



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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2017 Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest
Public Access and Recreation Management Plan
And Road Management Plan
Amendment

The Division of Parks and Recreation in consultation with the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee and state agencies who have regulatory or programmatic responsibilities for the area conserved by the Headwaters Conservation Easement per Section 5B has prepared this plan amendment for review and approval by the fee owner.

On behalf of the State of New Hampshire, this plan amendment has been approved by:



Jeffrey J. Rose, Commissioner
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

10/25/17

Date

On behalf of the CONNECTICUT LAKES REALTY TRUST, (a Trust formed pursuant to agreement dated March 12, 2002 and recorded in the Registry of Coos County, New Hampshire), this plan amendment has been approved by:

The Forestland Group LLC, (pursuant to the authority granted in agreement dated July 1, 2010)



Matthew W. Sampson
North East Regional Director

11-16-2017

Date

Introduction

The Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest Recreation Program, managed by the Division of Parks and Recreation, works closely with local organizations and businesses and the private landowner, The Forestland Group, to provide high-quality nature based recreation. The key recreational feature on the property, the roads, while providing easy access to other recreational sites, remains the largest operational responsibility and expense for the Division.

This is the fourth time the public access and recreational use on the property has been evaluated. The Division, in consultation with the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizen Committee, determined that it was not necessary to conduct a full plan revision and instead amend portions of the plan (see Section 5.B.iii and 5.Eii of the Easement). In general it was agreed the management of the property had not changed substantially, nor were new issues presented to initiate a full re-evaluation.

In addition, this document also includes information on the endowments that the Division felt necessary to link management direction to the funding available.

Plan Timeline and Highlights

Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizen Committee Meeting	September 19, 2015
State Agency Technical Committee	February 4, 2016
Public Outreach Session – Concord	April 13, 2016
Public Outreach Session – Pittsburg	April 16, 2016
Connecticut Lakes Headwater Citizens Committee	May 21, 2016
CLHCC ATV Subcommittee Meeting	June 20, 2016
CLHCC Road Subcommittee Meeting	June 30, 2016
CLHCC Road Subcommittee Meeting	September 28, 2016
Public Outreach Session – Pittsburg	November 15, 2016
Public Outreach Session – Concord	November 17, 2016
Comment Period - Public Review Draft Plan	November 30, 2016
Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizen Committee Meeting	December 10, 2016

How this document is used

The 2007 Public Access and Recreation Management Plan and Road Management Plan, required under the Conservation Easement remains the primary document for the management of and the policies that govern the public use of the property. The plan amendment would be additive to the 2007 plan and the 2012 amendment. There are no changes to the language within the 2007 Public Access and Recreation Management and Road Management Plan.

In reading the document, a topic for revision may be identified with page numbers and sections included to direct users to the appropriate section of the 2007 plan. Depending on the depth of analysis there will be “Discussion” of the topic which may include, an “Analysis of Use” that summarizes the issues associated with that public recreational activity, the analysis may or may not be followed by alternatives and separate actions, for example, an amended plan direction, that is proposed for the next 5 years.

Alternatives and actions that are presented to the landowner for approval are enclosed in a text box.

Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Stewardship Plan Statement of General Direction

This recreational plan does not include any additional recreational improvements to the property. The stewardship endowment funds (reserve and annual appropriation) are being allocated primarily to upgrade the road system to provide adequate public access to the property. Members of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee have also expressed concern over a change in the character of the experience on the property due to the installation of recreational improvements such as kiosks, pit toilets, parking lots, and enhanced trail access. The challenge going forward will be how to maintain the traditional character of the experience while addressing additional impacts of increased public use and changing expectations.

Review of the Endowments

Three endowments were established when the State acquired the easement for the headwaters property for the following reasons:

1. Monitoring Endowment RSA 216:7: for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the terms of the conservation easement interests acquired by the State (DRED 50% - Fish and Game Department 50%).
2. Stewardship Endowment RSA 216:9: for the purpose of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acre natural areas owned by the State and for the purposes of recreation use, and conservation easement management of the 146,000 acres within the tract (DRED 70% - Fish and Game Department 30%).
3. Road Endowment RSA 216:10: for the purpose of maintaining the system of roads that exist within the conservation easement (DRED 89% - Fish and Game Department 11%).

The endowments are invested by the Department of Treasury. Four (4) percent of the three endowment fund balances at the beginning of the fiscal year are allocated to an "expenditure account". The endowment revenue is the primary funding source for the property.

Action Items:

- Update Custodial and Investment Agreement with Treasury Department
- Update the DRED-Fish and Game Department Endowment MOA

Review of Current Management Strategies and Policies

The Division of Parks and Recreation convened a technical team of the state agencies, and representatives of the landowner and the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee to review current management and make recommendations for changes to the Public Access and Recreation Management Plan and the Road Management Plan. The topics were presented at a Public Outreach meetings in April 2016 and then to the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee in May 2016.

The following issues were identified:

Part I - Public Access and Recreation Management Plan

- **Public Access Improvements:** These improvements include facilities such as parking lots, pit toilets, and kiosks and address the health and safety of the public and support the recreational activities on the property.
- **Recreational Use and Improvements:** These improvements include trails (non-motorized and motorized), dams, wayfinding, and areas of special interest (fire towers, waterfalls, viewing areas).

- **Funding:** The stewardship endowment, as the primary funding source for public access management and recreational improvements, was recommended for study and recommendations on how to spend the reserves that have built up were discussed.

Part II – Road Management Plan

- **Road Classification:** The Five Year Road Plan shall be consistent with the Stewardship Plan and the Recreation Plan according to the easement. A new classification system is being implemented to support both the forest management purposes and the public recreation of the property. Particularly that the stewardship funds will be used in part for road maintenance. By RSA 216:9. By statute the Stewardship Endowment shall be utilized “for the purposes of recreation, use, and the conservation easement management.”
- **Road Maintenance Standards:** Road maintenance standards are described in the Road Management Agreement between the landowner and the State. A third classification of road is being proposed and a standard for the new classification of tertiary roads will be developed.
- **Road Capital Needs:** A 10 year capital road plan has been developed, but the source of funds has not been identified.
- **Funding:** The road endowment, as the primary funding source for annual maintenance and capital improvements, was recommended for study and recommendations on how to spend the reserves that have built up were discussed. Increased funding has been requested in the FY 2018-2019 budget for the roads.

Part I - Public Access and Recreational Management Plan

Over the last 10 years, kiosks have been added to the property boundaries, special places in the forest, and trail entrances onto the property. Pit toilets have been installed at high use destinations depending on season of use and areas of congregation. Parking lots and non-motorized trails have been created and improved. No additional improvements are proposed in this plan; however, the Division will complete current projects and continue to maintain existing parking lots, trails and to complete approved kiosk installation.

The only source of funding provided for public access and recreational improvements is the stewardship endowment.

Stewardship Endowment RSA 216:9

A stewardship endowment was established when the State acquired the easement for the headwaters property for the “purposes of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the State (managed by the Fish and Game Department), and for the purposes of recreation use, and the conservation easement management of the 146,400 acres within the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Tract.”

The Division budgets \$50,000 per year for its stewardship responsibilities on the property even though the investment has recently returned higher amounts. A reserve has accumulated in anticipation of contracting out future planning. The Department consulted with the Attorney General’s office on use of the Stewardship Funds for road maintenance and management and determined the funds can be used; however, the work has to directly benefit public access and cannot be used for the purpose of providing access for forest management and timber harvesting.

NH State Parks has been subsidizing the headwaters property through staff including the Great North Woods Regional supervisor, the Trails Bureau supervisor and the State Park Planning and Development Specialist that devotes significant time to the management of the property. These staff members oversee road maintenance projects and work with local organizations to ensure public access and use of the property as permitted in the easement. Limited stewardship endowment funds have been expended for staff time and materials to maintain existing recreational improvements and construct new improvements as approved in past plans.

Recreational Management

3.4.6 Recreation Improvements (p. 74),

Discussion

The Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest Recreation Program is how the Division executes its operational responsibilities for public access and recreation management stewardship on the property. The Division is given the authority by the conservation easement to maintain the visitor experience, public safety and public health and to maintain the character of the property and to accomplish this may construct and manage recreational improvements. Recreational improvements permitted in the easement include but are not limited to trails, dams, bridges, culverts, sheds, pit toilets, parking lots, gatehouses and Visitor Support facilities (huts, shelters, lean-to's, primitive campsites) as outlined in section 5.N of the Easement.

During this planning cycle the landowner referred a request by the Warriors @ 45 North for a public shooting range to the Division. The Division would like to retain this proposal and if funding and adequate resources are identified for site management and supervision of the general public, the proposal will be submitted to the Landowner and the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizen Committee for implementation.

Alternatives

Selected Alternative - Alternative A: No New Recreational Improvements

To address immediate need for public access improvements the Division has proposed in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget, for purposes of public recreational access, to appropriate Stewardship Endowment Funds to support the following actions;

Action

- a. Allocate a portion of Stewardship Endowment funds to road maintenance (see road management plan section).
- b. Purchase equipment (lease-to-own) for mowing and other maintenance activities.
- c. Fund staff time for operation of mowing equipment, contract management and maintenance of existing facilities.
- d. Contract with the SCA NH AmeriCorps Program to assist in the clean up the boat launch sites.
- e. Reimburse the use of state-owned vehicles.
- f. Purchase of supplies.
- g. Completion of started projects approved in the previous plan including installing already constructed kiosks at the Magalloway Trailhead, Robinson's property line and the intersection of Hedgehog Road and Corridor 5.

Alternative B: New Recreational Improvements

The reserve and annual endowment allocation will be used to purchase (lease-to-own) of equipment for mowing and will be used for the following stewardship responsibilities; staff time (contract management and maintenance of existing facilities), SCA NH Corps (to clean up the boat launch sites), overhead for use of vehicles and supplies for and supplies and to potentially fund a variety of new projects (see Table 1: Proposed New Facilities by Type) and staffing.

Under this alternative the Division proposed to plan and implement all or a subset of the following projects as available resources permit for the following actions;

Actions

- a. *Vista Cuts*: To preserve important historic vistas of the property, the Division will work with the Landowner to identify and cooperatively manage the vegetation in those areas to preserve the view. Scenic vista areas will include a pull-off/parking area and interpretive signage.
- b. *Deer Mountain Fire Tower*: A pedestrian trail easement from the landowner will be requested by Division to maintain the Deer Mountain fire tower trail and the view from the summit.
- c. *Fees & Donations*: A self-service donation collection system will be implemented on the property at popular destinations to collect donations to support the management of the public access and maintenance of recreational use of the property.
- d. *Kiosks & Signage*: Kiosks are installed at the entrance to the property and at high use recreational sites to provide property rules and safety and directional information. Cooperators shall take advantage when possible of existing infrastructure and kiosks and comply with DRED sign standards as practicable. If new structures or signs are needed they shall complement the existing style.
- e. *Pit Toilets*: Pit toilets are installed at high use recreational sites to provide effective human waste management for health and safety and to prevent ground water and surface water pollution.
- f. *Interpretive Signage*: Interpretive signs provide information about the natural, cultural, and historic features and stories for forest visitors and also to interpret management activities of landowner and to showcase “working” lands.

Table 1: Proposed New Facilities by Type

Pit Toilet	Iron Ranger	View Clearing	Interpretive Signs	Kiosk
Indian Stream Gorge	Indian Stream Gorge	Diamond Ridge	Indian Stream Gorge	Robinson's
Big Brook Bog	Magalloway Trailhead	Ruk's Look	Magalloway Trailhead/Summit	Magalloway Trailhead
Little Hellsgate Falls	Garfield Falls	Bog Branch Overlook ¹	Garfield Falls	Hedgehog & Corridor 5
	Little Hellsgate Falls		All viewing areas	
			Active harvest areas near roads	
			All boat launch sites	
			Little Hellsgate Falls	

¹ Bog Branch viewing area is in the road right of way and adjacent to the Natural Area

3.4.5.2 Non-Motorized Trail Use (p. 59)

Analysis of Use, New Use and Updated Trail Plan

In the 2007 plan the public requested that non-motorized trails be separated from the motorized trails and roads to the extent possible to enhance the experiential qualities and avoid unsafe conditions. The existing hiking trails have been maintained and new trails around Deer Mountain Campground are in construction by the Division of Parks and Recreation and other partners. The Cohos Trail Association has been working on the property maintaining the existing trail and moving sections off-road with the permission of the landowner.

Non-Motorized trail work is discussed yearly with the landowner and outlined in the Annual Operating Plan between the State and the Landowner. The Division is working on a trail project approved in the 2012 plan amendment to link Coleman State Park to the headwaters property for snowmobilers, hikers & equestrians. The trail will be built to support snowmobiles & horses to Cedar Stream Road, where Cohos Trail would then separate and follow Whipple Ridge to Lake Francis State Park.

Alternatives – No Alternatives Considered

Actions

- a. A non-motorized trail blazing plan for the property to be developed by the Division in cooperation with non-motorized trail users for the non-motorized trail system.
- b. Cohos Trail Association will provide a GPS or shape file of the Cohos Trails on the property to document its location prior to the construction of any new trails.
- c. The Cohos Trail Association shall invite the landowner and Fish and Game Wildlife biologist on a site walk prior to new trail construction along Whipple Ridge.

3.4.5.4 Biking on Designated Roads (p.65)

Discussion

Bicycle use is only allowed on Designated Roads under the Easement (5.A.iv.b) and continues to be a dispersed use on the roads. Bicycles can be used on Designated Roads unless posted closed to bicycles and all wheeled vehicles.

At the public outreach session in April there was a request to allow “fat tire”² bicycles on winter pedestrian trails, however that is contrary to the easement and cannot be permitted.

Alternatives – No Alternatives Considered

Action

- a. None

² “Fat tire” are low geared bicycles that have wide, low pressure tires. These bicycles are designed for slick or loose surfaces like snow, mud, wet roots and rocks.

3.4.5.7 Boating and Paddling (p. 72)

Discussion

The 2007 plan documented the custom of storing boats on site and noted that as many as 40 were counted at one site. In subsequent years the number of boats in poor or unusable condition has grown. Boating and paddling on the ponds within the headwaters property continues to be an important recreational activity for fishing and wildlife viewing.

The landowner has requested DRED clean up the boats stored around the ponds and create policies regarding boat storage. At the September 19, 2015 Connecticut Lakes Headwaters meeting the Division presented a proposal for the storage of boats at designated sites and a procedure per DRED Administrative Rule RES 7301.17.

At the December 10, 2016 Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee meeting the advice to Commissioner Rose was to convene a sub-committee to study the boat launches and make a recommendation on managing these sites. The Committee supported the cleanup of the sites by the removal of derelict boats, boats in a condition that would make them unusable, and to require boats to either be registered or to have the owner's name and contact information identified.

Alternative A: Boat Management and Storage Policy

- a. Boats will be allowed to be stored in designated areas on the CLH property no sooner than one week before the start of fishing season, if the roads are open to vehicle use, to one week after the close of fishing season (approximately mid-April to mid-October). Boats shall either be registered with NH Department of Safety or have the owner's name and telephone number displayed.
- b. Boats stored on the property after fishing season is over, if in good condition and with registration numbers or owner identification, will be taken to a storage facility and assessed a towing fee plus an impound fee. Owners will be notified to claim within 90 days and if not claimed by then the boat will be considered abandoned and sent to the State of NH Surplus Property for disposal.
- c. Boats stored on the property after fishing season is over, if in good condition without registration numbers or owner identification, will be taken to a storage facility and assessed a towing fee plus a impound fee. If not claimed within 90 days the boat will be considered abandoned and sent to the State of NH Surplus Property for disposal.
- d. Boats stored on the property after fishing season is over if in poor and unusable condition without owner identification or current registration will be removed and disposed as trash by October 31st of each year.

Selected Alternative - Alternative B: Convene a study committee

Alternative B: Convene a study committee to develop policy and advise the Division on cleanup of boat launch sites.

Action

- a. The Division shall convene sub-committee of the CLHCC to study boat storage and boat launch area management.
- b. The Division will cleanup the boat launch sites using staff, contracted services and/or volunteers.

3.4.5.5 ATV/UTV Riding on Designated Roads (p. 66)

Current Status

The 2012 amendment designated two routes on the property in the areas of Cedar Stream and Hall Stream. A primary alternative route to serve the Cedar Stream area is designated across Magalloway, Buckhorn and Deadwater routes which connects to secondary alternate routes and the regional trail networks. The alternative routes would only be used if Cedar Stream is closed because of forest management operations, maintenance, no designated off property connection or safety concerns. Only one of the Cedar Stream alternative routes will be open at a time. No more than one alternative route will be open at the same time. There is no alternative route planned if Hall Stream route is closed.

Issues Identified

The Great North Woods Trail Riders ATV Club submitted a proposal for the plan revision to extend the riding season until the Monday of Columbus Day, extend the riding hours in the fall, and add additional loops and connections to local businesses. An ATV Subcommittee of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee met in June 2016 to review the trail proposal and make recommendations.

ATV Sub-Committee Discussion Points

- a. The general consensus of DRED and Fish and Game Department staff is that there is no more environmental degradation on primary routes as compared to other motorized routes on the property and few enforcement issues have occurred, however the landowner feels there have been negative impacts on road condition as compared to other motorized routes on the property.
- b. It was noted that ATV use on the roads is causing road wear and in some places the damage is significant.
- c. ATV usage continues to grow in the state and in the region. In fact, 2015 was the first time ATV registrations exceeded snowmobile registrations.
- d. Off-highway trail mileage in Coos County has not substantially increased; the increased mileage has come primarily from the interconnection of the town roads since the 2012 plan amendment.
- e. The first two weeks in October are prime bird hunting.
- f. Changing operating time daily causes enforcement issues. Late summer/fall riders cannot get back to their home base before sunset after supper if eating out.
- g. The landowner and conservation organizations do not want to have Magalloway road added to the trail system. It is too busy already.
- h. Connecting the businesses near the First Connecticut Lake to the Perry Stream Land and Timber trail system would require private landowner permission plus designating 1.5 mile of new Designated Road (Primary Trail 139).
- i. Landowner has requested that the alternate designated routes be removed from maps as it communicates the presence of a route that does not exist. If closure of an existing trail becomes necessary state agencies and the club will work with the landowner who has agreed to establish an alternate route.

ATV Subcommittee Recommendations

- a. The Subcommittee unanimously recommends keeping existing routes open in next recreation plan.
- b. A majority of the subcommittee supports set time operating hours (instead of sunset per RES 8504.02(i)) if part of county-wide operational change.

- c. A majority of the subcommittee supports to extend operating season to October 15th as long as there is a connection to and from the trail system on the property.
- d. There was not majority support by the subcommittee to designate additional route on CLH roads (Coon Brook to Magalloway). This change would increase designated mileage by 24 miles in next 5 years.
- e. A majority of the subcommittee supports connection to local businesses in area where ATV use is already occurring (1st Conn Lake connections).

CLHCC Discussion

The general consensus of the CLHCC is to not extend the ATV season beyond Sep 30.

Alternatives – No Alternatives Considered

Actions

- a. The Cedar Stream and Hall Stream ATV trails will continue to be permitted.
- b. The designation of ATV alternative trails will be discontinued and if closure of an existing trail becomes necessary the landowner has committed to work with state agencies and club to establish an alternate route.
- c. There is no change in the operating season dates; the trail system will open in May consistent with road and regional trail network and will not be open later than September 30th of each year. However, the landowner is willing to consider a “weekend use only” proposal; until the Monday of Columbus Day by special permit as long as the trail system it connects to is open on both ends.
- d. There is no change in operating times; the trail shall be open from sunrise to sunset per RES 8504.02(i). If there are changes via a county-wide effort the proposal will be brought to the CLHCC for advice.
- e. The Division of Parks and Recreation, Trails Bureau will work with the Great North Woods Riders ATV club to determine a route and secure written private landowner permission to connect interested First Connecticut Lakes businesses to the trail system on the west of NH Route 3. Once the route is determined Division will report to the CLHCC and submit to the CLH landowner for consideration.

3.5.1 Public Safety & Law Enforcement (p.78)

Analysis of Use - Discussion

Traditionally snowmobiling, hunting and fishing were the dominant outdoor pursuits in the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters region. The development of the “Ride the Wilds” trail network has connected local trail networks with others across the region increasing ATV/UTV use. The connector on the headwaters property has provided an important link.

Actions

- a. As the popularity increases, sufficient resources should be dedicated to support this use.

3.7 Public Information and Education (p. 79)

Analysis of Use

Wildlife viewing is an important activity on the headwaters property. Guests to the area in addition to asking for the “best places to see moose” are also interested in bird watching and other animals. Identification of wildlife viewing locations and the maintenance of those areas is desired.

Actions

- a. The Division of Parks and Recreation will partner with the NH Fish and Game Department to identify areas to view wildlife on the property.
- b. The reactivation and cooperative management of the low powered wildlife radio beacon to broadcast wildlife information and public safety messages.

Part II - Road Management Plan

Section 5.E of the Easement acknowledges the need for a Road Management Plan for management and maintenance of the “designated road network” and identifies elements that would be included. The 250+/- miles of “designated roads” owned and maintained by the State of New Hampshire and the hundreds of miles of roads owned and maintained by the landowner are the most important public resource on the headwaters property. The state-owned “designated roads” per the easement are the only location where certain activities such as driving motor vehicles including ATVs and bicycle use are permitted by the public.

At the time of the acquisition, there was a network of constructed roads and several additional roads were “designated” on paper but yet to be constructed. Other roads have been constructed in the last 13 years by the landowner and may be considered for potential classification as “designated” roads. Any roads constructed by the state will be documented as “designated” roads under the State’s management. Previous road management plans have continued to use the historic road management descriptions which were forest management based, the Division in this plan changes the road’s classification to address public recreational access objectives

The potential sources of funding for the roads are; endowment, landowner, and state general funds. Prior to the state’s acquisition of the designated roads, landowners and managers budgeted \$3.00 per acre for road maintenance therefore an estimated pre-conservation budget of \$400,000 - \$450,000 was needed annually to maintain the entire road network on the property.

No parks fund operating funds have been directly dedicated to the expenses for the management of the headwaters property, however, the Division absorbs the cost of staff including the Great North Woods Regional supervisor, the Trails Bureau supervisor and the State Park Planning and Development Specialist who devote significant time to the management of the property.

Stewardship Endowment RSA 216:9

A stewardship endowment was established when the State acquired the easement for the headwaters property for the “purposes of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the State (managed by the Fish and Game Department), and for the purposes of recreation use, and the conservation easement management of the 146,400 acres within the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Tract.” The endowment is distributed between DRED (70%) and Fish and Game Department (30%) per a memorandum of understanding. Revenue from the endowment is budgeted in the Division’s operating budget.

Road Endowment RSA 216:10

A road endowment was established to support road maintenance under the authority of state agencies within the conservation easement and property interests acquired in the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract. The endowment revenue is distributed between DRED (89%) and Fish and Game Department (11%) per a memorandum of understanding. Revenue from the endowment is deposited in the "Dedicated Maintenance Account" and budgeted in the Division's operating budget.

Landowner Contribution

The landowner annually contributes to the State's expenses of maintaining the roads by paying a "Base Amount" and an additional amount, "Usage Fee", per cord of timber removed from the Property. These fees are deposited into "Dedicated Maintenance" and "Dedicated Capital" accounts as described in the Road Management Agreement between DRED and the landowner.

Road Management Agreement

1. Dedicated Maintenance Account (3415): The State shall deposit at most, 100% of the annual Base Amount and, at most, 75% of the annual Usage Fee in this account.
2. Dedicated Capital Account: The State shall deposit 10% of the annual Usage Fee in this account.
3. In the event fees are not sufficient to cover the required maintenance of the roads, the State may forego depositing funds in the capital account and use them for maintenance.

State Capital Budget and other Operating Funds

In FY 2014-2015, \$150,000 was appropriated in the capital budget for the maintenance of the Headwaters Roads. This has been the only capital budget appropriation to date for the maintenance of the road system.

2017-2021 Road Management Direction

A roads sub-committee of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee was established in June 2016 to assist the Division in developing this plan amendment. The subcommittee met twice in 2016 to review the anticipated funding for the roads and maintenance strategies. The roads provide access to the landowner for forest management activities and to the public for public access and recreation.

Mission of the Roads Sub-Committee is to provide advice to DRED for the preparation of the Road Management Plan addressing the following issues:

1. *Development of a new road classification system for maintenance that identifies roads that are important public access and public use.*
2. *Determining annual maintenance plan for the entire road system (mowing, gravel, grading, ditching);*
3. *Identifying capital improvements to address critical infrastructure (bridges, culverts, road upgrade/rebuilding);*
4. *Securing adequate resources and establish appropriate policies to provide adequate annual maintenance and capital improvements;*
5. *Addressing other access related issues.*

Road Classification

Issue

Previous road management plans have continued to use the historic road management descriptions which were forest management based, the Division in this plan changes the classification to address public recreational access objectives while continuing to meeting forest management objectives. The historic classifications were “main haul”, “gravel” and “seasonal” roads. The State’s “designated roads” are all the main haul roads and most of the gravel roads; the landowner retained ownership of the seasonal road network, a limited number of gravel roads and all new gravel roads constructed at landowner expense.

Analysis of Use

The State evaluated its road network to identify important public access sites and secondarily, roads important for landowner management activities; three classifications of “designated roads” were determined:

Primary Roads: These roads are the primary routes used for landowner management activities and provide access to important public access sites such as Magalloway Tower, Buckhorn Loop and boat access sites. These roads will receive the most intense management and will adopt the “main haul” road management standards. An example of this classification of road is Magalloway Road from NH Route 3 to the property boundary on the Maine/NH boarder.

Secondary Roads: These roads are used for landowner management activities and provide access for general forest recreation and/or provide connections to abutting properties where there is public access. These roads will receive less maintenance than the primary roads and may be closed temporarily to public use if funding is unavailable. These roads will adopt the “gravel” road management standards. An example of this classification of road is Stub Hill Road.

Tertiary Roads: Provide access for general forest recreation and are used for landowner management activities. Roads may not be maintained for passenger vehicles and are unimproved or have limited access due to condition/season. Bridges and culverts may not be in place. An example of this classification of road is Hedgehog Road.

Alternatives – No Alternatives Considered

Action

- a. Update the inventory and maps of designated roads and their classifications.
- b. Determine maintenance standards for tertiary roads.

Road Funding Forecast

In FY 2016 the landowner paid the State the “Base Amount” of \$25,000 plus \$1.40/cord or \$36,900 “Usage Amount” for a total of \$61,900. This amount is likely to be lower in the future. The Road endowment in FY 2016 gained \$60,598 in returns and \$19,923 was spent on road work. Annual road expenses in FY 2016 were \$82,370. A one-time transfer of approximately \$300,000 from the stewardship endowment reserve to the fiscal year 2017-2018 operating budget is proposed to address deferred maintenance needs for public access.

Road Work Plan FY 2018-2019

The landowner and the State meet annually to discuss the maintenance and management of the Designated Roads and agree what work will be done in the annual Road Management Agreement.

Use of Stewardship Endowment

Several alternatives were discussed on the use of the reserve stewardship endowment funds:

Alternative A: Outsource Maintenance

1. Hold \$50,000 in reserve (one-year annual return);
2. Appropriate \$150,000 of reserve in to support public access and property stewardship projects such as repair and maintenance of West-Side Bridge, replace Deadwater Bridge deck Middle Branch of Dead Diamond & Indian Stream Bridges;
3. Appropriate \$150,000 to pay for two years of mowing under contract;
4. Additional monies transferred from annual stewardship appropriation for roads.
5. 6% contract administration and contract supervision to be paid from stewardship reserve.

Selected Alternative – Own Forces Maintenance and Purchase of Equipment

Alternative B: Own Forces Maintenance and Purchase (lease to own) of Equipment

1. Hold \$50,000 in reserve (one-year annual return);
2. Appropriate \$150,000 of reserve to support public access and property stewardship projects such as repair and maintenance of West-Side Bridge, replace Deadwater Bridge and deck Middle Branch of Dead Diamond & Indian Stream Bridges
3. Appropriate \$150,000 to purchase (lease to own) equipment for mowing and other stewardship maintenance responsibilities by the Division; staff and operating funding for equipment to come from annual stewardship appropriation.
4. 6% contract administration and contract supervision to be paid from stewardship reserve.

Alternative C: Own Forces Maintenance and Lease of Equipment

1. Hold \$50,000 in reserve (one-year annual return);
2. Appropriate \$150,000 of reserve to support public access and property stewardship projects such as repair and maintenance of West-Side Bridge, replace Deadwater Bridge and deck Middle Branch of Dead Diamond & Indian Stream Bridges;
3. Appropriate funding to lease equipment for mowing and other stewardship maintenance responsibilities by the Division; staff and operating funding for equipment to come from annual stewardship appropriation.

Use of Road Endowment (3746)

The road endowment shall be used to support road maintenance under the authority of state agencies within the conservation easement and property interests acquired in the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract (RSA 216:10).

Alternatives – No Alternatives Considered

The Division proposes to use the road endowment reserve:

- a. Hold in reserve \$120,000 (two year annual return);
- b. Appropriate \$100,00 of reserve to road maintenance for each year of the biennium; and,
- c. Appropriate \$50,000/year of the annual endowment appropriation for road maintenance.

The total road budget (3415 & 3746) for each year of the FY 2018-2019 biennium is estimated to be \$170,000:

- \$50,000 reserve (3746)
- \$60,000 annual endowment return
- \$60,000 landowner contribution (Base Amount and Usage Amount)

10 Year Road Management Plan: Looking Ahead

As seen above, the division will significantly spend down the endowment reserves in fiscal year 2018-2019 and it is anticipated the only source of funds in future years will be the annual stewardship and road endowment and landowner contribution \$150,000. The table below illustrates what work should be done and estimated cost of the work, above routine maintenance.

Capital Road Management Needs

Location	Grading	Culverts	Gravel	Cost
Pisgah	X	X	X	300,000
Hedgehog	X	X	X	300,000
Garfield/DD flats	X	X	X	300,000
East Inlet Spurs	X	X	X	300,000
Stub Hill	X	X	X	300,000
Haystack	X	X	X	300,000
Meadow	X	X	X	300,000
Hawk Road	X	X	X	300,000
Tower Road	X	X	X	300,000
West Side Indian Spurs	X	X	X	300,000
Perry Stream Road	X	X	X	150,000
Cedar Stream Road	X	X	X	350,000
Magalloway Road	X	X	X	750,000

-END-