

## NEW HAMPSHIRE'S OUTDOORS

With just over 9,000 square miles of land area and 5,900 miles of shoreline and riverfront, New Hampshire's natural and cultural landscape provides an ideal setting for residents and visitors from around the world to participate in a stunning array of four season outdoor recreation opportunities.

Recreation opportunities include the popular White Mountain National Forest (WMNF), which is almost 800,000 acres, state lands and waterways, municipal outdoor recreation providers, and over one million acres of private forest and agricultural land. These places offer scenic beauty as well as vast opportunities for wilderness experiences, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, rock climbing, bicycling, snowmobiling, paddling, surfing, swimming, winter sports, and boating. New Hampshire's pristine view sheds, spectacular mountain tops and fragile alpine zones can be counted among the most unique natural and geologic features in the world.

**"We, who promote the outdoors as an indispensable element of our well-being, also must stress that the outdoors must be healthy as well."**

**- Jon Jarvis, National Parks Service Director, April 6, 2011**

Promoting and encouraging the enjoyment of New Hampshire's outdoors builds the tourism industry, which contributes heavily to the state's economy, and supports the health and well-being of New Hampshire residents and visitors. *Wise stewardship, protection, and management of these valuable natural and cultural resources are vital to New Hampshire's continued prosperity.*



Franconia Notch State Park

### STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN - A MANDATE

Under the terms of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) of 1965, which established the LWCF State Assistance Program, each state is required to develop a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) at least every five years. The SCORP is filed with the National Park Service (NPS), and enables New Hampshire to participate in the LWCF program, guiding the use of LWCF funding.

In addition, the 2013-2018 SCORP:

- Fulfills New Hampshire's statutory requirement (RSA 12-A:18) for an outdoor recreation planning program.
- Is intended to align with the 2011 America's Great Outdoors Report, which promotes connecting people to the outdoors, conserving natural and cultural resources and developing partnerships.
- Provides guidance on outdoor recreation planning that is focused on coordinating resources and efforts within the outdoor recreation community and the broader decision-making process throughout the state.

**2013-2018 SCORP Goals** - The goal and intent of the 2013-2018 SCORP is to use contemporary planning resources to secure a future where New Hampshire residents and visitors live healthier lifestyles; wildlife, water, and natural resources are conserved; and the economic vitality of communities is sustained.



Winslow State Park

### PLAN PURPOSE

The intent of this plan is to justify state and federal expenditures for outdoor recreation using the following planning criteria:

1. Identify major issues and challenges facing the state’s outdoor recreation and natural resources using public, provider, and user feedback, including those that may not be active participants in outdoor recreation activities.
2. Assess the existing supply of and demand for outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Evaluate recreation trends, deficiencies, under-served areas, and desired improvements.
4. Conduct an inventory of current outdoor recreation facilities, trails, and wetlands.
5. Establish priorities based on outreach efforts, data research, and previous plans.
6. Ensure accountability in measuring success using publicly issued annual benchmark reports.



Greenfield State Park



Clough State Park

## VISION

Public outreach efforts to determine a vision for outdoor recreation in New Hampshire and identify SCORP objectives consisted of the following initiatives:

- The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) convened “NH Listens” community conversations at seven sites throughout the state, with 171 community members participating.
- UNH Cooperative Extension facilitated planning sessions with key stakeholder groups and conducted a web-based survey with 136 recreation and conservation leaders throughout New Hampshire responding.
- Review of the 2010 New Hampshire Fish and Game Department survey on outdoor recreation participation.

Survey respondents identified several vision themes, which have been incorporated into the following Vision Statement:

**New Hampshire SCORP 2013-2018 Vision Statement** - “Outdoor recreation In New Hampshire serves diverse populations throughout the state, has a strong, positive impact on the economy, and improves the quality of life for New Hampshire residents and visitors.

Strong partnerships among community organizations, the business community and the public sector facilitate diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for a variety of users.

A well-connected and maintained system of trails, expanded funding, and quality educational resources insure that outdoor recreation continues to be a vital part of New Hampshire.”

## THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation is a vital contributor to local, regional, and state economies, natural and cultural resource conservation efforts, and public health. The New Hampshire 2013-2018 SCORP identifies priorities and actions that support a healthy citizenry by creating access to the outdoors for all, wise stewardship of the natural environment, and community and statewide economic vitality for the next five years.

**SCORP and Healthy Lifestyles** - Water parks, tennis courts, swimming pools, winter sledding areas and playgrounds, and a connected network of hiking, snowshoe, and biking trails on public and private lands are an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Federal and stateside LWCF projects are making vital contributions toward addressing our nation's growing public health concerns.

### a. The Land and Water Conservation Fund and Public Health

We are continuously reminded of the costs associated with obesity as more and more children are being diagnosed, in part because of a sedentary lifestyle. Hypertension or high blood pressure, kidney disease, heart disease, and now liver disease are on the rise for children, some as young as age 12. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index of greater than or equal to 30 percent of total body weight. The facts below tell the story about our children, their health, and the outdoors:

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that the percentage of obese youth has tripled from 1980 to 2008. Children and adolescents who are obese have a 70-80 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.
- Studies show that young people today spend a substantial amount of time using electronic media (screen time). Children ages 8-18 average approximately seven hours a day watching TV, video games, computers, and movies.
- An active lifestyle, along with other factors, can help to reverse this trend. However, if people are going to be encouraged to adjust their lifestyles, they need accessible, clean, safe places to connect with the outdoors.

### **b. Universal Access to Outdoor Play Opportunities**

A 2009 survey commissioned by KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit dedicated to bringing play back into the lives of children, included 1,677 parents with children between the ages of 2-12. The survey found that:

- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of parents report that their children don't have access to a community playground.
- Ninety-six percent (96%) of parents said playing outside was critical to keep kids physically fit.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of parents said children today spend less time playing outside than they did as children.

Seniors, youth, low income populations, people with disabilities, and New Hampshire's growing racially and ethnically diverse citizenry need to be included when considering land acquisition, and planning and designing trails, open space, facilities, and programs.

**Low Income Children and Access to Play** - According to a KaBoom! commissioned survey, "Sixty-nine percent (69%) of U.S. children in the lowest income bracket don't have access to a community playground."

### **c. Measuring the Economic Value of a Park System**

Measuring the benefits of outdoor recreation using survey tools, metrics, and data collection is an important component of understanding the impacts on employment opportunities, land values, revenue generation, mental and physical health, environmental stewardship, and community sustainability.

According to a study published in 2009 by The Trust for Public Land and Center for City Park Excellence, seven attributes of park systems that provide economic value (property value, tourism, direct use, health, community cohesion, clean water, and clean air) can be quantified and measured by calculating:

- Direct revenues to local and state government realized from property taxes related to property value increases because of proximity to parks, and increased spending by tourists.

- Direct savings in medical costs resulting from exercising in parks; community members coming together to improve neighborhood parks, the public safety, and social benefits of a healthy park system; and the value of trees in air and water pollution reduction.

The 2013-2018 New Hampshire SCORP outlines the economic contributions of various outdoor recreation providers throughout the State, demonstrating the significant value that outdoor recreation participation, environmental conservation initiatives, and cultural resource preservation make to the State's overall economy.

**New Hampshire Recreation and Conservation Leaders Survey** - Seventy-one percent (71%) ranked partnerships with organizations to foster connections between outdoor recreation and improved health and wellness as a medium to high priority.

#### **d. Outdoor Recreation Participation**

According to the Outdoor Foundation (OF), a non-profit organization that conducts research on outdoor recreation, nearly 50 percent of Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2011, the highest participation level in five years. "Active" outdoor recreation includes bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, paddling sports, snow sports, wildlife viewing, trail-running, hiking, and climbing. The Outdoor Industry Association, a trade association of outdoor retailers, manufacturers, distributors, and sales representatives, has calculated that outdoor recreation contributes \$646 billion annually to the U.S. economy in direct sales.

#### **The Outdoor Recreation Economy in New Hampshire**

- Supports 53,000 jobs
- Generates \$261 million in annual state tax revenue
- Produces nearly \$4 billion annually in retail sales and services

- *Outdoor Foundation Report, 2006*

## TRENDS IMPACTING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

### a. Emphasis on Community Connectivity and Active Transportation

Emphasis on community connectivity through trails, greenways, and active transportation initiatives is receiving increased attention by communities committed to public health, environmental conservation, and economic development.

According to a 2002 report on housing preferences, *Boomers on the Horizon: Housing Preferences of the 55+ Market*, trails were the #1 amenity influencing homebuyers in the 55+ age bracket. Being able to get from home to natural areas, parks, recreation facilities, and important community destinations by bicycling or walking allows people to make the choice for active transportation.

**Economic Impact of Trails and Greenways** - There are numerous economic benefits from trails and greenways, such as increased property value of nearby homes, health benefits, and reduced environmental impact. Studies have shown that trail users spend money on food, beverages, camping, bike rentals, and accommodations, all of which stimulate the local economy.

### b. Overweight and Obesity Concerns

Overweight and obesity rates among children and adults continue to receive attention nationally and in New Hampshire, notably for the increased risk of developing chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and cancer. According to the 2001 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, childhood overweight and obesity rates have tripled since 1980, and adult obesity rates have doubled since 1980.

### c. Demographics

In the 2012 Carsey Institute report, *NH Demographic Trends in the 21st Century*, the following key trends were observed:

- New Hampshire's population increase is slowing.
- New Hampshire's population is aging.
- The pace of demographic change is uneven in New Hampshire.
- New Hampshire is becoming more racially diverse.

**New Hampshire's Active, Aging Population** - "...recreational and scenic amenities will attract additional older migrants, and this stream will likely swell as the large baby boom cohorts now in their late 40s to early 60s begin to retire. The combined effect of residents aging in place and senior migration is a likely doubling of the population aged 65 to 74 in the next twenty years."

*- 2012 UNH Carsey Institute Demographics Report*



Rollins State Park

### HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The 2013-2018 SCORP provides specific guidance to communities, school districts, planning jurisdictions, and their partners about how statewide LWCF monies for communities will be targeted in the upcoming five-year period. In this context, the plan may serve as a:

- **Policy guide** for local, regional, and state outdoor recreation planning initiatives.
- **Data source** for demographic trends in the context of recreational trends, supply, and demand.
- **Information Resource** for recreation-related issues in the state, with recommendations for addressing them.
- **List of performance goals** that will allow the Department of Resources and Economic Development and others to assess progress on meeting the recommendations in this SCORP.



Rhododendron State Park

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

To create a comprehensive analysis of parks and outdoor recreation facilities for the 2013-2018 SCORP, the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (NHDRED) and the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP) conducted outreach sessions around the State and analyzed relevant national, regional, and state plans. Outreach efforts consisted of the following initiatives:

- The Carsey Institute at UNH convened “New Hampshire Listens” community conversations at seven sites throughout the state, with 171 community members participating.
- The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service facilitated planning sessions with key stakeholder groups and conducted a web-based survey with 136 recreation and conservation leaders throughout New Hampshire responding.
- Review of the 2013-2018 SCORP was conducted by the Office of Energy and Planning, Department of Resources and Economic Development, the SCORP Advisory Work Group, and the Open Project Selection Process Committee.

## Summary of Key Findings

The public engagement process for the 2013-2018 NH SCORP yielded the following key findings:

- **Health and Quality of Life**  
There is a growing appreciation for the benefits of outdoor recreation, including reduced health care and transportation costs. Access for all children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities is important.
- **Economic Development and Funding**  
Recreational opportunities contribute to economic vitality and attract business. Retailers should be enlisted to support the State’s outdoor recreation initiatives.
- **Community Recreation, Children and Youth**  
Opportunities for the underserved (including urban populations and immigrants) are important, as well as leadership opportunities for young people, and education on how and where to recreate close to home.

- **Connectivity – Places and People**

There is a high value placed on increasing connectivity among recreational sites and trails while addressing the environmental impact and safety concerns that come with multiple users..

- **Communications and Outreach**

Cultivating volunteerism and developing partnerships to combine resources and a centralized source of information were important. Addressing the risk aversion of parents letting children play outdoors, also identified as a “culture of fear” was a priority.

- **Stewardship**

It is important to implement sustainability practices in stewardship plans, including adequate funding and overall financial support for lands, facilities, and programs.



Fort Stark Historic Site

### NEW HAMPSHIRE SCORP PRIORITIES

It is vital that local, state, and federal government agencies work in partnership with private sector and non-profit organizations to address the priorities of the 2013-2018 New Hampshire SCORP, which are derived from the community engagement process, statewide data collection, current and previous plans, and regional, state, and national trends:

1. Connect People to the Outdoors.
2. Consistent Stewardship and Conservation
3. Economic Vitality
4. Education Ethics and Benefits



### NEW HAMPSHIRE SCORP MANAGING AGENCIES

The following agencies play a role in preparing and administering the SCORP.

- **National Park Service (NPS)**

New Hampshire receives LWCF funds from the Department of the Interior managed through the National Parks Service, which is the corresponding federal agency that reviews the statewide plan. Upon approval, the NPS authorizes the release of funds to the State if funds are available.

- **New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (NHDRED)**

Following approval by the NPS, the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development is responsible for the oversight, management, and allocation of the LWCF monies through a request for proposal grant process. NHDRED is the state agency acting as liaison with the federal government for the purposes of preparing the SCORP.

- **New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP)**

The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning partners with DRED on the development of the statewide plan and assists in its implementation.



Hampton Beach State Park

### ROLE OF SCORP IN ALLOCATING FUNDS

Funds for LWCF projects are provided through the U.S. Department of Interior’s National Park Service. The allocation of LWCF funds may be conducted through a statewide application process, and requires a 50 percent federal and 50 percent local matching grant. A number of criteria guide the allocation of funds, including:

- Compliance with the SCORP
- Demonstration of a link between the proposed project and an analysis of New Hampshire’s outdoor recreation supply, demand, and need
- Compatibility with the priorities expressed in the public involvement process



Miller State Park

**WHO ARE THE PARTNERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SCORP?**

Implementing the 2013-2018 SCORP will only be successful by taking a new approach to creating sustainable partnerships with the numerous public, private, and non-profit outdoor recreation providers throughout New Hampshire.

- Municipalities, state agencies, federal land managers
- Private and quasi-public outdoor recreation providers
- Non-profit and health organizations
- Residents and visitors participating in outdoor recreation



Wellington State Park

## 2013-2018 SCORP OUTLINE

The 2013-2018 SCORP provides guidance for how New Hampshire expends federal LWCF monies on a community level and provides direction for addressing statewide recreational issues. The focus of the 2013-2018 SCORP is as follows.

### Chapter 1: Trends Impacting Outdoor Recreation

An analysis of current and projected trends in New Hampshire's demographic and socio-economic profile and the resultant challenges they pose.

### Chapter 2: Supply, Usage Patterns, and Expressed Demand

A summary of available data related to the supply and demand for outdoor recreation in New Hampshire with regional issues identified.

### Chapter 3: Priorities

A discussion of the four priority themes and related recommendations:

- Promoting health and livability for all through connection to the outdoors
- Practicing wise stewardship and conservation of natural resources and the built environment
- Contributing to New Hampshire's economic vitality
- Educating multi-user groups, partners and agency leadership

### Chapter 4: Goals and Actions

A comprehensive presentation of strategic actions to guide agency leaders, policy makers, and recreation providers in developing programs, policies, and land management strategies.

### Chapter 5: Guiding Principles for Implementation

An evaluation of unmet needs in rural and urban communities, regional coordination initiatives, wetlands evaluation, and LWCF requests and awards.

**The Benefits of Active Outdoor Experiences** - Studies show that the socio-economic benefits of outdoor recreation spaces and experiences far outweigh the public's investment. An active lifestyle connected to nature is not only a right of human existence, but a requirement for sustained public and environmental health. Therefore, parks and outdoor spaces held in public trust should be considered essential services.