

The Benefits of New Hampshire's Open Space

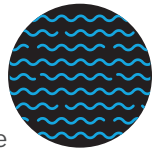
THE VALUE OF WORKING FARMS AND FORESTS, NATURAL LANDS, AND WATERS

New Hampshire's forests, farmlands, and waters provide diverse and extensive natural resources that form the fabric of the Granite State. These open spaces provide a broad range of benefits, support a dynamic Granite State economy, and make key contributions to what makes our state special.

Open space can make communities healthier and more resilient by protecting drinking water, and preventing and controlling floods.

■ Conserving land within a water supply watershed, aquifer, or wellhead protection area is a longstanding practice in New Hampshire to **protect drinking water** quality and quantity. For example, land conservation in the Piscataqua-Salmon Falls watershed provided an estimated \$40+ million in avoided treatment costs over 10 years.

■ **Flooding** is the most expensive natural hazard in New Hampshire. Conserving open space stores and slows runoff from storms, thereby reducing the frequency and magnitude of floods.



Protecting natural resources supports a strong economy. Working lands create jobs and support businesses.



■ Open space buttresses the **forest products** industry, which contributes \$2.5 billion, 12,800 jobs, and total wages of \$696 million annually.

■ Open space helps sustain **agriculture**, which is responsible for \$514 million of output, 7,940 jobs, and \$181 million in labor income annually.

Open space supports a robust tourism and outdoor recreation economy.

■ Open space with public access enables and encourages **recreational use** by residents, which is very popular with residents.

■ Open space supports the **outdoor recreation economy**, which accounts for \$3.9 billion in value added annually, representing 3.4 percent of the State's GDP, and 32,000 jobs.



■ Open space facilitates **hunting, fishing, and wildlife-associated recreation** with 2.4 million residents and visitors participating in annually spending \$5.2 billion on these activities.

■ Open space provides numerous **health benefits**. Research indicates that people with access to the outdoors show long term health improvement.





Open space improves **quality of life** for residents and strengthens **economic development** by attracting talent, employers, and investment.

Open space provides **ecosystem services** such as **drought resistance**, naturally moderating **temperatures**, sequestering carbon dioxide in trees, improving **air quality**, helping to prepare for climate change, and maintaining **wildlife habitat**.



Maintaining the current level of public benefits that open space lands provide will require consistent efforts by a range of conservation stakeholders at all levels to ensure that the State continues to reap the benefits of a healthy environment now and in the future.



The report was a collaborative effort between The Nature Conservancy, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, New Hampshire Audubon, New Hampshire Land Trust Coalition, New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association, The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, and Statewide Program of Action to Conserve our Environment. We also wish to acknowledge the input provided by New Hampshire Housing and New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation.



For the full report go to www.forestsociety.org

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