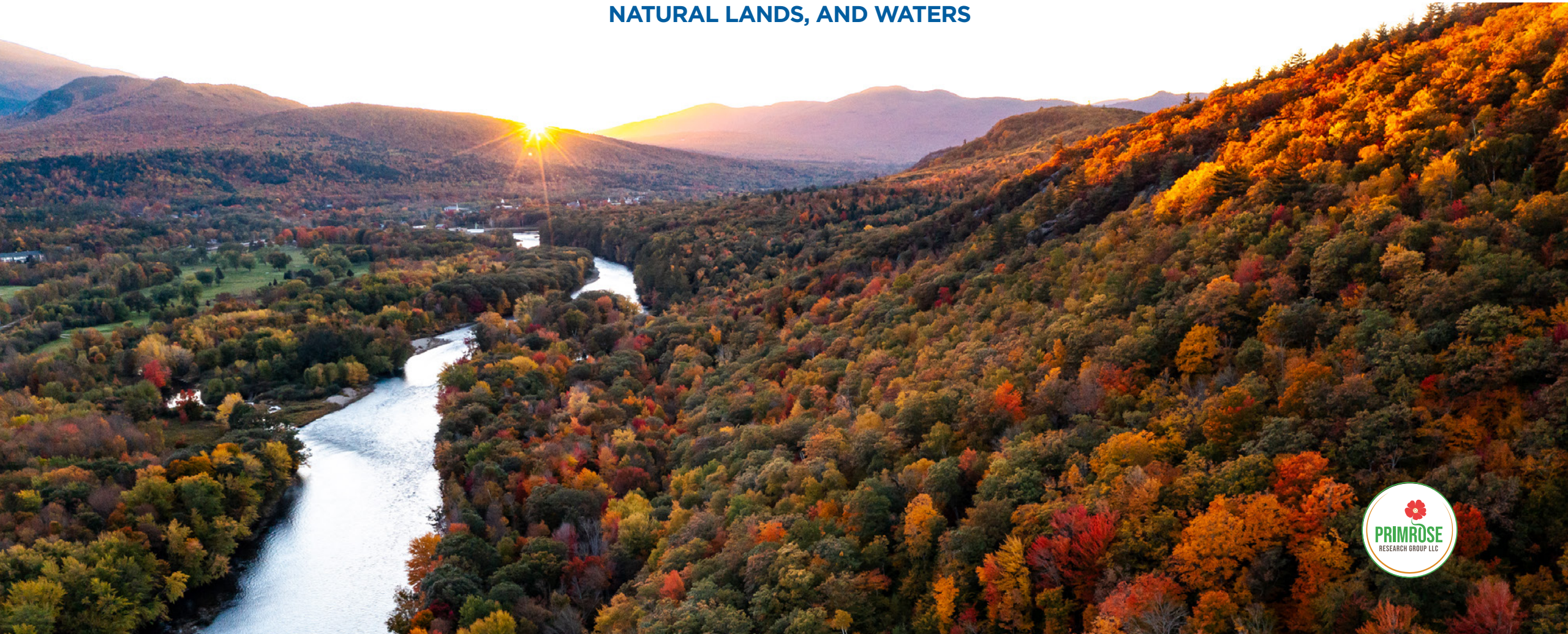


The Benefits of New Hampshire's Open Space

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



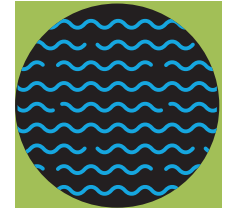
Benefits of Open Space

- Protecting water
- Creating jobs and sustaining businesses that rely on working lands
- Sustaining quality of life
- Providing ecosystem services
- Providing public access

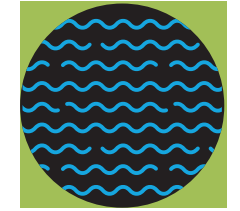


Protecting Water

- Maintaining drinking water quality
- Preventing and controlling flooding



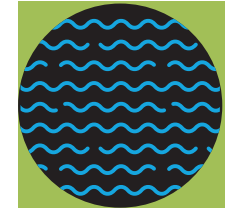
Maintaining Drinking Water Quality



- 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
- Land conservation in the Piscataqua-Salmon Falls watershed provided an estimated \$40+ million in avoided treatment costs over 10 years



Preventing & Controlling Flooding



- 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
- The economic value of a single wetland acre is \$150,000 to \$200,000.



Creating Jobs & Sustaining Businesses that Rely on Working Lands



- Buttressing the forest products industry
- Sustaining agriculture



Buttressing the Forest Products Industry



- Forest land conservation and the Current Use program help maintain the forest products industry.
- According to the US Forest Service, the forest products industry in New Hampshire supports:
 - 12,800 jobs
 - \$696 million in income
 - \$2.5 billion of output



Sustaining Agriculture



- Farmland preservation and the Current Use program help sustain the agriculture industry, secure the food supply, and provide an economic stimulus to rural communities.
- According to the US Department of Agriculture, the agriculture industry in New Hampshire supports:
 - 7,940 jobs
 - \$181.3 million in income
 - \$292.4 million value added
 - \$513.8 million of output



Sustaining Quality of Life

- Strengthening economic development
- Mitigating costs of municipal services



Strengthening Economic Development



- Open space benefits communities by enhancing quality of life and attracting talent, employers, and investment.
- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) highlighted that while New Hampshire has a strong and diverse economy, 80% of respondents identified recreation as a major economic driver in the state.
- Conserving land can also help local economies:
 - New England study found conservation increased local employment numbers and the labor force.
 - Especially true in rural areas.



Mitigating Costs of Municipal Services



- Working lands pay more in taxes than the municipal services they receive.
- Numerous studies have shown that open space can pay its way in taxes, and in many cases has a beneficial impact on municipal budgets.



Providing Ecosystem Services



- Improving air quality
- Sequestering and storing carbon
- Naturally moderating temperature
- Helping prepare for climate change
- Maintaining wildlife habitat



Improving Air Quality



- The vegetation in open space plays a role in improving air quality, helping nearby areas avoid the costs associated with pollution.
- Trees and shrubs have the ability to remove pollutants from the air.
- New Hampshire trees were estimated to remove 115,500 tons of air pollution in 2010, with human health effects valued at \$44.1 million.



Sequestering & Storing Carbon



- Forests sequester and store carbon, removing carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere.
- In New Hampshire, forests offset 25% of the state's humanmade carbon dioxide emissions annually.
- A 40-acre forest in New Hampshire is estimated to contain the same amount of carbon as 53,000 tanks of gasoline.



Naturally Moderating Temperature



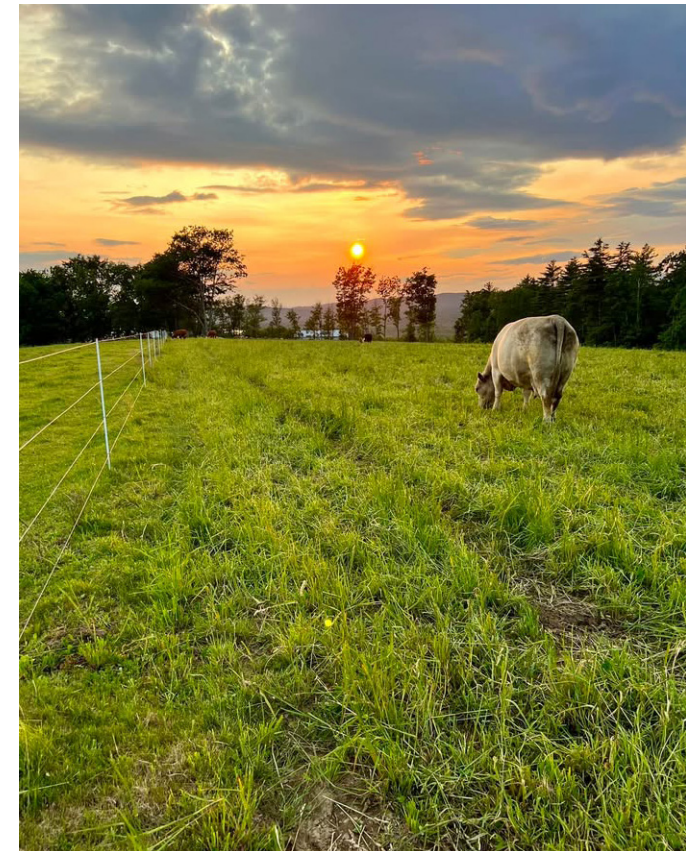
- Trees around residences keep homes cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter which reduces cooling and heating costs and improves human health and comfort.
- Green infrastructure, including urban parks and forests, can reduce the energy demand of nearby buildings by 10 percent
- Provides important benefits to vulnerable populations.
Extreme heat causes a range of health problems, including heat exhaustion, heat stroke, even death



Helping Prepare for Climate Change



- Intense rainstorms are likely to occur more frequently, causing more flooding, as experienced in July 2024
 - Communities and businesses will need to make major investments to combat and accommodate rising temperatures and the increased frequency of flooding and severe storms
- At the same time, New Hampshire has experienced short term dry periods, with extreme drought in 2016 and 2020
 - Future summer drought conditions will strain water supplies
 - Farms may be harmed if more hot days and droughts reduce crop yields
- Land use decisions have an impact on the magnitude of stormwater, flooding, and water quality impacts



Maintaining Wildlife Habitat



- The New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan identifies the greatest risks to wildlife and habitat
 - Pollution
 - Climate change and severe weather
 - Natural system modifications
 - Invasive and other problematic species, genes, and diseases
 - Residential and commercial development
- One of the actions identified to help wildlife thrive is a network of permanently conserved lands that effectively connect the diversity of the state's wildlife and habitats



Providing Public Access



- Enabling recreational use by residents
- Supporting the outdoor recreation economy
- Facilitating hunting, fishing, and wildlife-associated recreation
- Health care cost savings



Enabling Recreational Use by Residents



- Open space with public access enables and encourages recreational use by residents
- According to the 2024 SCORP:
 - Outdoor recreation is very popular with residents
 - Local and state recreation areas are frequented the most
 - Publicly accessible private lands are also important
 - The most popular activities are walking, running, and/or dog-walking



Supporting the Outdoor Recreation Economy



- The outdoor recreation tourism economy includes spending by visitors on things like food, lodging, and transportation.
- In 2023, visitors to New Hampshire:
 - Spent \$7.5 billion including \$668 million on the arts, entertainment, and recreation subcategory
 - Supporting 53,300 jobs and \$2.3 billion in labor income
- The overall outdoor recreation economy includes spending by both residents and visitors. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis outdoor recreation, in 2023, accounted for:
 - \$3.9 billion in value added
 - 3.4% of state GDP
 - 32,000 jobs



Facilitating Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Associated Recreation



- Publicly accessible lands are critical to wildlife recreation
- The 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation estimates:
 - 830,000 New Hampshire residents aged 16 and older participated in wildlife-associated recreation activities
 - Residents and non-residents spent \$5.2 billion on wildlife associated recreation in New Hampshire during the calendar year



Health Care Cost Savings



- Open space provides numerous health benefits
- Recreational activities improve health and reduce health care spending
- According to the 2024 SCORP:
 - 85% of respondents identified the improvement of overall health as an important benefit of outdoor recreation participation
 - 89% of respondents identified stress reduction as an important benefit of outdoor recreation participation
 - 84% of respondents agreed that participation in outdoor recreation helps them to appreciate life more



Thank you

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Presenter name, title

Organization

Email

More information available from

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

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Available at www.forestsociety.org

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

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