

1972

G. National and State Trails System

New Hampshire has been long famous for its comprehensive system of foot trails which has evolved during the past century, principally in the White Mountains. These trails have been cut and maintained through the cooperative efforts of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Dartmouth Outing Club, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Randolph Mountain Club, the United States Forest Service, the State Parks System, and other conservation-minded, recreation-oriented organizations.

Backbone of the trail system in New Hampshire is the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, constituted by the linking of many previously existing trails into one major trail route across the Granite State. It traverses New Hampshire in a southwesterly-northeasterly direction, entering the state at Hanover, passing over the highest ridges and peaks of the White Mountains, and crossing into Maine along the Mahoosuc Range north of Shelburne, New Hampshire. Overall, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a continuous, marked foot path extending from Mt. Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia, a distance of more than 2,000 miles.

In New Hampshire the Appalachian National Scenic Trail covers approximately 150 miles, with 101 miles over land in public ownership (Federal and state), and 49.8 miles over private lands. With 66.9 percent of the trail's length in New Hampshire in public ownership, the integrity of the Trail right-of-way is ensured to a great extent. There remains concern, however, for the length of the trail in private ownership. It was this concern for the protection of the entire Appalachian Trail right-of-way, as well as similar feeling in the West for the Pacific Crest Trail, which was a factor in the creation and passage of the National Trails Systems

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Quality of environment also includes values of the mini-landscape (the individual picnic site, camping area, boat launching site). For instance, if a camper finds that the area in which he is camping is crowded, dirty, poorly designed, inadequate, or noisy, the quality of his camping experience is lessened. Thus, the quality of facilities of the recreation resources and the environment in which they are found relates directly to the quality of the recreation values inherent in the area.

"It is also indicative that the quality of the environment reflects the opinion that man and his society have of themselves. Man can provide quality in his environment - if he wants to."*

Environmental despoliation is not an inevitable result of growth and progress. Rather, it is the result of poor planning or ill-conceived development. There is opportunity for progress while maintaining the beautiful environment we want, and shape our private and public programs to bring it about.

An inventory of classes and specific locations of sites and places with value for recreation and leisure use is an appropriate and useful element of the New Hampshire Outdoor Recreation Plan. Also an important consideration of the Plan is current regulations that involve environmental quality and resource protection.

Special Areas Requiring Protection

Essentially, in New Hampshire there are three types of recreational areas requiring resource protection; scenic, natural, and historic. The relationship of scenic quality and natural value are often interrelated. The quiet, natural setting of a woodland beaver pond is aesthetically pleasing as well as environmentally significant. More specifically, types of areas which require resource protection are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Rivers and Floodplains. Rivers and flood plains should be preserved through planning and programming for water resource development. Floodplains provide natural, open and often undeveloped spaces that offer opportunities for wildlife and recreational development. In some cases, water development projects are designed and built in such a way that some of the natural area is destroyed. It is proposed that flood control and other water resource development programs and projects seek to retain and restore natural channels, vegetation, and fish and wildlife habitats on rivers and streams. Many of our streams serve as corridors of natural and scenic areas. The state should establish necessary controls for the lands adjoining natural and scenic areas to protect their natural beauty and prevent those land uses which would damage their quality, both natural and man made.

Wetlands and High Elevations. Special emphasis is given to these two particular natural resources in the belief that they provide critically needed environment which needs to be preserved. Certain flora and fauna species survive only because these wetlands, both freshwater and tidal, exist. The same is true for high elevations which provide a unique environment for the northeastern United States. For the recreationist who wants nothing more than to view such preserved areas, further attempts should be made at so doing. For the hiker, fisherman and naturalist, the benefits are obvious.

* Bureau of Planning, Minnesota Department of Conservation, Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Plan - 1968, p. 107.

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ISSUE TWO: NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

New Hampshire is fortunate to have a natural resource base of quality. Protection of these natural resources is, without a doubt, a priority within the State's conservation community. Over the years, through cooperative efforts, governments, organizations and individuals have worked tirelessly to identify and protect New Hampshire's unique, irreplaceable resources.

Much of value is already under protection. Wilderness areas have been set aside in the White Mountain National Forest. The National Landmarks Program has designated several outstanding sites throughout the State. Between its two land managing agencies, the Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Fish and Game Department, the State owns over 115,000 acres of land. Some of these lands are indeed considered unique and irreplaceable; for instance, the Pine River State Forest/Heath Pond Bog/Ossipee Lake State Park complex. The State has acquired properties with natural resource protection in mind, just as a number of private organizations have acquired important parcels of land for protection purposes. In a cooperative effort between the public and private sectors, programs to identify and protect endangered species and natural areas have also been instituted. Yet, much remains unprotected.

Community development and energy development pressures are increasing at a rapid pace. As there is still much work to do if New Hampshire's resource base is to be conserved, as well as developed, further cooperation efforts between the public and private sectors is necessary.

1986-87 Action Agenda

Federal

- . Promote the Atlantic Salmon and Shad restoration programs in the Merrimack and Connecticut River basins. Ongoing (FWS)
- . Support of the Peregrine restoration work being conducted. Ongoing (FWS)
- . Monitor and comment upon hydropower and other developments as they affect fish and wildlife resources. Ongoing (FWS)
- . Support the National Landmarks nomination process, designations, registration and cooperation with states. Ongoing (NPS)
- . Continue the study of Wildcat Brook for the purposes of inclusion in the Federal Wild and Scenic River System. Calendar year 1986. (NPS)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Stewardship Of The Natural Resource Base For Outdoor Recreation

GOAL: Insure that the quality and quantity of the natural resource base is maintained or enhanced as recreation pressures increase.

I. Objective: Continue to support efforts to identify and protect open space lands.

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to land acquisition efforts focused on natural areas/lands identified in existing local, regional, or state plans (e.g. lands might include forests, wetlands, rare natural communities, coastal areas, agricultural lands, etc.).
- B. Support efforts to secure permanent state funding for LCHIP (e.g. encourage groups to endorse and support Citizens for Land and Community Heritage).
- C. Support efforts to secure continued funding for federal programs (e.g. stateside LWCF funding, Forest Legacy, TEA-21, EPA Brownfields, Farm Bill etc.).
- D. Support comprehensive statewide and regional planning for open space, recreation corridors, and greenways (e.g. State, regional, and local open space plans, trail plans etc.).
- E. Educate the public on plans that currently exist (NH Living Legacy Project, Hanover Open Space Plan, etc.).
- F. Expand efforts to fund conservation for outdoor recreation at the local level (e.g. encourage communities to consider open space bonds and/or earmarking all or a portion of the local land use change tax for conservation purposes).
- G. Encourage state, regional, and municipal partnerships with non-profits and land trusts to acquire and protect locally significant open space lands (e.g. New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, Center for Land Conservation Assistance).
- H. Target specific purchases in areas of the state where the fastest growth and usage is taking place (e.g. protect lands near areas experiencing increased development pressure to protect open space lands and recreational opportunities close to home).
- I. Target purchases that protect hydrological units or create or link large contiguous blocks of lands for wildlife and people.
- J. Support efforts to protect scenic views (e.g. encourage and give incentives to landowners to keep fields mowed. Examples might include the NH Fish and Game small grants programs for wildlife or establishing incentives through existing programs like Current Use).

- II. Objective:** Address environmental and cultural resource impacts from existing recreational facilities and when new recreation facilities/opportunities are developed.

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that help redistribute recreational use away from ecologically sensitive areas.
- B. Address impacts to important resources such as wildlife, water quality, rare or endangered species, cultural/historic resources, and sensitive areas when planning and designing trails/facilities and coordinate with affected agencies early in the planning process (e.g. coordinate efforts with NH Natural Heritage Inventory, Division of Historical Resources, etc.).
- C. Evaluate the role tourism and outdoor recreation marketing and development play in creating both positive and negative environmental and cultural resource impacts.
- D. Expand coordinated state review efforts of new development plans on state lands (e.g. State Land Management Team).
- E. Continue existing programs focused on resource protection (e.g. Volunteer Lake Assessment Program, Lakes Lay Monitoring Program, DES Exotic Species Program, NH Living Legacy Project, State Conservation & Rescue Archaeology Program, etc.).
- F. Expand partnerships and initiatives aimed at promoting the use of recreational equipment that utilize cleaner, more environmentally friendly technologies (e.g. NH Clean Marine Initiative).

- III. Objective:** Address long-term stewardship issues on existing parcels and when parcels are protected or developed.

Strategies:

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that have a prepared stewardship plan in place.
- B. Continue to address enforcement and enforceability of existing environmental laws (e.g. support increased enforcement by State agencies and examine existing limitations given current staff and funding levels).
- C. Encourage and assist landowners in preparing stewardship plans on existing parcels.
- D. Emphasize the importance of stewardship when lands are protected by the state, municipalities and other organizations (e.g. LCHIP requires a stewardship plan to be developed in order to receive grant funding for fee-owned lands and easements.).

- E. Utilize and promote technical assistance programs for providing consultation when parcels are protected (e.g. Center for Land Conservation Assistance, local land trusts, NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture, OSP).
- F. Develop partnerships with recreational user groups to steward lands.
- G. Improve information and educational efforts aimed at addressing stewardship concerns and issues faced by both public and private entities.

SELECTED CONTACTS & INFORMATION SOURCES

- National Center for Recreation & Conservation (www.ncrc.nps.gov/)
- National Park Service, Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/)
- Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (www.lchip.org/)
- DRED – Division of Parks and Recreation (www.nhparks.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (www.des.state.nh.us/)
- Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (www.spnhf.org/)
- The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (www.nhacc.org/nhacc.htm)
- NHFG Non Game and Endangered Wildlife Program (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/nongame_page.htm)
- New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory (www.nhdfl.org/formgt/nhiweb/index.htm)
- New Hampshire Chapter of the Nature Conservancy (www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/newhampshire/)
- Audubon Society of New Hampshire (www.nh.audubon.org/)
- New Hampshire Lakes Association (www.nhlakes.org/)