

9. Open Space

Draft Update of 1/31/2011

DRAFT

OPEN SPACE

Typically, open space is defined as any lands that remain in a natural and undeveloped condition that contribute ecological, scenic or recreational value. The definition of open space may be expanded to include working lands (forests, agriculture, field corners, fence rows and abandoned pastures) and managed green space such as golf ranges, parks, and recreation areas. The terms ‘natural environment’ and ‘natural resources’ are used to broadly describe air, water, and land resources including, but not limited to, scenic qualities, air quality, aquifers, streams, soils, plants and animals.

These natural features form an integrated natural network or “**green infrastructure**” in which the town’s built environment and its key cultural and historic resources are embedded. The open space and green infrastructure provides the ecosystem services required to sustain a vibrant and healthy community.

The green infrastructure comprises the land and resources that, if protected from development or degradation, should ensure that the services provided by the natural environment to Danville’s residents could be sustained.

Open space provides many benefits: 1) recreation; 2) buffer areas between developments; 3) screening for unsightly features; 4) pleasant scenery, visual relief, maintenance of rural character; 5) food production; 6) wildlife habitat; 7) soil and other natural resource conservation; 8) air purification and production of oxygen; 9) groundwater retention and recharge; and 10) flood control. As development continues to expand into new areas, Danville needs to take steps to ensure that open space areas are preserved and managed wisely.

Open space can be defined as sites having natural resources worthy of conservation or protection. It can be comprised of areas that contain forests, farmland, floodplains, or wetlands. Open space can also be scenic vistas, recreational areas, or historic landscapes.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Forests:

Danville is very fortunate to have its own Town Forest and small part of the Rockrimmon State Forest. The original 55 acre and 20 acre “parsonage lands” were acquired in 1761 for ministry support. A forest type map of the parsonage lands was drawn by the state’s forestry department in 1938, several months after the hurricane. Today, the Town Forest is more than 400 acres and provides many benefits to the Town. The Danville Conservation Commission used Conservation Funds to survey the Town Forest Lands in anticipation of placing a Conservation Easement on the property. In addition, a new 20 acre parcel of land south of the Hersey Road (so-called) was purchased with conservation funds.

In general, forests are highly valued as areas of ecological stability that help to protect soil, promote clean air and water, and provide wildlife habitat and renewable energy resources. Forests also contribute to the rural setting of the Town. Forests serve many social, ecological, educational, and economical purposes.

With increasing residential development, the Town is experiencing a steady loss of forested land. According to the UNH Department of Forest Resources, Danville had 6290 acres in 1953, 5990 acres in 1974, and 5035 acres in 1982. The Town should seek to have forest lands of manageable size (greater than ten acres) preserved and utilized for their aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits.

Public and private forests provide the townspeople with further benefits:

- 1) Provide areas for outdoor recreation such as hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling;
- 2) Provide local sources of outdoor education in forestry, nature studies, and wildlife; and
- 3) Foster a greater sense of community by adding to the quality of community life. Municipal officials should monitor the lands surrounding the Town Forest in the event that these lands become available for Town acquisition.

Proper management of public and private forests allows multiple forest uses. The goals and strategies of proper management are best described in a forest management plan. A forest plan is important for the following reasons.

- 1) The plan describes to citizens the administration of public resources and provides continuity of land management.
- 2) Managed forests stands have greater timber yields, thus greater revenues from wood sales;
- 3) A management plan may increase the Town's eligibility for federal assistance for forest management practices through the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS); and
- 4) If Town lands are well managed, the townspeople are more apt to support the Town forest activities and may choose to deed their land to the Town, or manage their own lands better.

A Forest Management Plan for the Town Forest was developed for the Forestry Committee in 2002 by a NH Licensed Forester. The management plan includes the location, history, descriptions of timber stands and site factors (i.e., wildlife, water, soils), maps, forest management objectives, management recommendations, and a schedule for plan implementation.

A management plan should be flexible in order to reflect any changes in the Town's objectives or demands. Typically, a plan is reassessed every 5 to 10 years. A NH Licensed forester should evaluate the effectiveness of any programs implemented, collect new data, and make new recommendations. .

Town Forest Management

An important component of planning is setting clear short-and long-term goals and objective. These must be realistic and based on the forest's current condition and its potential capability. Goals and objectives can include:

- Protection of water resources
- Protection and/or enhancement of wildlife habitat
- Protection of native plants and animals
- Recreational development
- Maintenance or enhancement of scenery and aesthetics
- Periodic income

- Timber production

Forest Sustainability

Forest sustainability involves all resources and amenities provided by the forest: trees shrubs and herbaceous plants; water and scenery; soil bacteria, fungi and nutrients; wildlife and insects. It requires trade-offs and compromises among competing uses and the balancing of individual and society need, rights, and responsibilities. Forests in Danville are both public and private.

Good Forestry in the Granite State provides the following principles that are adapted from the Northern Forest Lands Council Principles of Sustainability and the Society of American Foresters Task Force *Report on Sustaining Long-Term Forest Health and Productivity*. The principles are interrelated and equally important.

- Maintain the structural, functional, and compositional integrity of the forest as an ecosystem, through:
 - Maintenance of soil productivity;
 - conservation of water quality, wetlands, and riparian zones;
 - maintenance or creation of a healthy balance of forest size classes;
 - conservation and enhancement of habitats that support a full range of native flora and fauna;
 - protection of unique or fragile natural areas.
- Meet the diverse needs of the human community, through:
 - Continuous flow of timber, pulpwood, and other forest products;
 - improvements of the overall quality of the timber resource as a foundation for more value added opportunities;
 - addressing aesthetic impacts of forest harvesting;
 - continuation of opportunities for traditional recreation.

Farmland:

Even though there is very little land in Danville that is actively being farmed, much of the Town contains very good agricultural soil. The USDA Soil Conservation Service classifies agriculturally productive land into four categories:

- 1) Prime Farmland -- land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.
- 2) Unique Farmland -- land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

- 3) Farmland of Statewide Importance -- land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.
- 4) Farmland of Local Importance -- In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. In places, additional farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

Areas containing these farmland soils and are of significant size are depicted on maps in this plan. With only a few sites containing very good agricultural soil, and even fewer farms still active, Danville should act to protect and preserve these resources. Preservation methods are outlined in the section "Planning Approaches for Open Space Protection."

Wetlands:

Wetlands provide many benefits yet pose significant development constraints. Wetlands severely restrict all types of building development because of high water tables, poor drainage, slow percolation rates for septic systems, highly unstable conditions for foundations, and susceptibility to flooding. Costs to overcome these limitations and the associated environmental damage typically prohibit development.

The benefits wetlands provide to a community are discussed in the Water Resources section of this plan. Briefly, these include: wildlife habitat; silt and nutrient absorption; stabilization of ground and surface water levels; and flood water storage.

Danville contains a considerable amount of wetland soils, most of which surround the Town's streams. The Conservation Commission and Planning Board have done a fine job toward preserving wetlands. A wetland conservation district ordinance, prepared by these two volunteer groups, was adopted at Town Meeting 1986. As a result, the wetlands will be further protected from encroachment and preserved as a vital natural resource.

Surface Waters:

Danville has a dense network of interconnected streams, rivers and ponds fringed by extensive floodplain wetlands and wetland complexes. Numerous isolated small ponds and open water wetlands are also scattered across the landscape between floodplain and upland areas.

Two of Danville's largest tributaries – the Exeter River and the Powwow River – serve as surface water sources for public drinking water supplies in Exeter, NH and Amesbury, MA respectively.

Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA)

The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act was enacted by the NH legislator in 2008. The

statute cites as it's purpose that:

"The shorelands of the state are among its most valuable and fragile natural resources and their protection is essential to maintain the integrity of public waters" and therefore "There is great concern throughout the state relating to the utilization, protection, restoration and preservation of shorelands because of their effect on state waters."

Within the 250 foot Protected Shoreland, the CSPA requires a 150 foot natural woodland buffer, a 50 foot waterfront buffer and a 50 foot primary building setback. Refer to RSA 483-B for more detailed information about additional requirements of the CSPA.

Long Pond, Little Cub Pond, Cub Pond, and the Exeter River (fourth order or greater stream) are under the jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act. Refer to Figure 9-2 at the end of this section.

As shown in Figure 9-2, a significant number of smaller streams (third order and lesser) are not protected under the CSPA. While zoning ordinances and development regulations can include protections such as buffers and setbacks, land protection and open space preservation offer permanent protection of surface water resources including the adjacent uplands, riparian corridors and floodplains.

Aquifers:

Danville has extensive stratified drift aquifers situated mostly in the Exeter River and Powwow River drainages, with a small isolated portion in the headwater areas of Colby Brook. The transmissivity of these aquifers are at the lower range at less than 1,000 feet squared per day (or 7,481 gallons per day per feet).

Generally, stratified drift deposits consist of sorted layers of gravel, sand, silt and clay of glacial origin. Drinking water wells located in these deposits are typically shallow and can often be affected by seasonal changes in the groundwater table and contamination from land based activities. Therefore land uses that pose high risk for contamination of groundwater and surface waters (i.e. involving hazardous substances, excavation or subsurface infiltration/injection) should be limited in these areas to protect the quality of drinking water supplies.

Impervious surfaces can hinder the natural process of groundwater recharge from precipitation and snowmelt. While proper site development and stormwater management standards can help to preserve groundwater recharge in developing areas, land protection and open space preservation offer permanent protection of highly valuable aquifers and groundwater resources.

Floodplains:

Flooding from rivers and large brooks is a primary consideration in assessing the development potential of land. In 1975, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development/Federal Insurance Administration (HUD/FIA) mapped the flood hazard areas in Danville for use in the flood insurance program. This flood zone was designated for the 100 year storm based on topography and previous flooding history.

As is true for the Town's wetlands, the 100-year flood zone surrounds the major water courses flowing through Danville. The largest zone lies in the Exeter River drainage in northwest quadrant of Town. Development should be located away from these low-lying areas because of the potential for flooding and the unstable soil conditions.

Now that Danville has its flood hazard areas identified, the Town should work toward joining the National Flood Insurance Program. For Danville to qualify for this federally sponsored insurance, it must enact and maintain in force adequate land use control measures for floodprone areas.

It would be to the Town's advantage to become eligible for flood insurance, not only so the Town residents can obtain the insurance (which otherwise would be far too expensive), but also to obtain municipal coverage and ensure implementation of sound floodplain management practices. A possible result of adopting floodplain regulations would be a very attractive "greenbelt", used for scenic and recreational enjoyment, along the Town's flood-prone streams.

Wildlife and Habitat:

New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan

In 2006 the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department collaborated with partners in the conservation community to create the state's first Wildlife Action Plan. The New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan (NHWAP) is a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy that examines the health and distribution of wildlife and habitat types across the state. The plan includes maps of exemplary and high quality wildlife habitat types for each NH community and prescribes specific actions to conserve wildlife and vital habitat before they become scarce and more costly to protect.

Based on the NHWAP maps, Danville has the following wildlife and habitat resources:

- Areas of highest ranked wildlife habitat located primarily in the Exeter River floodplain and adjacent uplands in the northwest corner of town (see Figure 9-3), and
- Critical wildlife habitat types including: Hemlock-Hardwood Pine, Appalachian Oak-Pine, Peatland, Floodplain Forest and Grassland (see Figure 9-4).

Refer to maps of these resources in Figures 9-3 and 9-4 at the end of this Section.

Slope:

Slope is a very important consideration in land use planning because it affects the land's capability to supporting development. Typically, development on steep slopes (>25%) causes negative environmental impacts such as increased runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and pollution. Moreover, the costs for the design and construction of buildings and septic systems, as well as the risks of septic system failure, are very high. For these reasons, development in very steep areas should be discouraged.

Despite hillsides being unsuitable for development, they are well suited for recreation and open space. Scenic vistas are common along Danville's hillsides, especially in the Rockrimmon State

Forest area.

Recreational Areas:

As stated in the 1980 Master Plan, assorted trails throughout the Town provide the principal mode of outdoor recreation. The plan also cited three problems:

- 1) overuse of trails by non-residents;
- 2) incompatible of recreational uses, such as trail biking and horse riding; and
- 3) sections of trails being privately owned.

The 1980 plan recommended that:

- a scheme of tax incentives be developed to encourage landowners to give easements for trail use; and
- a detailed plan be developed for enforcement of resident-only use and use restrictions.

Historic Landscapes:

Danville's parsonage land, established in 1766, is a prime example of an historic landscape. This land continues to help support the parsonage and is used as the Town forest as well. This site should be preserved, if not expanded, for its historical significance, as well as for its forest land benefits.

A natural resource inventory has been undertaken by the newly established Heritage Commission. These resources are more fully addressed in the Historic Resources Chapter.

PLANNING APPROACHES FOR OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

The previous section described the benefits of different types of open space lands. Some areas of notable value were mentioned as well. However, for a more complete analysis of lands worthy of protection, a natural resource inventory should be performed.

Benefits of Open Space Preservation

Open space preservation serves multiple goals within a community and provides the following benefits:

- ✓ Attracts investment by residents and businesses seeking high quality of life
- ✓ Revitalizes town and village centers
- ✓ Supports a resource based tourism economy
- ✓ Helps prevent flooding and flood related damage
- ✓ Protects farms and agricultural lands
- ✓ Promotes sustainable development patterns
- ✓ Protects environmental resources (water, aquifers, air, forests)
- ✓ Provides recreational and educational opportunities

Danville Open Space Report (2011)

Funded by a grant through the I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP), the

Danville Board of Selectmen worked with staff from the Rockingham Planning Commission to develop the Danville Open Space Report which identifies natural resource protection priorities for open space preservation. The BOS served as the Open Space Task Force for this project. Through a series of meetings, the task force first ranked important natural resources and ultimately selected the following high value resources to guide the open space evaluation process:

- Wetlands, perennial streams, lakes, ponds and the 250' buffer from them
- Unfragmented areas of 50 acres and greater
- NH Wildlife Action Plan highest ranked habitats
- Stratified drift aquifers
- Forested areas

From the resource areas selected, the task force identified lands as part of the “green infrastructure” or lands for priority preservation based on the following additional criteria:

- areas of exceptionally high resource value
- areas where multiple resources occur
- special consideration given to lands near existing conservation lands
- special consideration given to lands that allow public access to open space
- excluded areas slated for industrial or commercial development, unless they contain exceptionally high quality resources
- included at least 25 percent of the Town’s land area to ensure the sustainability of natural processes, while reserving 50 percent of this land to allow for future development

The results of this open space evaluation process are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Lands identified for priority open space preservation by rank and acreage

Ranking	# of Parcels	Acreage
High Priority	58	1,315.7
Medium Priority	103	1,340.3
Total	161	2,655.3
Priority parcels = 35.8% of total town land area (7,569 acres)		
Existing Conservation Land	20	650.6

The Danville Open Space Report can serve as a guidance document for the community to implement planning and resource protection initiatives, and capital improvement and budgetary decisions relating to land and resource preservation. The plan can guide voluntary efforts to implement land conservation easements and promote stewardship of both private and public lands.

Open Space Preservation Methods

Priorities for land protection could then be set based on environmental benefits, imminent threat, accessibility, scenic beauty, recreational potential, fragility, and scarcity. The next step would be to piece together a protective strategy using an appropriate combination of approaches.

- 1) Land Purchase (fee-simple interest): Purchase of land will give the Town ultimate control

over its use, but may also be the most expensive means of land acquisition. However, federal and state matching grants can greatly reduce purchase costs.

- 2) **Option or Right of First Refusal:** If landowners are not interested in any permanent protection method, they may be willing to grant an option or right of first refusal to the Town. An option establishes a price at which the Town could purchase the land any time during a specified period of years. A right of first refusal guarantees the Town the opportunity to purchase the land for a price equal to a bonafide offer from another party. It provides a legal means for the Town to become aware of a potential sale and an opportunity to respond.
- 3) **Purchase and Resale:** An increasingly necessary option the Town should consider is the purchase of the property and subsequent resale of all or part with restrictions or limited development opportunities. In this way, the Town may be able to recoup more than its purchase cost through some creative planning and tasteful development on that part of the land not critical to open space benefits.
- 4) **Bargain Purchase:** Buying the land for less than its fair market value reduces the purchase price for the Town and offers tax deductions to the seller. The difference between the fair market value and the bargain sale price may be used as a charitable donation by the landowner. Used in concert with the Land and Water Conservation Funds or Pitman-Robertson funds administered through the Department of Resource and Economic Development, a bargain sale of 50% could eliminate any expense for the Town.
- 5) **Easements (less-than-fee interests)** can be implemented in various ways depending upon the desired outcome and level of protection sought. Both of the methods described below provide tax benefits to the landowner.
 - **Conservation Easement:** Landowners who do not want to develop their land can sell or, more commonly, give a conservation easement to the Town, and yet retain some property rights themselves. A conservation easement places perpetual restrictions on land use and provides for long term enforcement by the Town. The Town may also work with local (The Rockingham Land Trust), state (The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests), or national organizations (The Trust for Public Lands) in acquiring these easements. Finally, a well drafted Cluster Ordinance may be the impetus for the development and donation of easements that are part of the development themselves.
 - **Purchase of Development Rights:** Landowners sell the development rights to the Town, state, or private conservation entity, thereby permanently protecting their land from development, and reaping certain tax benefits.

Regulation and Zoning:

Through regulation of land use and growth patterns, Danville can conserve open space areas in the interest of environmental quality and public health and welfare. To achieve this, specific

regulatory approaches might be considered such as the establishment of a shoreland protection district and an aquifer protection district. Another method is to allow cluster development in certain areas, so that a portion of the property can be designated and restricted by deed to remain undeveloped.

In 2005, Danville adopted a Cluster/Open Space Development ordinance (Zoning Ordinance Article IV Permitted Uses and Regulations, Section A Cluster/Open Space Development). The following provisions of this ordinance enhance and encourage preservation of open space:

- Its purpose is to “encourage flexibility in the design and development of land, while promoting its most efficient use, as well as preserving natural features and open space.”
- The open space for all Cluster/Open Space Developments shall be separately set aside and not be less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the gross land area of the development.
- All open space shall be contiguous and shall provide for connected corridors of undeveloped land.

Tax Incentives:

- 1) Donation: Land owners who donate their land, or execute easement restrictions, can receive tax benefits in the form of federal income tax deductions, potential estate tax benefits, and relief from property taxes.
- 2) Current Use Assessment Program: Authorized by NH RSA 79-A, this property tax abatement program generally provides for reduced property assessments on parcels of field, farm, forest and wetland of 10 acres or more or on "natural preserves" of any size, recreational land of any size, or farmland generating more than \$2,500 annually.

Government and Non-Profit Programs:

- Designation of Prime Wetlands: Prime wetlands are designated by a municipality according to the requirements of RSA 482-A: 15 and Chapter Env-Wt 700 of the DES administrative rules. Under the statute and rules, towns may evaluate and designate wetlands within their borders as "prime wetlands" based on the value of their physical and biological characteristics (i.e. size, unspoiled character, fragility or uniqueness). Once prime wetlands are designated, the NH Wetlands Board is required to give special consideration to these areas. Once designated, the NH DES will apply to any future projects that are in or within 100 feet of a prime wetland the rules and law that are applicable. All projects that are in or within 100 feet of a prime wetland are classified as major projects for the purpose of permitting. The Wetlands Board will not issue a dredge and fill permit for prime wetlands: 1) without a public hearing; and 2) if the proposed project impairs the value of the wetland.
- The former program Acquisition of Agricultural Land Development Rights administered by the Agricultural Land Preservation Committee (ALPC) was designed to save important farmland throughout New Hampshire through the purchase of land development rights in order to limit the land's use to agricultural production

The NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) holds all easements on lands previously designated by the ALPC as an "agricultural preservation restriction area".

-- Trust for New Hampshire Lands: This is a nonprofit corporation formed in the fall of 1986 by representatives from the business, conservation, and government sectors. There are two primary goals set for the Trust:

- 1) protect up to 100,000 acres of prime natural land throughout the state for conservation and recreation purposes; and
- 2) enable towns to identify and retain important natural landscape that enhance the community's character.

The Trust wants to accomplish its land preservation goals through voluntary negotiation with landowners, and will rely on land protection methods such as land acquisition, conservation easements, and purchase of development rights. The Trust will seek \$50 million in bonds from the state over a 5 year period. A portion of this money will be available as a match to towns.

-- Federal programs: There are several federal grant programs for the purchase of conservation land:

1) The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1965. The Act designated that a portion of receipts from offshore oil and gas leases be placed into a fund annually for state and local conservation, as well as for the protection of our national treasures (parks, forest and wildlife areas). ~~It should be noted that the continuing viability of this program is some doubt.~~ The LWCF program provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program is intended to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high quality recreation areas and facilities and to stimulate non-federal investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States.

2) The N.H. Department of Fish & Game receives Pitman-Robertson Funds which cover 75 percent of the fair market value of lands acquired by the Department for wildlife protection.

3) The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) partners with State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

To qualify for the FRPP, farmland must: be part of a pending offer from a State, tribe, or local farmland protection program; be privately owned; have a conservation plan for highly erodible land; be large enough to sustain agricultural production; be accessible to markets for what the land produces; have adequate infrastructure and

agricultural support services; and have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production.

- Exeter River Watershed Association: This is also a nonprofit citizen organization. Its present goal is to "work towards regional cooperation to protect and improve the health of the Exeter River and its watershed." Since so much of the Exeter River flows through Danville, the Town should continue to participate in this program.
- Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests: A private non-profit organization that has been extremely active throughout New Hampshire that promotes responsible use and land protection for generally larger tracts of forested land throughout the state.
- Southeast Land Trust: The Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire (SELT) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve the significant lands and natural resources of greater Rockingham County, including farmland, working forests, water, wildlife habitat and natural areas, and community landscapes. Depending on a landowner's goals and the natural resources of the property, SELT employs several methods for long-term conservation, including conservation easements, deed restrictions, or transferring full ownership to the Trust. SELT is a membership-based organization that relies on the financial support of hundreds of residents, businesses and other land protection partners throughout southeastern New Hampshire to support its mission.

Conservation Commission:

The Conservation Commission, as well as the Selectmen, play a critical role in the conservation and preservation of open space in Danville. Conservation Commissions typically provide information and instruction to other town officials regarding the open space protection methods described above.

Chapter 36-A of the RSA's establishes the right of a municipality to create a conservation commission for the purpose of "proper utilization and protection of the natural resources and for the protection of watershed resources of said town." The commissions also inventory open space, natural, aesthetic, and ecological areas, marshlands, swamps and other wetlands and make recommendations to the selectmen, on the use of such lands. In addition, RSA 36-A:4 allows the conservation commissions to receive gifts of property or money that are intended for conservation purposes, subject to the approval of the selectmen. The commission is then responsible for managing the acquired land.

In order to identify important areas on which to focus its preservation efforts, the Conservation Commission should undertake a natural resources inventory. Such an inventory would establish areas of critical concern that the Commission should direct its energies toward protecting.

The conservation of valuable and unique natural resources and the preservation of open space is important for Danville. It is one way to maintain the community's character in spite of its continued growth. All the Town boards, especially the Conservation Commission, play a vital role in this endeavor.

Forestry Committee:

The Danville Forestry Committee plays a key role in managing and protecting the Town Forest. RSA 31:112 provides that a Town Forest shall be managed by a Forestry Committee. The goal of the committee is to use sustainable management practices as a model for private forest landowners through outdoor education and workshops; recreational activities; and hands-on work with interested in nature trails and wildlife studies.

The proper management of our forest resources is extremely important to the preservation of open space. It helps to maintain the rural character of the Town. All the Town boards, and especially the Forestry Committee, play a vital role in this endeavor.

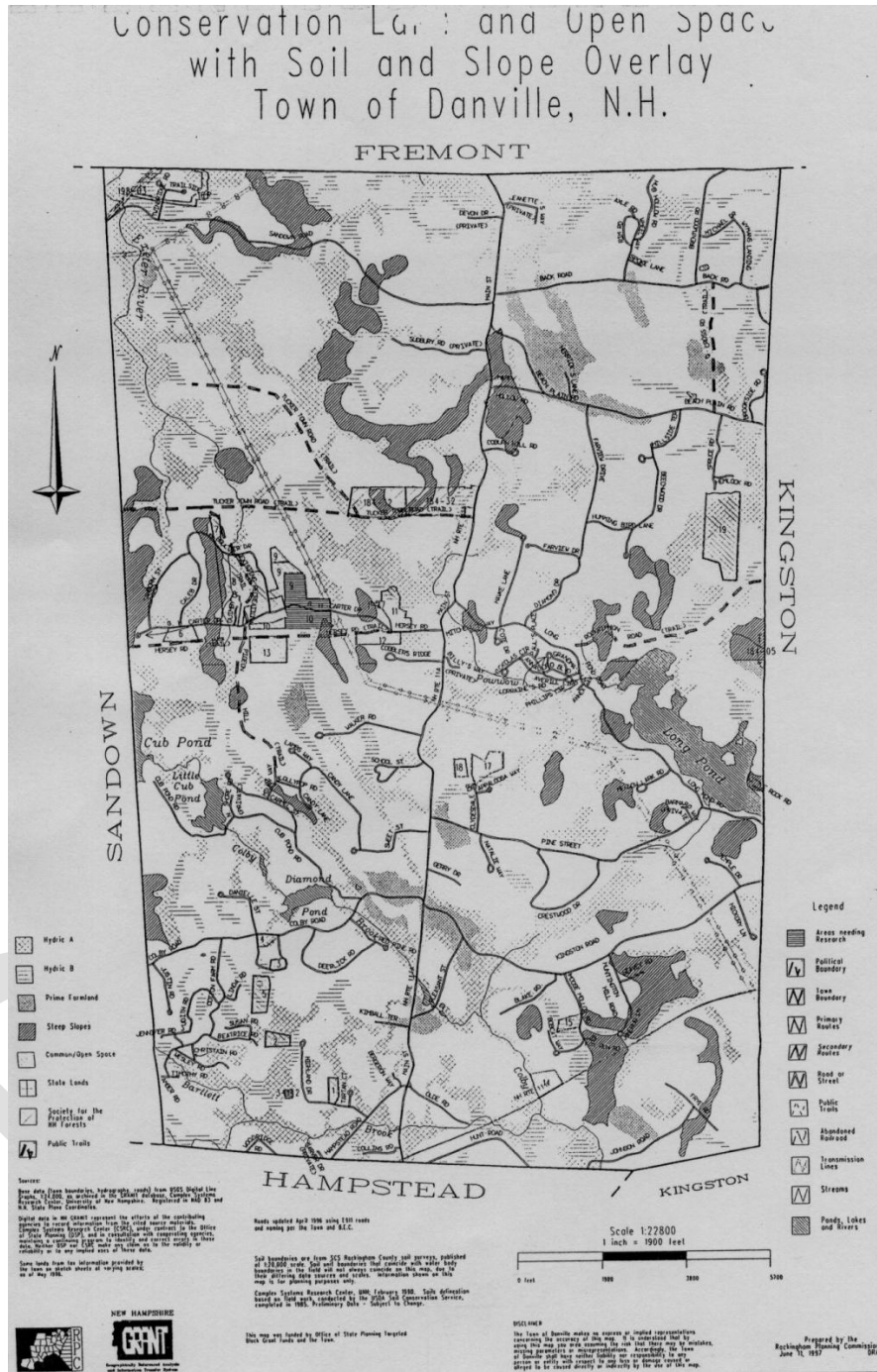
Recommendations Need to review and Update

- 1) Contact the County Extension Service, or Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to help develop a Forest Management Plan.
- 2) ~~Work toward joining the National Flood Insurance Program.~~
- 3) Develop a recreation plan that describes techniques for trail management, and identifies a playing field site for the Town.
- 4) Undertake a natural resource inventory in order to identify prime forestland, farmland, wetland, scenic areas, and historic landscapes.
- 5) Employ regulatory approaches for open space protection such as adopting additional incentives in the Cluster/Open Space Development ordinance, and developing shoreland and aquifer protection zoning.
- 6) Encourage land and conservation easement donations by promoting tax incentives.
- 7) Participate in the federal, state and regional open space protection programs.
- 8) Publicize to citizens the results of the trails work completed by the Conservation Commission and the Rockingham Planning Commission.
- 9) The Planning Board and Conservation Commission should work together with outside organizations to facilitate conservation of land in partnership with the private industry.
- 10) The Heritage Commission should work with landowners in Historic areas to preserve historic landscapes and viewsheds that permit reasonable development thus increasing preservation of open space, property values and preserving the rural character and quality of life present in Danville.
- 11) Consider innovative development, such as Innovative Land Use Controls, as authorized by

RSA 674:21 and as provided in the NH Department of Environmental Services publication *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development (2008, as amended)*, ~~Cluster Development~~ to help preserve open space.

- 12) Continue to develop and set aside a town trail system:
 - Publicize to citizens the results of the recent trails work completed by the Forestry Committee.
 - Develop a recreation plan that describes techniques for trail management.
- 13) Learn more about the State's Wildlife Action Plan:
 - Assist private landowners to identify wildlife habitat management opportunities that may be effective and reasonable.
- 14) Investigate sources of grants to support projects to enhance the forest landscape and wildlife:
 - Establish a Town Forest Trust Fund to receive grants, gifts, donations, and other funds.
- 15) Provide outreach materials such as a newsletter or website to provide information about forest lands in the town:
 - UNH Cooperative Extension publications and educators.
- 16) Recruit volunteers from the community:
 - Individuals, families, civic groups, girl and boy scouts for special projects.
- 17) Learn more about the tree farms and private landowners:
 - Distribute an "Intent- to- Cut" handout to landowners.
 - Visit sites and learn about the goals and objectives of the owner's forest.

Figure 9-1 Conservation Land and Open Space with Soil and Slope Overlay



For reference only. Consult Town Hall for the latest map.

RPC can update this map if requested.

Figure 9-2. Surface waters under the jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA)

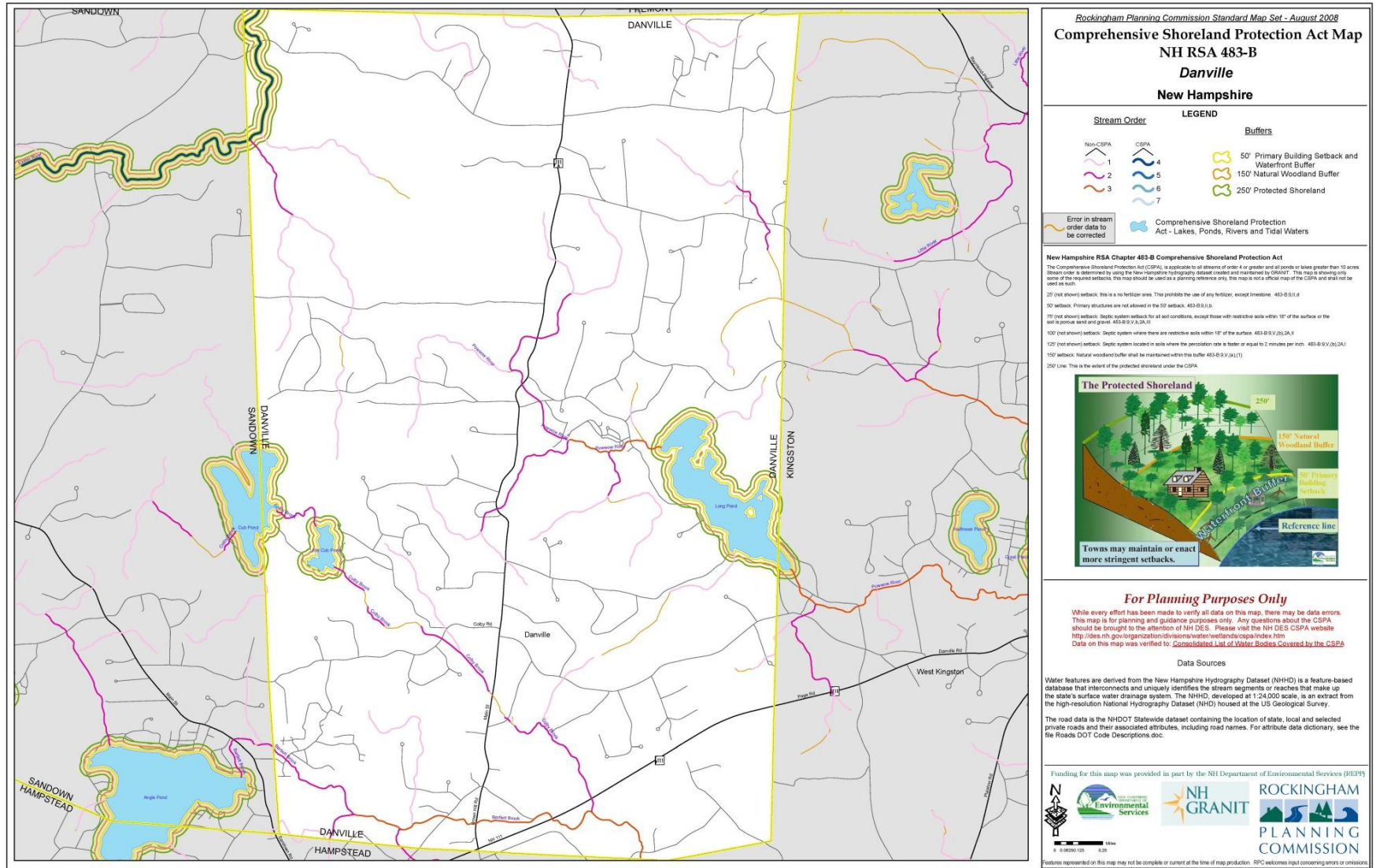


Figure 9-3. NH Wildlife Action Plan areas of highest ranked wildlife habitat

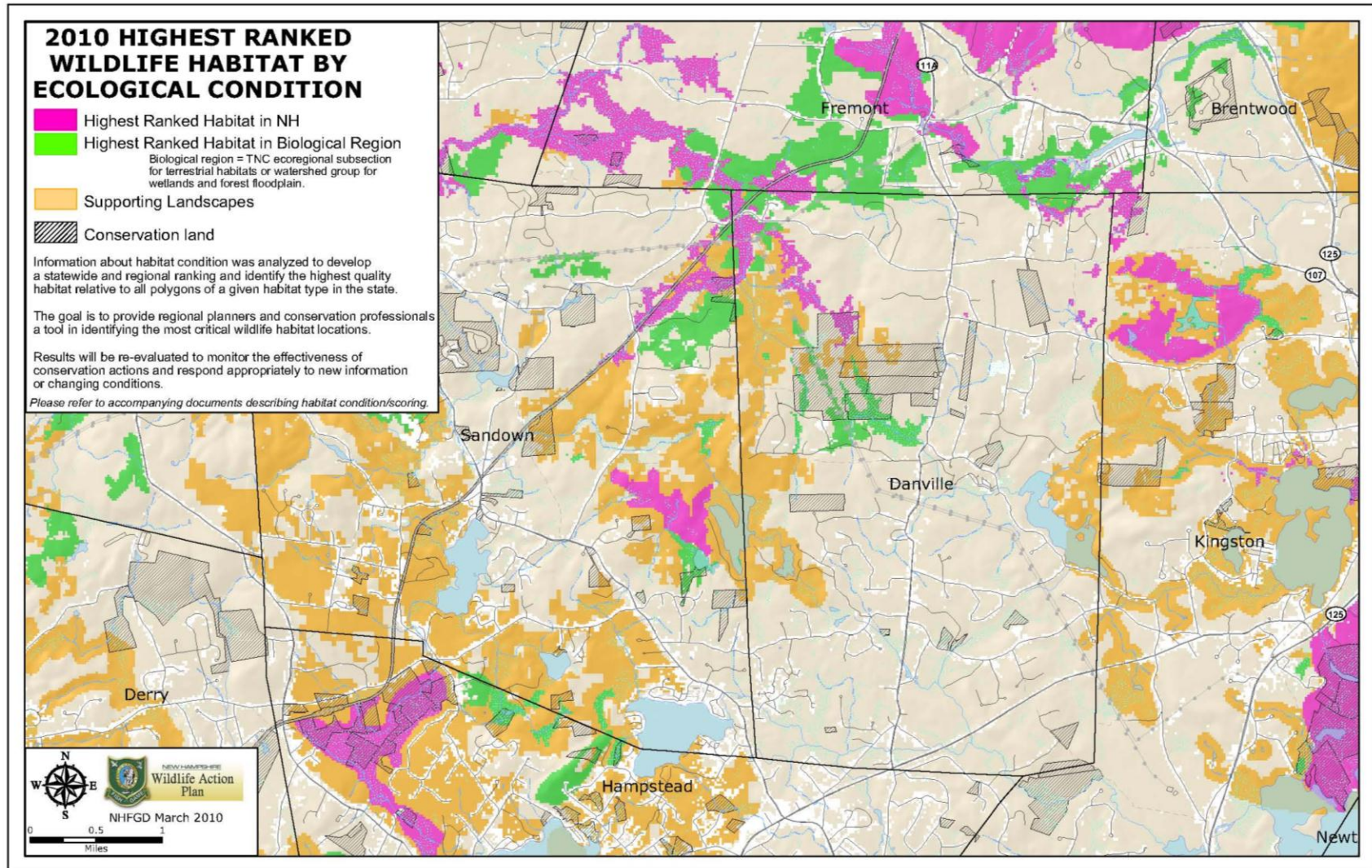


Figure 9-4. NH Wildlife Action Plan critical wildlife habitat types

