

Town of Sandown

I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program

Open Space Report

**Report to the
Sandown Planning Board
and Sandown Board of Selectmen**



*Prepared for the Sandown Open Space Task Force
by the Rockingham Planning Commission*

Draft for March 2011

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The Planning Board of the Town of Sandown wishes to thank the following individuals for volunteering their time and expertise to complete this Open Space Report.

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Cover Photo: Exeter River in winter courtesy of Pam Merrill

This document is for informational and planning purposes only. The Town of Sandown does not intend this document to be used for regulatory purposes and does not constitute any commitment on the part of the town or landowners to implement the recommendations contained herein.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP)

The Sandown Open Space Report was developed as part of Phase 2 of the I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP). CTAP was developed in cooperation with the State of New Hampshire's Department of Transportation, Office of Energy and Planning, Department of Environmental Services, and the Regional Planning Commissions to provide planning assistance to the 26 I-93 corridor communities expected to experience additional growth that may result from the I-93 expansion project. This multi-year initiative provides assistance to these corridor communities to help them meet the wide range of planning and community development challenges in the region. CTAP provides access to technical information and tools to implement innovative land-use planning and resource conservation practices that address the impacts of growth and development including Phase 1 2008-2009 activities: community planning assessments, conservation commission forums, projects funded by technical assistance grants, detailed land use mapping, buildout analyses, and open space planning.

Report Development

To develop the Sandown Open Space Report, the Conservation Commission agreed to serve as the Task Force which includes representation from the following community interests: Board of Selectman, Planning Board, Exeter River Local Advisory Committee, Local Energy Commission, Sandown Republican Committee, environmental and wetland scientists, and residents.

The basis of the Open Space Report was identification of high value resources and their occurrence relative to one another throughout the town. These co-occurrence areas comprise the "Green Infrastructure" or those areas where the high value resources occur in the greatest concentration. The high value resources selected by the Open Space Task Force were:

- ✓ Unfragmented lands of 50 acres or greater
- ✓ Forested lands
- ✓ Wetlands/streams/rivers/lakes/ponds plus their 250 foot buffer
- ✓ NH Wildlife Action Plan Highest Ranked Habitats
- ✓ Land Conservation Plan for NH's Coastal Watersheds – Core Focus Areas
- ✓ Flood hazard areas
- ✓ Stratified drift aquifers

Within the Green Infrastructure, the Task Force identified 167 parcels that if protected would provide significant benefits to the community by preserving open space and valuable ecosystem and natural resource functions (refer to the summary table below).

| Lands of Conservation Priority | Acres |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Priority Parcels (167) | 3,596 |

** Priority parcels represent 39 percent of the total area of Sandown (9,216 acres of land and water)*

The Sandown Open Space Report can serve as a guidance document for the community in implementing planning and resource protection initiatives, and capital improvement and budgetary decisions relating to land and resource preservation. The report can help inform voluntary efforts to implement land conservation easements and promote stewardship of private and public lands.

A. Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Sandown Open Space Task Force was to identify critical resources, and agricultural, open and undeveloped land in Sandown, and to select and prioritize those lands that should be excluded from residential, commercial and industrial growth. In doing so, the Town will sustain the ecosystem services provided by its resource base and maintain the rural character envisioned in Sandown's Master Plan (2005).

Resulting from the planning process completed by the Sandown Open Space Task Force, this report will serve as a guide for future open space planning and land protection in the town. The products developed during the planning process identify where protection is deemed most appropriate, and identify where and how to implement various modes of protection.

B. CTAP Open Space Task Force

The Sandown Open Space Task Force ('Task Force') held four meetings from November 2010 through January 2011. Open Space Task Force members included: Brian Butler, Heidi Chaput, Dave LeFleur, Pam Merrill, Scott Burt, Chuck Crowe, Ed St. Pierre, Steve Brown, Gerry Miller, Roger Barczak, and Mark Traeger

Task Force prioritized and evaluated natural resource information to ultimately identify open space lands most suitable for preservation. The first exercise of the Task Force was to identify the features of the town's natural resources and to assign relative values to rank the various resources. A map showing the distribution of these resources throughout the Town enabled the Task Force to identify the natural network or green infrastructure that links them together. Once key parcels were identified within the network – parcels that linked important resources, habitats and corridors, and were adjacent to or nearby existing conservation lands - the Task Force recommended preservation strategies to guide Sandown's open space protection efforts. The estimated cost associated with achieving preservation of the identified parcels was then determined using local assessment data.

C. CTAP Open Space Report

This report is organized to provide a summary of the Task Force work and recommendations, including the criteria used to evaluate and identify open space resources and lands, analysis of spatial and statistical data, and maps products developed during the open space planning process. Detailed information on the technical methods, meeting minutes and presentation materials considered by the Task Force are contained in the appendices to this report.

There are a number of additional parcels that are not appropriate for town purchase or for easements, but are more appropriately protected through formal or informal voluntary agreements with landowners and as part of development review and approval process.

A. *What is Open Space?*

For the purpose of this report, 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 Sandown’s air, water, and land resources including, but not limited to, the town’s scenery, air quality, aquifers, streams, soils, plants and animals. These 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 green infrastructure provides the ecosystem services required to sustain a vibrant and healthy community.

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 of 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*

B. *Benefits of Preserving Open Space*

Studies from across the nation have demonstrated that farmland open space preservation can provide more revenue to a community than is incurred in expenditures, resulting in a net fiscal benefit. In many instances, the costs associated with support of residential and commercial development often exceed the costs to support farmland and open space. Tax benefits are maximized when a conservation easement is placed on land already enrolled in current use.

A study conducted by the Trust for Public Land (see below *Managing Growth: The Impact of Conservation and Development on Property Taxes in New Hampshire, 2005*) concluded that towns that have the most permanently protected land have slightly lower tax bills on average. It is unlikely that land conservation alone is responsible for these tax benefits. However, land conservation is a tool that shapes the landscape of a community by:

- ✓ helping maintain the rural character of a community,
- ✓ creating more centralized, dense development patterns,
- ✓ creating more efficient municipal service areas, and
- ✓ providing multiple environmental and aesthetic benefits.

Thus, the resulting landscape is a direct result and reflection of the community’s support of open space preservation.

Managing Growth :

The Impact of Conservation and Development on Property Taxes in New Hampshire (Trust for Public Land, 2005)

The Trust for Public Land found that in the short term, land protection, by fully or partially exempting land from taxation, often reduces the tax base and results in a tax increase for a finite period. In the long term, contrary to the common perception that development will bring lower taxes, property tax bills are generally higher in more developed towns than in rural, less developed towns. Further, findings also indicate that tax bills are not higher in the towns that have the most permanently protected land regardless of the method and ownership used to conserve the land.

The study suggests that patterns of growth have an effect on both the livability and affordability of a town. Land conservation can be used as a tool in both protecting resources that contribute to quality of life (from drinking water protection to scenic beauty and recreation), as well as to help guide the path and location of municipal growth to those areas that are most appropriate and that are most cost-effective for towns to service.

In general, it is true that land increases in value when it is developed —thereby adding taxable value to the town’s tax base. However, development usually requires town services—thereby increasing the budget. The tax bill on the typical house is, on average, higher in towns where:

- There are more residents, and/or
- There are more buildings.

In the long term, contrary to the common perception that development will bring lower taxes, property tax bills are generally higher in more developed towns than in rural towns, and towns with more development have higher tax bills.

C. Support for Open Space Preservation

Town and Citizen Support

In 2008, the town utilized a bond to fund acquisition of the Minton Property for open space land preservation. In 2004, the town approved an increase in the percentage of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) dedicated to open space land preservation to 100 percent.

In 2003, the town adopted Article II-Part D Open Space Development ordinance which when voluntarily implemented requires 33 percent open space preservation for residential. The open space preservation land must be platted as common open space to be permanently protected and used for recreational, forestry agricultural and/or conservation purposes pursuant to the provisions of RSA 674:21-a.

The citizens of Sandown have twice supported at town meeting contribution of 100 percent of the LUCT collection to the Conservation Fund for the purpose of land preservation.

Master Plan

Open space and land preservation is strongly supported by the Sandown Master Plan (2005) particularly in the following chapters: Chapter 1-A Community Vision, Chapter 6-Recreation,

Chapter 7-Transportation Chapter 8-Natural Resources, and Chapter 9-Current and Future Land Uses. Following are excerpts from Chapter 8– Natural Resources.

Open space provides numerous benefits to the community including areas for wildlife, walking and hiking, recreation opportunities, and protection of sensitive lands and maintenance of a rural atmosphere. Natural resources play an important role in Sandown and its natural beauty is often noted as one of its prime features. The Statement of Purpose of the recently completed Community Profile was entitled Working Landscape and Natural Environment states: Natural resources and historical assets of a community contribute significantly to the quality of life for residents and play an integral part in defining community character. Streams, rivers, walking trails, working farms, forest, clean air, historic buildings and bridges, wildlife and open land help to determine a community's personality and contribute to the everyday pleasures of community life.



A sustainable community recognizes the importance of these assets and takes appropriate measures to assure their continuance. As the community continues to grow, the protection of open space will increase in importance. Sandown is currently a rural community, but if the recent growth trends continue these existing open space areas will vanish with time.

Key assets and issues regarding Sandown's natural resources were discussed by this group and others, noting such issues as the need to preserving open space and wildlife habitat, walking trails, the Exeter River, development pressure, wetlands, water quality, town forest and access to water bodies. It is clear that the community's natural heritage is a vital component of living in Sandown.

The Exeter River flows through the heart of the community and is a significant water resource in Sandown. A majority of the community is within its watershed, with extensive wetlands and ponds draining to it. This river and wetland corridor provides a natural path for many forms of wildlife. Fishing and canoeing are common on the river. A majority of the land area adjoining the Exeter River is designated as floodplain which restricts its development potential.



Sandown has several ponds - Angle Pond, which partially lies in Hampstead, Phillips Pond, Cub Pond, Lily Pond, Hunt Pond, Showell Pond and Punch Pond. These water bodies provide fishing, swimming and boating opportunities for many residents. Public access to water resources and open spaces should always be a priority. Developing a trails plan to link these features with a series of walking trials will enable the citizens of Sandown to access the resources and features these areas have to offer. The Planning Board should begin negotiating with the development community to obtain trail easements within development projects. This is especially true for developments planned near exiting open space and along the Exeter River.

A summary of the goals, objectives and recommendations from the Sandown Master Plan in support of open space preservation is provided below in Table 2.

TABLE 1. Summary of goals, objectives and recommendations for open space preservation

| Chapter | Goals, Objectives and Recommendations |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chapter 1: A Community Vision | <p>Outcomes from 2003 Sandown Community Profile event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide safe walking and biking areas and trails (Exeter River corridor) ▪ Preserve lakes and streams ▪ Preserve open space, historical buildings, town heritage and natural resources ▪ Improve public boat access and trails to community waterways ▪ Protect natural resources for drinking water, recreation and wildlife, particular emphasis on Exeter River and its headwaters ▪ Update master plan to address growth (low impact) ▪ Maintain land use for recreational activities ▪ Encourage more citizen involvement around natural resources ▪ Provide more wild open space (town owned or conservation easement) |
| Chapter 6: Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide recreational opportunities for residents close to home or a short bike ride away ▪ Provide public access to all public waters (trails, canoe or boat launches) ▪ Develop a town wide trails plan |
| Chapter 7: Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate bike lanes into future road widening projects and new road construction ▪ Require construction of sidewalks and bike lanes as part of site plan and subdivision approvals |
| Chapter 8: Natural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a Forest Management Plan for key town owned properties ▪ Develop a community wide trails, sidewalk and bike path plan ▪ Strive to preserve 25 percent of the town’s land area; As part of this effort, the Conservation Commission should develop and maintain a priority list of land areas or specific parcels that have unique or critical natural resource values. ▪ Protect land abutting surface water resources to ensure adequate water supply, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities ▪ Continue town participation with the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee ▪ Maintain an active and adequately funded land conservation program to ensure resources are available to protect critical natural resources |
| Chapter 9: Current and Future Land Uses | <p>The chapter reports statistics that indicate the lack of open space protected in the community (4.2 percent in 2005), and further states that the town’s location in a rapidly developing area of the state and local demand for residential development will further erode remaining open space lands. Recommendations include: encouraging open space subdivisions by creating incentives to implement this existing zoning ordinance; reducing frontage and setback requirements and shared driveways to promote open space preservation; and mandating growth control.</p> |

Conservation Commission

The Sandown Conservation Commission saw many changes beginning in 2003, with expansion of its members and collectively looking forward to accomplishing short term goals to address the “Conservation” issues facing the Town of Sandown. Following are the long term goals the Commission hopes to accomplish:

- Create buffer zones to protect our wetlands, waterways and surface water bodies
- Increase our inventory of conservation land
- Increase conservation awareness, education and outreach programs
- Develop an Open Space Management Plan (Note - this Open Space Report may serve as a starting point for development of such a plan)
- Develop a Forestry Management Plan
- Develop a network of non-motorized recreation trail

TABLE 2. Land protection efforts by the Sandown Conservation Commission, 2005-2010

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Property</i> | <i>Acres</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>LUCT Funds</i> | <i>Other Funds</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 2005 | Samoisette parcel | 15 | Abuts the original Fremont Road. Town Forest of 37 acres | \$15,000 | -- |
| 2006 | Old Meeting House parcel | 5 | Abuts Cranberry Meadow Road | \$138,000 | -- |
| 2007 | Quaranta parcel | 31 | Abuts Samoisette parcel | \$38,000 | -- |
| 2007 | Webler parcel | 10 | Abuts Cranberry Meadow Road (a Class VI road) | \$330,000 | -- |
| 2008 | Minton parcel | 138 | | \$600,000 | \$1,000,000 bond \$11,000 PREP |
| 2009 | Dingman parcel | 15 | Town purchased a half interest in the property | \$17,000 | -- |
| 2010 | Porter property | 74 | | \$238,000 | \$585,000 NRCS Wetland Reserve Program \$895 PREP |
| Total | | 288 acres preserved from 2005-2010 | | \$1,376,000 | \$1,596,895 |

PREP – Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

TABLE 3. Grant Awards for natural resource study, land protection and public outreach

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Award</i> | <i>Description</i> |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2007 | \$8,000 | PREP Grant for Prime Wetland Study |
| 2007 | \$10,000 | I-93 CTAP Grant for Prime Wetland Study |
| 2008 | \$3,500 | PREP Grant for buffer brochure; this was used to promote the Minton bond and educate on wetland protection |
| 2009 | \$2,300 | PREP Grant for a buffer public outreach brochure |
| 2010 | \$10,000 | I-93 CTAP Collaborative Grant (part of a \$30,000 grant with Danville and Fremont) for Exeter River Bio-Inventory and Wildlife Habitat study, Open Space Report, Wildlife and Habitat Master Plan Chapter, and public outreach |

Municipal Property

Sandown currently owns roughly 122.2 acres of municipal properties of which 25.7 acres are used for municipal buildings, facilities and services, 35.81 acres for recreational facilities, and an additional 194.59 acres acquired through tax liens, right of way, and other types of acquisition.

Conservation Lands

As of December 2010, the town owns 414.31 acres of conservation lands or 4.5 percent of the total town area (9,216 acres of land and water). Many land conservation experts recommend that communities strive to reach the goal of 20-25 percent land preservation. This goal is stated in the town's Master Plan (page 82, Chapter 8 Natural Resources). The Conservation Commission's short term goal through 2015 is to reach 10 percent land preservation town wide.

Land preservation goals can be achieved in a variety of ways, without relying solely on acquisition as the primary preservation method. Land preservation strategies include:

- Purchase of easements and development rights
- Zoning/regulatory protections
- Land use regulations
- Transfer of development rights
- Voluntary conservation easements
- Land and resource management

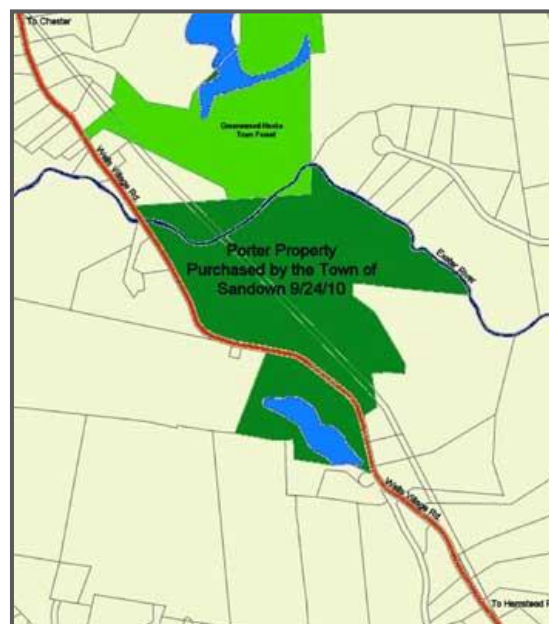
Refer to Section 4.C. on page 13 for more detailed information about these strategies.

The Porter Conservation Property

On Friday September 9, 2010, the Sandown Conservation Commission in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) completed the purchase of 74 acres of protected open space from the children of Ward A. Porter. A parcel of 16 acres (Tax Map 9, Lot 16) surrounding the pond on Wells Village Rd. and a parcel of 58 acres (Tax Map 13, Lot 20) across the road from the pond make up the 74 acres.

The 58 acre parcel abuts Sandown's existing Greenwood-Hooke Town Forest and the Exeter River creating a wildlife corridor of 116 acres and protecting approximately a half mile of the Exeter River with a riparian buffer.

The NRCS provided the majority of the funding with the balance of \$236,000 coming from the Town's Conservation Fund. This fund is made up of revenue from Land Use Change Taxes paid by landowners who develop their land. This new open space contains an old mill site, cellar hole, shoreland, and a system of walkable woods roads. Temporary signage has been put in place at two trail heads.



Exeter River Bio-Inventory Study

The Exeter River Bio-Inventory Study was completed by West Environmental, Inc. in January 2011 with collaborative grant project funds from the I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP). The Exeter River Bio-Inventory study was one of four tasks in a collaborative project between the towns of Danville, Fremont and Sandown to document resources in the Exeter River corridor and develop technical and planning tools to address wildlife and habitat protection within the three towns. Other project tasks included completion of this draft Master Plan Wildlife and Habitat Chapter, completion of an Open Space Report for Sandown, and providing outreach on the collaborative project within the three towns.

Summary of the Study and Findings

The floodplain of the Exeter River in Danville, Fremont and Sandown supports a wide variety of wetland plant communities that protect and enhance water quality of the River filtering surface water and trapping and attenuating pollutants and sediments. Red Maple Forested Swamps, Oxbow Marshes, Buttonbush Swamps and Vernal Pools, can be found in floodplains and these wetlands provide critical habitat for several rare and endangered plant and wildlife species. Habitat for wood turtle, State endangered Blanding's turtle, and spotted turtle is present in these wetlands. Habitat also exists for rare bird species including sedge wren, American and least bittern, pied-billed grebe and American black duck. Mapping and inventorying these habitats will help to provide these three towns the important planning tools. The information collected from this project can be used in future grant requests and to prioritize habitat and water quality protection.

This study included mapping and evaluating wetlands within the FEMA mapped floodplain of the Exeter River in the three towns, field data collection to verify plant communities and wildlife habitats, preparation of final report with maps and data, and presentations of the report and its findings to the three towns at public meetings in January 2011.

Study Area Information

Overall reach of Exeter River within Study Area – approximately 15 miles and almost half of the rivers reach. Most of the study area in Danville and Sandown represents the headwaters of the Exeter River and therefore is critical to the overall health of the river.

Total Study Area 1882.27 acres

Study reaches include:

Sandown 5 miles

Danville 1 mile and tributaries

Fremont south reach 2 miles and north reach 7 miles

Note: Portions of the FEMA mapped floodplain in these towns do not contribute to the Exeter River and in some cases is not part of its watershed.

Copies of the Exeter River Bio-Inventory Study are available at the Rockingham Planning Commission and on its website, and the town Halls of Danville, Fremont and Sandown.

D. Current Use and the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT)

Current Use

The current use tax law (RSA 79-A) is a widely-used tool in which property owners ease their tax burden by placing their land under current use. While this status helps them lower their property taxes on the parcel, the right to use their property in certain ways has been temporarily relinquished. New house construction, subdivision, or other significant terrain- and use-altering activities are prohibited until the property is removed from its current use status, which would then require property owners to pay a portion of the assessed value of the parcel back to the Town. This penalty not only discourages the removal of the current use status, it also creates opportunities for municipalities to use the land use change tax in ways that benefit the community. The penalty assessed upon removing a parcel or a portion of a parcel from current use is called the “Land Use Change Tax” or LUCT.

What is the Conservation Fund?

A Conservation Fund is a municipal finance account to be used by the Conservation Commission for conservation projects. It is the most common way for a Conservation Commission to hold money from various income sources. A Conservation Fund may be created in municipalities that have voted to establish a Conservation Commission. The Conservation Fund may hold money from both public and private sources. (RSA 36-A:4 and 36- A:5) The Land Use Change Tax (LUTC), of which Sandown receives 100 percent, contributes heavily to the Fund. Private donations to the Conservation Fund may be tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

Money in the Conservation Fund is non-lapsing, which means it carries over from one fiscal year to the next. (RSA 36-A:5 I) This is not the case with most municipal funds, and it provides the Conservation Commission with the opportunity to budget for anticipated expenses and to save toward important projects. The disbursement of funds shall be authorized by a majority of the Conservation Commission. In order to utilize the funds for land purchase, the Commission shall hold a properly noticed public hearing. While the Conservation Commission is not required to get approval at Town Meeting before accessing the Fund, the Sandown Conservation Commission conducts outreach to the public, if the property negotiation schedule permits, to raise awareness and support of important community conservation projects.

Refer to the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) publication The NH Municipal Conservation Fund Guidebook (2009) for additional information on the subject of Conservation Funds. This publication is available on the SPNHF website at www.spnhf.org/.

Sandown Conservation Fund

As of 2005, Sandown designates one hundred percent (100%) of its Land Use Change Tax collected each year toward land conservation. The LUCT has been a consistently significant funding source for land conservation efforts in the town. Annual LUCT collections are summarized in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4. Summary of Land Use Change Tax and Conservation Fund contributions from 2001 to 2010

| <i>Year</i> | <i>LUCT Collected</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>LUCT Collected</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 2000 | \$35,609.98 | 2005 | \$820,483.87 |
| 2001 | \$83,612.02 | 2006 | \$335,034.87 |
| 2002 | \$172,009.65 | 2007 | \$49,519.18 |
| 2003 | \$207,329.93 | 2008 | \$205,446.54 |
| 2004 | \$192,152.15 | 2009 | \$96,120.15 |
| | | 2010 | \$89,563.0 |

Total Collected from 2000 to 2010 **\$2,286,881.10**

Annual Average from 2000 to 2010 **\$207,898.28**

[Source: Sandown Town Report, Tax Collector and Bookkeeper]

Conservation Fund Contributions from 2008-2010

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 2008 | \$141,000 |
| 2009 | \$113,322.59 |
| 2010 | 166,500 |
| Balance as of March 2010 | \$263,243 |

For additional explanation of funding strategies and options, refer to Section 5.

SECTION 3 OPEN SPACE PLANNING METHODOLOGY

Note: It is extremely important to recognize that landowners whose land falls within the green infrastructure or identified as an open space protection area are free to dispose of their land as they choose, consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. Inclusion of land within the green infrastructure or identified as an open space protection area is NOT an indication that the Town of Sandown has any legal interest in the land or has any intention of taking the land for a public purpose.

Step 1: Identification of High Value Natural Resources

Process. Step 1 in the open space planning process was the identification of high value natural resources that will be used to define open space lands within the town. The Open Space Task Force selected the following high value resources from the list shown in Table 3 below:

- ✓ Unfragmented lands of 50 acres or greater
- ✓ Forested lands
- ✓ Wetlands/streams/rivers/lakes/ponds plus their 250 foot buffer
- ✓ NH Wildlife Action Plan Highest Ranked Habitats
- ✓ Land Conservation Plan for NH's Coastal Watersheds – Core Focus Areas
- ✓ Flood hazard areas
- ✓ Stratified drift aquifers

The high value natural resources were grouped into four broad categories (shown in green highlight) based on their resource function or type. Note: Data for each natural resource is displayed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data from NH GRANIT database and/or other local data sources.

TABLE 5. Description of Natural Resources Evaluated for Open Space Protection

| <i>Natural Resources</i> | <i>Description</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Soil Types</i> | |
| Important Forest Soils | <i>Groups 1A and 1B that support diverse high-quality hardwood species</i> |
| Agricultural Soils | <i>Includes prime soils, and soils of statewide and local importance</i> |
| <i>Open Space Continuity</i> | |
| Unfragmented Areas 50 acres or greater | <i>Lands of any type including forest, agricultural land, wetlands and surface waters</i> |
| Unfragmented Areas 100 acres or greater | |
| Unfragmented Areas 500 acres or greater | |
| NH Wildlife Action Plan - highest ranked habitats | <i>Habitat types of exemplary quality and rare habits in the region or statewide</i> |
| <i>Water Quality</i> | |
| Stratified Drift Aquifer | <i>Drinking water source areas</i> |
| Special Flood Hazard Zones | <i>As identified on FEMA maps; areas subject to inundation and erosion</i> |
| Wetlands, streams, lakes, ponds plus 250' buffer | <i>Surface water resources important for maintaining water quality</i> |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prime wetlands plus 100' buffer | <i>High value wetlands and habitats</i> |
| <i>Views/Quality of Life</i> | |
| Scenic Views/Ridgelines & Hilltops | <i>Quality of life, aesthetics and land value</i> |
| Forest (general) | <i>All forested areas; timber resource and unfragmented lands</i> |
| Forest (Hemlock/Pine) | <i>Two specific forest types prevalent in certain parts of the state</i> |
| Forest (Appalachian Oak/Pine) | |

Map 1 shows the geographic extent of the high priority resources selected by the Task Force. ***Parcel boundaries were not displayed on Map 2 Green Infrastructure as the focus of this exercise was to use specific criteria to select area for open space protection.***

Step 2: Define the “Green Infrastructure”

Step 2 in the open space planning process was to define the “green infrastructure” meaning the contiguous resource network and natural areas across town. The green infrastructure is the area that, if protected from development or degradation, should ensure that the services provided by the natural environment to Sandown’s residents could be sustained. These natural services include:

- Maintaining the quality of groundwater and surface water;
- Protecting the health of rivers and streams;
- Improving air quality;
- Providing sufficient habitat for plants and animals;
- Providing an opportunity for outdoor recreation for residents at a reasonable distance from their homes;
- Creating a pleasant and scenic environment in which to live; and
- Preserving interconnected green spaces that allow for trails connecting the various parts of town and allowing for the movement of wildlife.

Parcel boundaries were displayed on Map 2 Green Infrastructure as the focus of this exercise was to use specific criteria to select area for open space protection while recognizing where developed lands already exist in town.

Process. To develop *Map 2 Green Infrastructure* the Task Force followed general guidelines and constraints to select priority areas using *Map 1 Highest Scoring Natural Resource Co-occurrence Areas*:

- Include areas of exceptionally high resource value for a particular category
- Include areas where multiple resource values occur in the same place
- Give added consideration to lands near existing conservation lands
- Give added consideration to lands that allow residents reasonable access to open space
- Avoid areas slated for industrial or commercial development, unless they contain exceptionally high quality resources
- Include at > 25 percent of total land area to ensure sustainability of natural processes
- Exclude 50 percent or more of the Town’s land area, to allow for future development

As identified on *Map 3 Green Infrastructure*, approximately 3,596 acres (167 parcels) or 39 percent of the town is located within the Green Infrastructure. This includes a wide diversity of land uses, including vacant properties and already developed or protected lands.

Step 3: Parcel Based Refinement of Priority Protection Areas

Step 3 in the open space planning process, information from *Map 3 Green Infrastructure* was ***superimposed over the town's tax maps (showing parcel boundaries) to determine which parcels or portions of parcels were included in the green infrastructure.*** GIS staff computed the natural resource value of each parcel or partial parcel lying within the green infrastructure. Although a number of parcels within the green infrastructure had some development on them, the developed areas were essentially excluded from the parcel value by assigning a natural resource score of 0 to the developed portion.

Process. From the parcels located in the green infrastructure (approximately 167 parcels), the Open Space Task Force limited detailed consideration to those parcels over 5 acres in size and in private ownership. Parcels of lesser size were presumed likely to remain in their current condition or, if developed, were considered as not critical to the integrity of the green infrastructure. The Task Force examined these parcels to identify which parcels would be selected for open space protection and to evaluate whether to assign a protection strategy for each parcel.

The result of Step 3 was the development of *Map 3 Parcels Identified for Open Space Protection*.

Ranking of Priority Parcels

The Task Force decided not to assign a priority ranking to specific parcels selected for priority protection as they believe all parcels are of equal interest for preservation and of equal consideration in the event that a land owner is willing to sell their property. However, the Task Force considered the following factors to be important when evaluating properties competitively based on their resource value and other attributes:

- proximity to or connectivity with existing conservation or town and state owned lands;
- proximity to the rail trail;
- occurrence of priority resources (agricultural soils, unfragmented and forested lands, surface waters, scenic views); and
- occurrence of riparian areas and shorelands.

A. *Lands Identified for Protection as Open Space*

The Task Force developed a list of lands that they recommend should be protected in some manner. These parcels are shown on Map 3 Parcels Identified for Open space Preservation. The properties are reported relative to their ranking from the weighted co-occurrence mapping exercise and the priority ranking assigned by the Task Force (high or medium priority).

Ultimately, the list elevates these 20 parcels in priority over the other roughly 5,463 parcels in Sandown. The many additional properties within the green infrastructure, but not appearing in the priority list of lands identified for conservation due to their smaller size, are still vital to the success of open space preservation efforts. However, due to their smaller size, the most appropriate protection strategy is likely to be cooperation with landowners to ensure the sensitive parts of the properties are properly managed.

B. *Land Selection and Protection Criteria*

The Task Force believes that every parcel identified on the open space map is worthy of protection as each is an important link in the green infrastructure that should be protected using appropriate, site specific strategies.

Protection Criteria

Further, the Task Force believes protection priorities should be based on three broad criteria:

1. The “threshold” criterion of being within the green infrastructure or a designated growth area. The *threshold criterion* acts as a broad filter that identifies both parcels of interest to the Town and parcels that are best dedicated to further development.
2. The “competitive” criterion of cost per resource value, computed at the time a purchase is considered. The *competitive criterion* is strictly a computation of resource value that assumes that all other factors are equal. This criterion promotes the greatest amount of conservation value for the least amount of dollars, but can only be applied to a specific parcel at a specific sale price at a given point in time.
3. The “qualitative” set of criteria that includes: geography (key links, abutting land); threat of development; ability to get outside money; sales price; possible bargain sale; cost avoidance if no development (self-paying). The *qualitative criteria* provide for the intervention of best professional judgment on a case-by-case basis. This judgment must be exercised by the Conservation Commission as they recommend parcels for protection, the Board of Selectmen as they consider the Conservation Commission's recommendations, and by residents who will vote to approve acquisition at Town Meeting.

The Task Force recommends using the qualitative criterion, recognizing that land availability and financial resources are most often the limiting constraint in executing open space preservation. It is these qualitative criteria that will play the most important role, for the simple reason that Sandown can only acquire interests in open space from willing sellers, whose numbers will likely vary over time. However, it is important to note that the threshold criterion

may apply in cases where lands available for acquisition have exemplary natural resource, recreational, historical or cultural assets that the town considers of high value to the community.

C. Land Conservation and Protection Strategies

Land conservation and protection strategies include land ownership, voluntary and regulatory and management actions that serve to preserve the green infrastructure by protecting open space and natural resources.

In addition to acquisition, the Task Force supports implementation of purchase of easements or development rights, creation of open space through conservation subdivision, protection through existing regulatory measures (i.e. zoning, buffers, wetlands, shorelands), and voluntary protection measures. In Table 7 below, the various protection strategies are identified as “high cost” and “low/no cost” protection strategies as well as a listing of their associated benefits.

TABLE 6. Land protection strategies and their benefits

| Protection Strategy | Benefit | Existing/Recommended Actions by the Town | Funds Expended* |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Land Acquisition | Purchase of land at fair market value or as a bargain sale where the difference between fair market value and sale price becomes a tax-deductible donation; Public access, leverage for securing funding | Actively pursue land purchase, partnering with others and seeking outside funding sources | High |
| Purchase of Easements or Development Rights | Growth management tool; retain development density and tax base if rights transferred to growth areas | Actively use this strategy | High |
| Regulatory Protection | Preservation of public resources and their functions and values to the community; federal, state and local implementation | Open Space Development Ordinance; Wetland Conservation District; Floodplain Development Ordinance | Low/No |
| Zoning and Land Use Regulations | Implement an incentive based Conservation Subdivision ordinance can provide large tracts of open space lands as part of development approval; implement requirement for buffers to wetlands, shorelands and sensitive habitat and resources | Incorporate incentives into existing Open Space Development Ordinance | Low/No |
| Voluntary Protection/Easements | Voluntary conservation easements involving donation of development rights; Private stewardship and management; public access permitted in some cases | Actively use this strategy | Low/No |
| Land and Resource Management | Fosters public participation and stewardship | Actively use this strategy | Low/No |
| Transfer of Development Rights | Voluntary transfer of development rights from designated open space areas to designated growth areas that allow greater development density | No activity at this time | Low/No |

* **Funds Expended** refers to the use of municipal and/or public funds to implement a specific land protection strategy (i.e. use of Land Use Change Tax contributions, Conservation Fund, municipal bonds, and other municipal funding sources).

SECTION 5 FINANCIAL PLANNING

A. Funding Projections

For the purposes of budgeting and assigning land protection strategies, the time horizon of this report is indefinite: it looks forward to the day when opportunities for both “land preservation” and “build out” in Sandown have been maximized. This indefinite timeframe has limited use in computing the total cost of implementing open space preservation for two reasons:

- the predicted range for build out may occur differs depending on the buildout scenario applied; and
- predicting the rate of inflation, much less fluctuations in real estate values even 10 years or more into the future would be highly speculative.

Based on their collective natural resource value and other physical and geographic attributes, the Task Force identified 167 parcels totaling roughly 3,596 acres as lands considered priority for protection and preservation as open space comprising the “green infrastructure” of Sandown. These priority parcels represent 39 percent of the total area of Sandown (9,216 acres of land and water).

Table 8 below summarizes historic and current funding sources available for land acquisition and protection.

TABLE 7. Summary of funding for land acquisition and protection

| Summary of Annual Funding Levels | |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Funding Sources and Levels |
| Land Use Change Tax collected ¹ | \$2,286,881.10 |
| Average annual LUCT collection ¹ | \$207,898.28 |
| Current Available Funding² | \$263,243 |

¹ Total collected from 2000 to 2010

² Conservation Fund balance currently available from Land Use Change Tax contributions and other sources

B. Previous Funding

For the period of fiscal years 2005 through 2010 Sandown has authorized use of \$1,376,00 from the Conservation Fund , a \$1 million municipal bond, and an additional \$596,895 from outside sources, totaling 2,972,895 dedicated for land acquisition and preservation purposes.

Historically Sandown has succeeded in leveraging its own resources with federal, state and private money. In addition, the Town properties could be used as leverage to match other federal and state grants in the future. The Task Force assumes that this rate can be sustained, at least in the near term. The Town should continue to apply for matching grant funds to support land acquisition and protection, including the NH wetlands mitigation fund, water and watershed grants, habitat protection grants, and federal transportation funding.

It is important to recognize that open space preservation can serve multiple community objectives, and funding is often specific to certain needs, from planning and community process,

to land acquisition and development, to maintenance of infrastructure. For example, purchasing an open space corridor could serve to provide stormwater retention, improve water quality, provide aquifer recharge, provide recreational opportunities, and establish bicycle and pedestrian connections within the community. Furthermore, funds for purchasing the open space corridor could be shared among several departments and other sources within the capital budget.

C. Adaptive Approach

Since the ability to predict land values beyond the near term is very limited, the Task Force recommends reviewing the open space financial plan on an annual basis, in conjunction with the annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan process, as well as the availability of outside funding sources.

In the foreseeable future, the Task Force assumed an equal level of funding for open space protection, and since, as discussed above, it is not possible to predict how much time is left before the town is essentially built out, the question of how much funding to dedicate on an annual basis is largely a question of risk. The risk is that the point of build out will be reached before the open space protection acquisitions are complete. At too low a level of annual funding, Sandown may not be able to preserve the parcels recommended for protection in this report, because they will be developed before the Town has raised sufficient funds to protect them. At too high a level of annual funding, taxpayers may feel they simply cannot afford to support open space acquisition, even though they support the concept of open space protection.

Using the CTAP Buildout to Inform Land Preservation

A Buildout is a tool that allows planners to estimate future development based on different scenarios. The buildout method allows for the potential testing of alternative land use regulation, open space planning and major development scenarios.

As part of the I-93 CTAP, Sandown was provided with a Buildout Analysis to help illustrate future development potential based on three scenarios: existing zoning, a “smart growth” alternative, and a community alternative in which the community defines the scenario parameters. The CTAP Buildout Report is available in the Planning Board webpage.

Following are questions that guide the community through the Buildout process:

- Where should the community be at buildout?
- How much open space will remain?
- What will the traffic patterns look like?
- What will the quality of our environment and natural resources be?
- Where will new residents live and what will the development patterns look like?

A *Buildout Analysis* is not a prediction of what will occur. It is a planning tool to allow community decision makers to understand the impacts of growth under a specified set of land use rules. The Community Specified scenarios do not necessarily represent official policy goals or a plan for the community, but are merely a test of one alternative growth scenario.

The Sandown Planning Board decided not conduct the Community Alternative scenario at this time. The Planning Board would like to evaluate results from the Buildout Analysis and other on-going projects – such as this Open Space Report - before making decisions on what the Community Alternative scenario may contain. If the properties identified for priority preservation in this report were applied as the Community Alternative scenario, the analysis could yield useful information about the future development potential of these lands. Possible zoning and other regulatory incentives could be implemented to protect these lands from development while maintaining the ultimate (buildout) density under current zoning (i.e. transfer of development rights or bonus density for open space subdivisions).

D. Funding Strategy

The challenge when evaluating options is to strike a balance between what improves the community in the long term, what taxpayers can afford, and what other interests need to be served.

The Task Force recommends that the Town consider annual funding levels that voters have supported in the past, but that the town commit to annual reviews of this level of funding to ensure the risk of not completing the planned open space acquisitions does not become too high.

The Task Force believes the choice of implementing specific funding levels in the future will be a policy decision that must be balanced by Sandown’s leadership with all the other competing demands on town resources. The Task Force notes that, unlike many capital projects, the acquisition of open space adds an appreciating rather than a depreciating asset to the Town. In addition, most studies conclude that open space has a net positive effect on taxes, because it reduces the future cost of Town services. Appendix D lists grant programs and other funding sources that can help the town achieve their land protection and open space preservation goals.

The Sandown Open Space Task Force recommends the following to implement long term open space preservation in the town:

1. The green infrastructure identified in this report should be viewed as the Sandown's "greenprint" for open space preservation to guide growth and development, and inform future land use planning and zoning changes.
2. The parcels identified on *Map 3 Parcels Identified for Open Space Protection* should be pursued for protection using the strategies recommended in this report.
3. The Conservation Commission should work expeditiously and cooperatively with owners of developed parcels and those parcels proposed for development within the recommended green infrastructure to ensure that open space is preserved or managed to the extent possible.
4. The Conservation Commission should retain 100 percent of the Land Use Change Tax toward conservation, as well as other sources of funding to support land conservation and acquisition purposes.
5. The Conservation Commission should review the recommendations of this report every two to three years.
6. The Town should review annually the financing plan for open space preservation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Map Products

Appendix B Grant Resources

Appendix C Glossary

APPENDIX A MAP PRODUCTS

Map 1 - Highest Scoring Natural Resource Co-occurrence Areas

Map 2 - Identified Green Infrastructure

Map 3 - Parcels Identified for Open Space Protection

CTAP Theme B: *Environmental Protection, Land Use and Open Space*

LIST OF GRANT FOR LAND CONSERVATION and OPEN SPACE PROGRAMS

Tip: *If you are uncertain of the funding program to fit your need, contact the Center for Land Conservation at the Society of NH Forests at (603) 224-9945 or www.forestsociety.org or www.clca.forestsociety.org or.*

Grant Program: NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)

Brief explanation: Funds to acquire conservation land, historic buildings, sites

- **Name of grantor agency:** NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)
- **Key contact person(s):** Deborah Turcott, Executive Director
- **Amount of funding available:** \$0 for FY 2009; Varies
- **Key criteria for applications:** Significant natural resource area; significant historic buildings and sites
- **Funding cycle and deadlines:** Hopefully in FY 2010
- **Website address:** www.lchip.org

Grant Program: Land and Water Conservation Fund

Brief explanation: Municipalities can apply for assistance for local parks and recreation programs.

- **Name of grantor agency:** Division of Parks and Recreation, NH DRED
- **Key contact person(s):** Shari Colby, Community Outreach Specialist
- **Amount of funding available:** \$20,000 per project; 50/50 match
- **Key criteria for applications:** Outdoor recreation proposals; see Project Evaluation criteria
- **Funding cycle and deadlines:** Late January
- **Website address:** <http://www.nhparks.state.nh.us/community-programs/land-and-water-conservation-fund/>

Grant Program: Farm and Ranchland Protection Program

Brief explanation: Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

- **Name of grantor agency:** US Natural Resources Conservation Service
- **Key contact person(s):** Jody Walker, Assistant State Conservationist
- **Amount of funding available:** Varies based on Congressional appropriation
- **Key criteria for applications:** See website below
- **Funding cycle and deadlines:** Open; on-going acceptance
- **Website address:** <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/>

Grant Program: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Brief explanation: The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provides funding on a competitive basis to projects that sustain, restore and enhance the Nation's fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats through our *Keystone Initiative Grants* and other *Special Grant Programs*.

- Name of grantor agency: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Key contact person(s): Mike Slattery
- Amount of funding available: Keystone \$50 to \$300k; special – varies
- Key criteria for applications: Specific to program
- Funding cycle and deadlines: June and November; Pre-proposal-April 1st; Full June 1st
- Website address: <http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Grants>

Grant Program: Forest Legacy Program

Brief explanation: The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership between states and the USDA Forest Service to identify and help conserve environmentally important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. The main tool used for protecting these important forests is conservation easements. The Federal government may fund up to 75% of program costs, with at least 25% coming from private, state or local sources

- Name of grantor agency: Division of Forest and Lands, NH DRED
- Key contact person(s): Susan Francher, Forester
- Amount of funding available: Varies annually; based on national competition
- Key criteria for applications: Project identified in a Forest Legacy Area (FLA) and meet continuation of traditional forest uses including forest
- Funding cycle and deadlines: July 15th annually
- Website address: <http://na.fs.fed.us/legacy/index.shtm>

Grant Program: Transportation Enhancement (TE)

Brief explanation: The intent of the TE program is to afford an opportunity to develop “livable communities” by selecting projects that preserve the historic culture of the transportation system and/or enhance the operation of the system for its users. Projects with a water quality component associated with transportation facilities are eligible. 80/20 funding.

- Name of grantor agency: Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance, NH DOT
- Key contact person(s): Thomas Jameson, PM, (603) 271-3462
- Amount of funding available: \$3.8 M for TE
- Key criteria for applications: TE: encourage non-motorized transportation, pedestrian
- Funding cycle and deadlines: Summer of odd years and submit to the RPC; TE Advisory Committee recommends projects
- Website address: <http://www.nh.gov/dot/municipalhighways/tecmaq/details.htm>

Grant Program: Grassland Reserve Program

Brief explanation: The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property. The program helps landowners restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland and certain other lands.

- Name of grantor agency: US Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Key contact person(s): Jody Walker, Assistant State Conservationist
- Amount of funding available: Varies based on Congressional appropriation
- Key criteria for applications: See website below
- Funding cycle and deadlines: Open; on-going acceptance
- Website address: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/>

Grant Program: Water Supply Land Protection Grant Program

Brief explanation: Also known as the Source Water Protection Program, NH DES can make 25 percent matching grants to municipal water suppliers for the purchase of land or conservation easements critical to their water quality. These water supply lands must be currently unprotected and within the wellhead protection area for a groundwater source or within the source water protection area and within five miles of the intake of a surface water source. These match sources can include donated land or easements that are also within the source water protection area, public funds, transaction expenses, or private funds. Also, there is a low interest loan fund available from DES that may be used to finance the match.

- Name of grantor agency: NH DES
- Key contact person(s): Holly Green
- Amount of funding available: Uncertain, but DES is soliciting applications; 25/75
- Key criteria for applications: Unprotected water supply land
- Funding cycle and deadlines: November
- Website address:
http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/dwspp/land_acqui/ws_landgrant.htm

Grant Program: Chloride Reduction in the I-93 Watershed Municipal Program

Brief explanation: Also known as the Salt Reduction Program, NH DOT has funding for designated communities for planning and implementation

- Name of grantor agency: NH DOT
- Key contact person(s): Mark Hemmerlein (mhemmerlein@dot.state.nh.us 603-271-1550)
- Amount of funding availability: Approximately \$2.5 million to aid communities in the TMDL watersheds (Salem, Sandown, Derry, Londonderry and Chester)
- Key criteria for applications: Location in the TMDL watershed
- Funding cycle and deadlines: Open
- Website address: <http://www.rebuildingi93.com/documents/Municipal%20Program%20-%20TMDL.pdf>

For special purpose land conservation projects, the following may be of interest:

Ecologically Important Land

- Sweet Water Trust <http://www.sweetwatertrust.org/>
- Wildlife Heritage Foundation of New Hampshire provides funds for NH Fish and Game projects. Contact: Chuck Miner at (603) 271-3511 <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/foundation>.
- Endangered Species Fund is a federal fund available to states for the conservation of T & E species. <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/ESA/sec6.html>

- The Neo-tropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund establishes a matching grants program to fund projects that promote the conservation of these birds.
<http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/index.shtm>

Wetlands, Waterfowl, Fisheries Habitat

- The North American Wetlands Conservation Act provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. Administered through the federal Fish and Wildlife Service. Contact Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Coordinator Andrew Milliken at andrew_milliken@fws.gov. <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/index.shtm> and <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWCA/USstandgrants.html>
- NH Fish and Game Department has a Small Grants Program to help landowners with a minimum of 25 acres restore or enhance habitat for wildlife. For more information, contact the Wildlife Division at (603) 271-2461, <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/wildlife.htm>
For the Fisheries Habitat Conservation Program contact John Magee
Fish Habitat Biologist john.a.magee@wildlife.nh.gov
- The Moose Plate program: <http://www.mooseplate.com/overview.html>
- Wetlands mitigation funds. Funds which permitting authorities (NH Dept. of Environmental Services, US Army Corps of Engineers) may require developers to provide for land conservation as mitigation for loss of wetland values resulting from proposed development. Contact municipal planning officials or the developer for details about specific projects.
- NH Department of Environmental Services established the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund to compensate for loss of wetlands. Contact: Lori Sommer at (603) 271-4059 or lori.sommer@des.nh.gov
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wet/documents/wb-17.pdf>
- Ducks Unlimited. <http://www.ducks.org/> State contact: Ed Robinson, NH Fish & Game Department, (603) 271-2462.
- Trout Unlimited Contact: Elizabeth Maclin, Vice President for Eastern Conservation Programs: emaclin@tu.org. For local projects involving a component of stream habitat restoration or improvement, there is the Embrace-A-Stream grant program that is available through state councils and local chapters of TU. The TU council or chapter must be the applicant for the funds. For more information about the EAS program go to:
<http://www.tu.org/site/c.kkLRJ7MSKtH/b.3198137/k.9DD6/EmbraceAStream.htm>
- Watershed Action Grants. The Conservation Fund, Contact: Nancy Bell, Vermont Representative
<http://www.conservaionfund.org/>

PARKS

Grant Program: Recreational Trail Program (RTP)

Brief explanation: RTP funds may be used for maintenance and restoration of existing trails, purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment, construction of new trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities, trail linkages, and acquisition of easements or property for trails.

Name of grantor agency: Bureau of Trails, NH DRED

Key contact person(s): Chris Gamache, Program Coordinator

Amount of funding available: \$25,000 maximum;

Key criteria for applications: 80/20 match

Funding cycle and deadlines: January

Website address: <http://www.nhtrails.org/grants-and-programs/recreational-trails-program/>
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails>

Grant Program: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Brief explanation: LWCF funds may be used for acquisition, development and restoration of existing or proposed parks.

Name of grantor agency: Division of Parks, NH DRED

Key contact person(s): Shari Colby, Outreach Coordinator

Amount of funding available: \$20,000 cap per project

Key criteria for applications: Applications must be submitted by a municipality, school district, county or state agency / department for government owned property. 50/50 match required.

Funding cycle and deadlines: January

Website address: <http://www.nhstateparks.org/community-programs/land-and-water-conservation-fund/grant-round-information-and-application-packet/>

Other Grant Sources

Farm Bill

For information on the 2008 Farm Bill, visit <http://www.ers.usda.gov/FarmBill/2008/>

Piscataqua Regional Estuaries Program (Coastal CTAP)

This program is of interest to the I-93 CTAP Towns of Candia, Chester, Danville, Deerfield, Fremont and Raymond as they are located in the Coastal Zone watershed area. See:

<http://www.nhep.unh.edu/programs/community-assistance.htm>

Moose Plate Grants

The state's Moose Plate program provides funding for cultural heritage, conservation and environmental programs. For details, see: <http://www.mooseplate.com/grants.html>.

Source: Grant Resources Guide: Grant Opportunities for CTAP Communities (prepared for the Rockingham Planning Commission by TF Moran, Inc. 2010)

APPENDIX C GLOSSARY

I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) - developed in cooperation with the State of New Hampshire's Department of Transportation, Office of Energy and Planning, Department of Environmental Services, and the Regional Planning Commissions to provide planning assistance to the 26 I-93 corridor communities expected to experience additional growth that may result from the I-93 expansion project. CTAP is a multi-year initiative that provides assistance to I-93 corridor communities to address planning and community development challenges through access to technical information and tools to implement innovative land-use planning and resource conservation practices that address the impacts of growth and development. (Refer to page iv.)

Open Space - For the purpose of this report, 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. (Refer to page 2.)

Natural Environment and Natural Resources – broadly used to describe air, water, and land resources including, but not limited to, the town's scenery, air quality, aquifers, streams, soils, plants and animals. (Refer to page 2.)

Co-Occurrence Areas – lands that combine both the physical co-occurrence of natural resources, where multiple resources occur together, and the numeric weighting for each resource as assigned during the resource prioritization process in Step 1. (Refer to page 7.)

Green Infrastructure - the contiguous resource network and natural areas across town. The green infrastructure is the area that, if protected from development or degradation, should ensure that the services provided by the natural environment to Windham's residents could be sustained. (Refer to page 8.)

Land Protection Strategy - implementation of a voluntary restriction, purchase of easements or development rights, creation of open space through conservation subdivision, protection through regulatory requirement (i.e. wetlands, shorelands), or voluntary protection measure that preserves the natural resources and features of land. (Refer to page 10.)

Build Out Analysis – using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), an estimation of the maximum number of units supported per parcel, excluding unbuildable lands (typically limited by soil conditions) and lands subject to state or local regulations, based on assumed land use and zoning scenarios (i.e. existing zoning, proposed zoning scenario, land use such as land conservation/open space preservation goals or transfer of development rights).