



State Highlights in Conservation: New Hampshire

Profile of State Program(s)

New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage

Investment Program: In September 2000, the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) was formed as the successor to Land Conservation Investment Program. LCHIP is an independent state authority that makes matching grants to New Hampshire communities and nonprofits to conserve the state's most important natural, cultural, and historic resources. Historically, LCHIP received an appropriation from the New Hampshire legislature for grant making. All appropriated funds went directly to projects, covering 20 percent of the project costs on average. In 2007, two amendments secured \$12 million in funding for LCHIP for the 2008-2009 biennium. Funds in 2008 came from the general fund, while funds from 2009 were supported by a new \$25 fee charged on documents recorded at county registries of deeds. In 2008, the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee rescinded \$3.5 million from LCHIP to address a growing general fund gap. The 2010-2011 Governor's budget proposal included a commitment of \$12 million for the biennium (\$6 million a year); however, during negotiations between the House and Senate, 50 percent of the 2011 funds were diverted. LCHIP did not receive revenue for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 because the funds were diverted to the state's General Fund. For fiscal years 2014 and 2015, the state budget allocates the entire income from the Registry Fees to LCHIP, which is estimated to be \$4.1 million in fiscal year 2014 and almost \$4.3 million in fiscal year 2015. LCHIP also receives about \$6 from the sale of each conservation license plate (Moose Plate). Sixty percent of administrative costs are paid with license plate funds and the remaining 40 percent with interest earned from an associated trust fund. Finally, the dedicated LCHIP fund is set to sunset after 10 years, at which time the legislature would need to re-authorize the fund to extend it beyond the 10-year period for which it is created.

In 2019, a bill to increase the recording fee from \$25 to \$35, which would generate an additional \$1.5 million per year) passed through the state legislature but was vetoed by the Governor. An override effort failed.

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services - Water Supply Land Protection Grants

Program: The Water Supply Land Protection Grant Program allows the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) to make matching grants to municipal water suppliers covering up to 25 percent of the cost of the purchase of land or conservation easements critical to their water quality. To qualify, the land must be within Source Water Protection Areas for an existing, proposed, or future water supply. The state grants must be matched 75 percent from local sources. 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. Low interest loan funds available from DES may be used to finance the match.

New Hampshire Department of Resources and

Economic Development: The Land Management Bureau in the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) is responsible for the acquisition of land for expansion of the state forest and state park system. Presently there are no regularly appropriated state funds for DRED land acquisitions. Occasionally, the legislature will appropriate a specific amount for a specific project. Most rights in real estate acquired by the state are either gifted or purchased with federal dollars from programs like Forest Legacy and LWCF.

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services - Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund:

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) administers the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (ARM). This program was established in 2006 to provide a mitigation option for certain development projects that were not able to mitigate their wetland or surface water impacts on-site. These projects pay into the fund, which is used to support projects that compensate for the loss of aquatic resource functions and values. DES requires that projects mitigate these impacts by restoring a previously existing wetland, creating a new wetland, or preserving land to protect the values of adjacent wetlands or water resources. Projects are subject to approval by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the NH Wetlands Council.

The New Hampshire Drinking Water and

Groundwater Trust Fund: In May 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a \$236 million verdict against ExxonMobil. ExxonMobil was charged for widespread contamination of New Hampshire's groundwater by the gasoline additive MtBE. ExxonMobil had failed to warn about the dangers of MtBE and that ExxonMobil was negligent with respect to manufacturing and supplying MtBE (MtBE has been shown to cause cancer). The State of New Hampshire received this money and the legislature passed SB 380 (the Safe Drinking Water Act), which states that the money will be used to fund projects that clean up and protecting drinking water sources. The New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund (Trust Fund) was subsequently established in 2016. The Trust Fund received the entirety of the \$236 million from the ExxonMobil MtBE lawsuit verdict, providing New Hampshire with a unique opportunity to provide long-term sustainable funding for drinking water infrastructure. The money is expected to be spent on these projects in the next 15 to 20 years. A representative of a state or regional land trust has been added to the Commission, which in essence includes the conservation community in the Trust Fund. NH's Forest Society sees the Trust Fund as having an enormous opportunity to protect the State's drinking water resources through the conservation of our forested landscapes. Anywhere between 10 and 20% could be allocated for land conservation, nearly \$50 million.

Substantial State Investment

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State Incentive for Local Conservation Funding

The Land and Community Heritage Investment Program is a matching grant program that supplies funds to communities through the state for conservation purposes. Eighty percent of the funding for a project comes from the community. LCHIP funds cover on average, 20 percent of the project cost. The Water Supply Land Conservation Grant Program allows the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) to make matching grants to municipal water suppliers for the purchase of land or conservation easements critical to their water quality. The state grants must be matched 75 percent from local sources. 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. In addition, there is a low interest loan fund available from DES that may be used to finance the match.

Local Financing Enabled

In New Hampshire, municipalities, rather than counties have largely undertaken conservation finance ballot measures. General obligation bonds are the principal local revenue sources that could be permitted for conservation purposes. New Hampshire communities can use general obligation bonds to dedicate local funds for conservation.

Local Programs Included

The local dollars and acres represented in the Conservation Almanac are those used to leverage funding from state sources such as LCHIP, and are only a small fraction of local conservation spending in New Hampshire. For a more complete illustration of local activity in New Hampshire, please visit www.landvote.org and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

Federal Partnerships

Federal agencies and programs that have conserved land in New Hampshire include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF)

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Section 6 Grant
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service – Forest Legacy Program (FLP)
- U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. National Park Service – LWCF Stateside
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)



The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

The Conservation Almanac

A comprehensive database of land conservation and public conservation funding in America, the Conservation Almanac provides a context for assessing impacts of conservation and the growing conservation finance movement. The Almanac offers information on public dollars spent and acres conserved, details on local, state, and federal conservation programs, and geospatial mapping of conserved land.

Almanac data collection efforts focus on land conserved using public dollars; contributions funded by private and non-governmental organizations are not tracked comprehensively. Federal data is complete from 1998-2017. State and local data is complete from 1998-2011. In the tables and charts below, acres are allocated to each program proportionate to the size of the contributions to each acquisition. For example, if an acquisition had two contributions, and each program contributed equal dollar amounts, each program receives 50% of the acres. If you have questions or want to provide updated information, please contact Jessica Welch at jessica.welch@tpl.org.

www.tpl.org

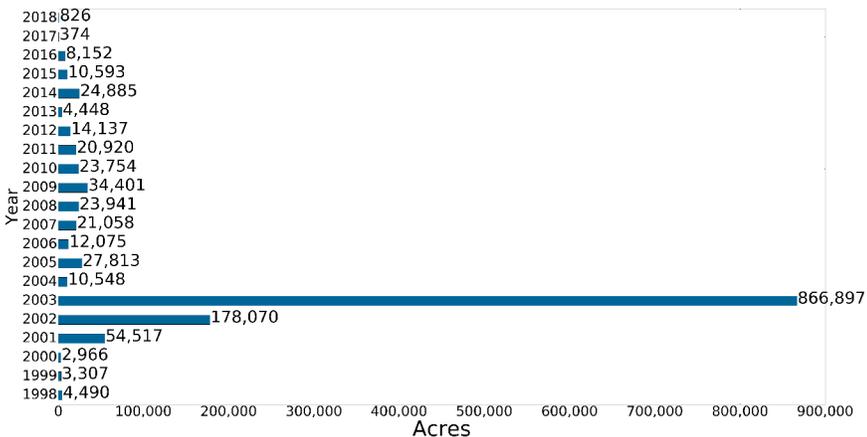
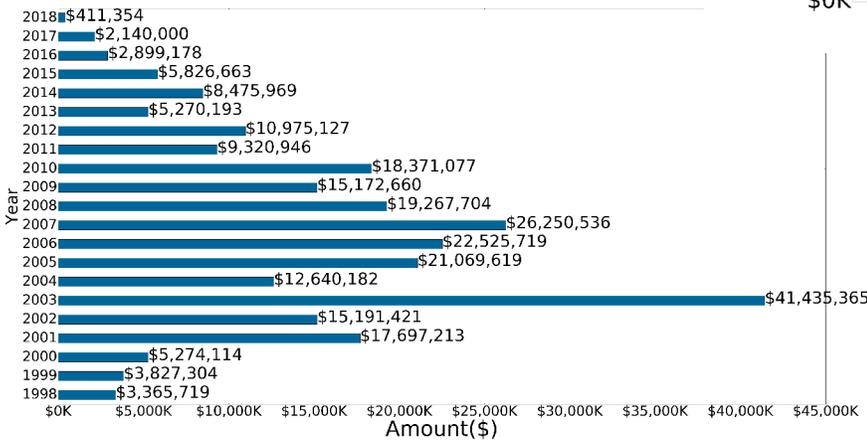
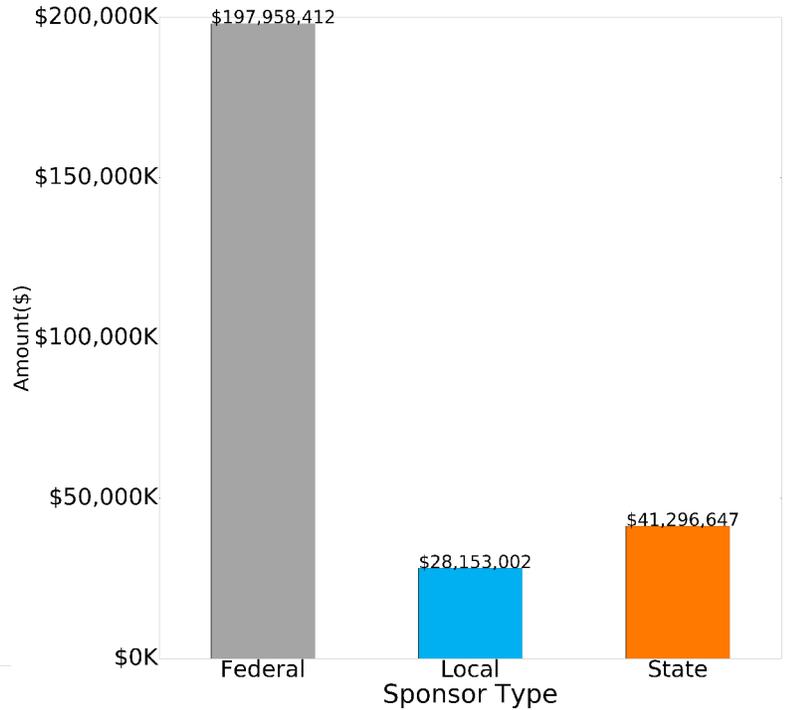
www.conservationalmanac.org

State Conservation Report New Hampshire



CONSERVATION ALMANAC
Tracking Investments in Protected Lands

November 20, 2020



The data in the Conservation Almanac track the impacts of public spending on land conservation. Created by The Trust for Public Land, the Conservation Almanac brings those data together along with state policy profiles, current conservation finance news, and an interactive map, to provide a powerful online tool.