



New Hampshire **OUTDOORS**

2008 - 2013

STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)



**NEW HAMPSHIRE OUTDOORS
2008-2013**

**STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN**

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

1. PURPOSE

New Hampshire Outdoors, Revised 2008-2013 is New Hampshire's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). It serves as the state's official plan for outdoor recreation for the ensuing five years. The SCORP identifies major issues and challenges concerning the state's recreation and natural resources and offers a series of recommendations to address those issues. In some cases, the recommendations are guidelines; in others, they give direction for specific action, particularly for state agencies. This document satisfies a requirement of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that each state have an approved SCORP on file with the National Park Service (NPS) in order to participate in the LWCF program. It also fulfills New Hampshire statutory requirement (RSA 12-A:18) for an outdoor recreation planning program.

How To Use This Plan. This Plan can be used as a reference guide or information source for those interested in recreational trends, supply, and demand. Data is provided, often on a county-level, for the supply of recreation and open space lands in the state, as well as on nationwide and statewide demand. This Plan can also give recreational providers and decision-makers information characterizing major recreation-related issues in the state, and some recommendations for addressing these issues. Finally, this Plan provides more specific guidance to communities and school districts about how statewide LWCF monies for communities will be targeted in the upcoming five-year period.

2. NEW HAMPSHIRE OUTDOORS

With just over 9,000 square miles of land area and 5,900 miles of shoreline/riverfront, New Hampshire's natural and cultural landscape provides a great setting for people to participate in a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities. New Hampshire's four-season climate allows for a great diversity of recreational pursuits, from alpine and cross-country skiing or snowmobiling, to swimming, boating, and sunbathing. "Leaf peepers" come from all over the world to enjoy the renowned autumn foliage of the state as they travel scenic byways by automobile, bus and bicycle.

New Hampshire is home to approximately 1,000 lakes and ponds, 18 miles of coastline, 144 miles of Great Bay shoreline, 60 miles of tidal water shoreline and 1,200 miles of rivers. These natural resources possess significant recreational potential, including opportunities for swimming, water sports, fishing, and boating. Over 83 percent of New Hampshire is heavily forested, including the popular 780,000 acre White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) offering scenic beauty as well as vast opportunities for hiking, camping, picnicking, and wilderness experiences. (There are 730,000 WMNF acres in New Hampshire and 50,000 acres in Maine.) In addition, over one million acres of private forest and agricultural land is available for public uses such as hunting, fishing, nature appreciation, hiking, snowmobiling and ski touring. The state harbors hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including popular game species. Several endangered and threatened species are enjoyed by naturalists, birdwatchers, and photographers. New Hampshire's historic resources, rich in tradition, contribute to the state's scenic beauty

and cultural heritage. Small historic villages, distinctive architecture, covered bridges, winding country roads, and historic sites are all part of that tradition.

Tourism is one of the most important industries in the state. Our natural and cultural resources are important, inspiring millions of residents and out-of-state visitors to visit the state's mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, and coastline. Promoting and encouraging the enjoyment of the state's outdoors builds the tourism industry and increases its contributions to the state's economy. With this, however, also comes the responsibility to consider consequences related to providing for outdoor recreation and our state's ability to manage and steward our resource base. New Hampshire's outdoors is crucial to residents' quality of life and the continued success of our tourism industry. It is important for the state to protect what it also seeks to promote.

3. WHAT IS OUTDOOR RECREATION

With this diverse array of natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation comprises countless activities that are categorized in a variety of ways. Some activities require specialized skill or equipment (e.g. rock-climbing, off-highway recreation vehicle travel); others such as picnicking can be enjoyed by anyone. Some activities require a structured environment and take place in developed recreation areas (e.g. tennis); others, such as walking, are unstructured and can take place in many different locations at any time. Activities can be motorized or non-motorized, consumptive (e.g. hunting, fishing) and non-consumptive (e.g. bird-watching), active (soccer) or passive (sightseeing), have relatively high impact (e.g. All-Terrain Vehicles) or low impact (e.g. hiking).

Different resources classify recreation in different ways. Below are two examples. In the *Illustrated Book of Development Definitions* (Moskowitz and Lindbloom, 1993), recreation is described as either passive or active. In this book, active recreation consists of leisure activities that "require equipment or take place at prescribed places, sites, or fields." Passive recreation includes those activities that are relatively inactive or "less energetic," but also means "open space for nature walks and observation."

The National Survey on Recreation and Environment (NSRE), one of the most widely cited surveys on recreation, includes over 80 activities in its survey of U.S. residents, and classifies outdoor recreation by the type of environment the activity relies upon. Activities are classified as land-based, water-based, snow/ice-based, or developed and further described as follows:

- Land-based activities include trail, street and road activities, camping activities, hunting, outdoor adventure activities (e.g. horseback riding, mountain climbing), viewing/learning activities (e.g. wildlife watching), and social activities (e.g. family gatherings).
- Water-based activities include a range of boating/floating activities, fishing, swimming, and viewing activities.
- Snow and ice-based activities include downhill activities (e.g. snowboarding, skiing), cross country skiing, ice-skating and snowmobiling.

- Developed recreational activities (i.e. those that require a developed setting or facility) include golf, tennis, outdoor team sports, and attending sporting events or other outdoor events.

This SCORP recognizes that people participate in a broad range of activities that can all be considered part of outdoor recreation. Some activities may rely on developed recreational sites; others rely on large tracts of undeveloped open space or access to public waters. This report addresses the broad range of recreation facilities. It includes sites that provide for activities requiring some type of constructed or built facility. Examples might include established campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches, fishing piers, tennis courts, golf courses, and the like. It includes recreational areas that may offer recreational facilities or may offer opportunities for more dispersed recreation such as hiking, bird watching, or mountain biking. Some recreational areas may have established facilities; others may not. Undeveloped open space (public or private) also provide for dispersed recreation activities such as hiking, hunting, snowshoeing and nature observation.

4. PLANNING PROCESS

The breadth of this topic mandates that this statewide Plan identify and address many different outdoor recreation-related issues and needs. Accordingly, the planning process used to understand these issues and needs requires consideration of many different perspectives. Therefore, multiple methods were used to collect input from various stakeholder groups. These mechanisms include a public advisory committee, a steering committee, surveys, and a stakeholder forum.

A Steering Committee was identified to provide the most direct input and guidance in the planning process. The steering committee is made up of diverse representatives from agencies, organizations, communities, and other stakeholder groups. The members of the steering committee are listed in Appendix J.

Public Advisory Committee. A SCORP Public Advisory Committee was also developed to provide a wider range of organizations an opportunity for input and feedback about major recreational issues facing New Hampshire. The Office of Energy and Planning and the Department of Resources and Economic Development identified the advisory committee jointly. This larger group met once during the planning process with a follow-up email survey. Organizations were invited to attend a December 2006 meeting to review the recommendations from the 2005-2007 SCORP and evaluate the continuing relevance of the statewide recommendations (Appendix B). A follow-up survey was distributed to a broader population, including this same group, to provide them with an opportunity to give additional feedback and suggestions about the SCORP recommendations. The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension staff served as facilitators and designed and conducted the email survey.

Outdoor Recreation Leaders Survey. When developing the 2003-2007 SCORP, the authors learned of the issues and concerns facing public recreation leaders and obtained information on the quantity and adequacy of public recreation resources in local communities. The Office of Energy and Planning worked with the University of New

Hampshire Recreation Management Department to undertake an Outdoor Recreation Leaders' Survey. The survey was used to gather information, create a forum for communication, and encourage participation from critical stakeholders involved in public recreation management and delivery. For the purposes of this survey, "public recreation leaders" were identified as directors (or heads) of municipal and state recreation agencies as well as chairpersons of local recreation and conservation commissions. For the 2008-2013 SCORP, the database of public recreation leaders was updated and some minor modifications were made, but essentially the same sample frame was surveyed.

The 2008-2013 SCORP Outdoor Recreation Leaders' Survey (ORLS) utilized a modified Salant-Dillman (1994) methodology:

- In 2007 an introductory letter was mailed to a database of municipal recreation directors, state park and recreation directors, recreation commission chairpersons (if the municipality did not have a paid recreation director), and conservation commission chairpersons introducing them to the study and inviting them to participate. The introductory letter also included a link to an on-line version of the ORLS.
- The ORLS was based on the 2004 Outdoor Recreation Leaders' Survey conducted by UNH Resources, Economics and Development Department. The survey was streamlined and modified slightly. There were several minor content differences between the recreation and conservation versions of the survey.
- A follow-up letter was mailed to all non-respondents approximately one week later, along with a paper-based version of the ORLS and another link to the on-line survey. There was no difference between the on-line and paper-based versions and respondents were asked to choose one option to complete. Cross checks of survey respondents were conducted to ensure that only one survey was completed per respondent.
- A post-card reminder was mailed to non-respondents approximately two weeks after the follow-up letter and paper-based survey were mailed out.
- A final letter with a link to the on-line version of the survey and additional paper-based survey were mailed to all non-respondents approximately three weeks after the follow-up letter and paper-based survey were mailed out. This letter noted that this was the final opportunity to participate in the 2007 ORLS.

By June 2007, a total of 69 responses were received from recreation directors (n=25) and conservation chairpersons (n=44). Total response to the 2007 Outdoor Recreation Leaders' Survey (N=69) exceeded the 2004 survey effort (N=46).

Findings. The 2007 Outdoor Recreation Leaders' Survey attempted to investigate the key management and planning concerns of public recreation leaders. One of the critical issues facing public recreation delivery in New Hampshire is funding. For this study, the average annual operating budget for municipal recreation departments was \$240,000. Conservation commissions indicated that their average annual operating budget was \$2,500. Both numbers reflect the restricted resource environment impacting many of the smaller towns and communities in the state. In fact, access to funding was considered to

be one of the key management challenges for recreation managers, as noted by both municipal recreation directors and conservation chairpersons.

Despite the funding challenges, more than half of recreation directors and conservation chairpersons indicated that public funding support for recreation and conservation in their communities had increased in the past 5 years. Less than 5 percent of survey respondents indicated that public funding support for recreation or conservation had declined during that time period.

A funding challenge that impacts public recreation managers is the development of a diversified and stable mix of funding sources. The vast majority of respondents indicated that taxes/appropriated funds were the principle funding source for both recreation and conservation activities. Recreation directors indicated a more diversified mix of funding sources when compared to conservation chairpersons. A significant majority of municipal recreation departments receive funding from user fees and charges, with a portion of respondents reporting that they receive funding (in order) from private donations, public (state or federal) grants, corporate sponsorships, private foundation grants, and impact fees. Conservation chairpersons indicated that a variety of taxes were their primary means of funding conservation activities. A smaller portion (less than 25 percent) of conservation commissions indicated that they receive funding from private donations, public grants (state or federal), private foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, user fees/charges, and impact fees.

Respondents indicated that the delivery and management of recreation services is typically carried out by a mix of full-time, part-time, volunteer, and contracted staff. Municipal recreation departments were more likely to have paid staff assisting with these efforts. The average numbers of full-time and part-time staff members serving the communities participating in this study were 2 (full-time) and 19 (part-time). Conservation commissions indicated that they rely heavily on volunteers to accomplish their mandates. Respondents indicated that recruiting, motivating, and retaining volunteers is a significant management challenge, and some conservation chairpersons indicated support for paid staff to help carry out their duties. Likewise, recreation directors also relied heavily on volunteers, with an average of 45 volunteers giving their time to assist with recreation delivery per community.

This study illuminated the need for adequate outdoor space for organized recreation and sport activities. This was a key concern for municipal recreation directors, as they identified *baseball/softball fields, multiuse athletic fields, nature/hiking trails, playgrounds*, skateboard parks, bike lanes/paths, and *municipal parks* to be among their pressing resource acquisition priorities. While not outdoor-focused, more than half of the recreation directors in this sample indicated that the acquisition of a *community center* was a significant planning priority in the next 5 years. Interestingly, 6 of the 8 resource acquisition priorities in the 2007 study (italicized above) were the same as the 2004 study.

Conservation chairpersons, on the other hand, identified *nature/hiking trails, natural areas, town/city forests*, and *multipurpose non-motorized trails* as their key resource

acquisition priorities. All of these were also noted as significant priorities in the 2004 study as well.

The survey attempted to shed light on the key management priorities for public recreation leaders. Municipal recreation directors identified *improving facility maintenance/upkeep*, *recruiting/retaining volunteers*, *developing new facilities for organized sports and athletics*, and *marketing recreation opportunities* as their most pressing management priorities. They also identified *addressing concerns with overuse of recreation areas*, ensuring public access to water-based recreation, new funding approaches, *increasing the annual operating and capital improvement budgets*, *increasing part-time staff*, *recreation planning*, addressing user conflicts, and improving linkages and connectivity as priorities. The 2007 study included 8 of the top 10 management priorities (italicized) identified in the 2004 study.

Conservation chairpersons identified *protection of important natural areas*, *resource acquisition*, *recreation planning*, *increasing capital funding budgets*, *regional planning for trails and open space*, and *recruiting and retaining volunteers* as their key management priorities. Six of the top 7 management priorities (italicized) identified in the 2007 survey were in the top 10 priorities noted in the 2004 study.

Public recreation leaders were asked to indicate, in their own words, their top three management challenges. After condensing, coding, and categorizing their responses, the following themes emerged:

Municipal Recreation Directors' Challenges:

- Resource Management and Development
- Program Development
- Staffing
- Financing and Budgeting

Conservation Commission Challenges:

- Resource Management and Protection
- Education
- Staffing and Volunteers
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Oversight and Enforcement
- Planning and Public Policy
- Financing

Consistent with past SCORP survey efforts (1997, 2000, 2003), the 2007 Outdoor Recreation Leaders' Survey attempted to identify critical partnership efforts between various community groups to facilitate recreation delivery. The survey asked respondents to rank the *importance* of partnering with a variety of community groups and organizations, and asked them to rate their organization's *actual level of engagement* with these groups. By doing this, we were able to conduct a basic Importance-Performance analysis and identify potential partnerships that could be enhanced.

Respondents indicated that more effort should be placed on engaging in partnerships with the following groups, where applicable (results are ranked based on the significance level of differences between Importance-Performance scores):

Municipal Recreation Departments should focus on engaging in partnerships with the following groups (where applicable):

- Conservation Commissions
- Trails Groups
- Private Landowners
- Planning/Zoning Boards
- State Agencies (DRED, OEP, DES)
- Tourism/Visitor's Bureaus
- Hospitals or Health Care Providers
- Colleges/Universities
- Public Housing Authority
- Schools
- Chambers of Commerce
- Senior Citizens' Councils
- Boards of Selectmen/City Councils

Conservation Commissions should focus on engaging in partnerships with the following groups (where applicable):

- Parks and Recreation Departments
- Schools
- Private Landowners
- Boards of Selectmen/City Councils
- Businesses
- Hospitals or Health Care Providers
- Trails Groups
- Voluntary Community Groups (sports-related)
- Voluntary Community Groups (non-sports related)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Planning/Zoning Boards
- Police Departments
- Senior Citizens' Councils
- State Agencies (DRED, OEP, DES)
- Tourism/Visitors' Bureaus
- Public Housing Authority
- Transportation/Public Works Departments

Interestingly, both recreation directors and conservation chairpersons noted that their organization's biggest partnership gap was with each other! The areas of commonality between these two groups, especially related to natural resources management and outdoor recreation provision, indicates an area ripe for partnership.

Recreation leaders indicated a number of significant benefits that accrue from their partnership efforts. Both municipal recreation directors and conservation chairpersons noted that partnerships help them better serve their constituents, increase their visibility

in the community, avoid duplication of services, contribute to solving community problems, contribute to community development efforts, avoid unnecessary competition with other organizations, meet their organizational mandates, enhance their organization's prestige, and increase access to additional funding. In addition, municipal recreation directors indicated that their partnerships allowed them to gain access to additional recreation facilities, while conservation leaders noted that their partnerships helped them to acquire and/or provide access to land and/or natural areas.

5. FOCUS OF 2008-2013 SCORP

Since the 2003-2007 SCORP continues to be relevant, this plan has two main components. The first is to review and update elements of the 2003-2007 SCORP. The second is to identify changes and trends in New Hampshire's population, recreation resources and needs. This plan continues to provide guidance for how New Hampshire expends federal LWCF monies on a community level and provides direction for addressing statewide recreational issues.

Chapter 2 provides a summary of available statistics and data related to the supply and demand for outdoor recreation. National and statewide trends are highlighted in the beginning and summarized throughout. Specific regional issues and trends were not identified in this planning process due to financial, staffing, and time constraints.¹

Chapter 3 provides information about recreation issues of statewide importance. The highlights of each issue are summarized in the beginning, followed by reference information about programs and initiatives that frame the issue in New Hampshire. Using this information as a foundation, goals, objectives and strategies are then provided to act as a framework for New Hampshire to address these issues. Some strategies relate directly to how LWCF funds could be expended, while other strategies consist of broader policy or practical recommendations. Though some recommendations are targeted to specific agencies/organizations, many can be applied on either a statewide, regional, or local level.

¹ It is recommended that future SCORP planning efforts examine demand and need on both a regional and statewide level to better integrate trends/findings from this plan with other regional and local planning efforts.

CHAPTER 2: SUPPLY, DEMAND, AND NEED

1. MAJOR TRENDS

National Trends and Management Considerations

Outdoor recreation is a fundamental aspect of life for most Americans. Almost everyone participates in some kind of outdoor recreational activity. The most popular are casual activities such as walking, sightseeing, and visiting beaches. Demand for most activities is increasing because of the sheer increase in population, growing popularity of these activities, and for health reasons. More people are participating in a wider variety of activities today than was the case 10 or 20 years ago. These changes are well documented in many of the current surveys, recreation magazines and health promotion programs. National recreation associations have begun to address these changes in their training workshops, conferences and publications for professions.

To address this trend, the National Recreation and Park Association assembled hundreds of park and recreation directors, advocates, and elected officials from across the country in Chicago in May 2007 for the inaugural Summit on Urban Parks and Recreation. The outcome was to provide guiding principles to the nation's professional leadership. While the initial focus was on urban parks, the impact of this blue ribbon assemblage is long-term and far-reaching. One of the primary outcomes of the conference was the adoption of a National Agenda which contains a call to action to government agencies, elected officials and citizens that is based on four guiding principles:

- That urban parks and recreation promote health and wellness;
- That urban parks and recreation stimulate community and economic development;
- That urban parks protect the environment; and
- That urban parks educate, protect and enrich America's young people, families and seniors.

Although New Hampshire does not have many urban parks, the National Recreation and Park Association and the leaders who attended this Summit have identified the crucial issues that are on the cutting edge of recreation planning.

Below are several specific national management considerations identified in *Outdoor Recreation in American Life* (Cordell, 1999) that remain relevant today and provide useful guidance in framing general recreation trends in New Hampshire.

- The most popular sites will experience greater congestion in the future.
- There will likely be more conflicts among recreationists as they vie for use of the same areas at the same times.
- Access to both developed sites and dispersed areas will become an even more important management issue.

- Changes in race, age, income, culture, etc. will continue to change the type of demand for recreation opportunities, and overall demand will continue to increase.
- America is confronted with an obesity crisis that threatens our nation's health, economy and future; it is important that physical activity is seen as a viable strategy for disease prevention and health promotion for all people.
- The number of organized groups (representing a wider variety of outdoor recreation interests) will continue to grow and will have an increasingly large voice in public land management.
- Pressure is expected to be particularly heavy at already popular water sites, especially with advances in technology.
- Travel and tourism will continue to grow if transportation and access to resources remains affordable and available.

Additional national considerations include:

- In less than five years the majority of the U.S. population will be age 45 or older (National Recreation and Park Association, *Parks and Recreation, October 2005*).
- The Caucasian population is expected to decrease from 76 percent to 50 percent by the year 2020 (National Recreation and Park Association, *Parks and Recreation, October 2006*).
- The environmental, social, psychological and spiritual implications of "nature-deficit disorder." (*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv, 2006).

Mounting scientific evidence corroborates the theory of global warming. Although no comprehensive study on the impact of global warming on recreation exists, anecdotal observations and data on individual activities and specific geographical areas, including New Hampshire, is mounting.

- "A growing body of research has shown a close connection between fluctuations in the northeastern Pacific marine ecosystems and large scale features of Pacific climate...Large die-offs have been observed among higher-level predators like sea-birds, marine mammals and some salmon populations during the strong climate warming events of 1983 and 1997/98." ("Potential Consequences of Global Warming for the Northwestern US: Water Resources and Marine Ecosystems" <http://www.usgcrp.gov/usgcrp/seminars/980513FP.htm>)
- "Already, Switzerland's Matterhorn had to be closed to some (rock) climbing at times because of recent summer rock-fall attributed to global warming and its Great Aletsch Glacier, Europe's largest, has retreated a couple miles from its peak...in 1860". ("Climbers becoming reluctant witnesses to global warming" (<http://www.zidaho.com/sharedcontent/northwest/trave/stories/NW041107ENBclimbersK>))
- "...as global warming lessens the extreme cold that normally keeps mountain bark beetles in check, they are multiplying and infesting white bark pines...and

threatening the trees with extinction. White bark pines are an important source of food for grizzly bears, and their loss would drive the bears into more populated areas in search of food..." impacting recreational camping areas. ("Global Warming Puts 12 US Parks at Risk"

<http://www.planetark.com/avantgo/dailynewstory.cfm?newsid=37391>).

- Many regions, states and agencies have begun to review and discuss the impacts of global warming on their economy, environment, and recreation; i.e. US Global Change Research Program, Great Lakes Region, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation, National Parks, Oregon, Wisconsin, Utah, and New York to name a few. (Wake, Cameron and Elizabeth Burakowski (2006). *Winter Recreation and Climate Variability in New Hampshire: 1984-2006*)

State Trends

Several other information sources also provide data that helps to frame outdoor recreational trends in the state. The findings and trends listed below are meant to provide a general flavor for recreation demand and need across New Hampshire. Refer to the details in this 2008-2013 SCORP, or to the original data source, for more detailed information.

- A majority of recreational land acreage is found in the northern part of New Hampshire. Greater numbers of smaller recreational sites are found in the southern part of the state.
- On average, slightly more than 51.3 percent of New Hampshire land acres were enrolled in Current Use as of 2005. Statewide, almost 47 percent of Current Use Lands received the recreational adjustment that same year. (Department of Revenue Administration, Current Use Report 2005.)
- State parks have seen an increase in attendance. Current estimates indicate state parks saw around 6.69 million visitors in 2001.
- According to the *Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study* (OEP, 1997) US Forest Service Data shows a 23 percent increase in trail use in the White Mountain National Forest between 1974 and 1995.
- Wheeled off-highway vehicle registrations, both in state and out-of-state, are increasing. Total registrations have more than doubled in the last ten years. Out-of-state registrations have more than tripled.
- In-state snowmobile registrations had been increasing annually from 1996/97 to 2000/2001 winter season. Since 2000/2001 they have fluctuated, reaching an all time low in 2005/2006. Non-residential snowmobile registrations have followed a similar pattern.
- Boating registrations doubled between 1980 and 1990 alone and increased over 19 percent between 1990 and 2000, reaching a peak of almost 13 percent growth in 2001. Since then the annual rate of increase is just shy of one percent.

- According to the 2005 Census, the average age in New Hampshire is increasing. The average age in 2005 was 39.5 years; in 2000, 37.1; in 1990, 32.8; and in 1980, 30.1. Following this trend, the estimated population change in New Hampshire from 2005 to 2020 for the 70-74 age groups is 140.0 percent and for ages 75-79, 72 percent. These ages represent a population that continues to be healthy and active.
- According to U.S. statistics, New England as a region has higher income levels than the U.S. average. New Hampshire is the sixth highest and Connecticut, the first. People with middle incomes tend to show higher participation rates in outdoor recreation than those with low incomes.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the state's population increased by over 11 percent. The rate of increase from 2000 to 2005 slowed to 6.0 percent. Even with the slowed growth, the increase in population means the demand for outdoor recreation opportunities (as measured by participation level) is also likely to increase.
- Many of the most popular activities in New Hampshire are similar to those identified in nationwide studies. Wildlife observation, driving for pleasure, sightseeing, and jogging/running/walking are extremely popular activities. Additionally, these activities show a high frequency of participation. Day hiking tends to be more popular in New Hampshire than the national average.
- Native New Hampshire residents have higher participation rates than non-natives for several different outdoor recreational activities including hunting, fishing, motor sports, activities that require developed settings, and active pursuits (e.g. swimming, jogging, hiking, rock climbing, etc.).
- The most popular activities in the WMNF include viewing wildlife and natural features, sightseeing, hiking and walking, general relaxation, driving for pleasure on forest roads, cross-country skiing, and developed camping.
- Available LWCF grants in 2005 and 2006 fell far below the demand for funding. In those two years, there were 37 local proposals totaling almost \$740,000 in requests. A total of 10 grants equaling \$200,000 were awarded.
- A majority of recreation leaders (recreation directors) surveyed in a 2007 UNH survey felt that local recreational demand exceeds supply for a range of recreation resources, including athletic fields, bike lanes/paths, pet/dog parks, skateboard parks, public campsites, and greenway corridors. (Wake, Cameron and Elizabeth Burakowski (2006). *Winter Recreation and Climate Variability in New Hampshire: 1984-2006.*)
- Half of recreation directors surveyed in the same study indicated that existing opportunities for motorized recreation on public lands were inadequate to meet demand.
- The impact of global warming on outdoor recreation is a critical consideration that has not been fully understood or vetted. One study, "Winter Recreation and Climate Variability in New Hampshire" at UNH (2006) indicates that global warming has a direct impact on winter recreation.

- State Parks has begun to implement the “Leave No Child Inside” initiative with a six-week program, “The Great Park Pursuit” to address the nature-deficit trend in New Hampshire.

2. RECREATION SUPPLY

New Hampshire has a rich natural and cultural heritage. Our landscape is well suited to a wide range of recreational pursuits, enjoyed by residents and tourists alike. This heritage is an important reason why New Hampshire continues to be a popular place to visit and an even more attractive place to call home.

Residents of New Hampshire have a strong connection with the outside environment. In the University of New Hampshire (1997) study of New Hampshire residents, *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment*, over 81 percent said that New Hampshire’s scenic beauty and cultural heritage were important to them personally. Sixty-one (61) percent of respondents agreed that outdoor recreation plays a central role in their lives. Given recreation’s centrality, planning for outdoor recreation is important to help ensure that high-quality recreational opportunities remain available for future generations. Planning is also necessary to ensure that the state’s natural and cultural heritage is maintained in the face of changing conditions and trends. Understanding the quality and quantity of New Hampshire’s recreation supply, as well as trends in demand, provides some guidance and direction to the planning process.

An understanding of “recreational supply” can be gained through quantitative inventories of existing facilities and resources as well as through more qualitative means of gauging resource conditions. Maps and inventories in New Hampshire exist for both conservation lands and for lands with recreational facilities. County-level divisions provide a starting place for understanding regional variations that may exist beyond a reported statewide average. Figure 1 shows a map of New Hampshire’s 10 counties.



Figure 1. Counties of New Hampshire

Conservation Lands in New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Geographically Referenced Analysis and Information Transfer System, better known as GRANIT, maintains a comprehensive statewide database of geographic-related information. The statewide conservation lands layer provides acreage and ownership information about both publicly and privately held conservation land holdings with either permanent or limited protection. This database is also available on-line through the GRANIT Conservation Lands Viewer (<http://.mapper.granit.unh.edu>).

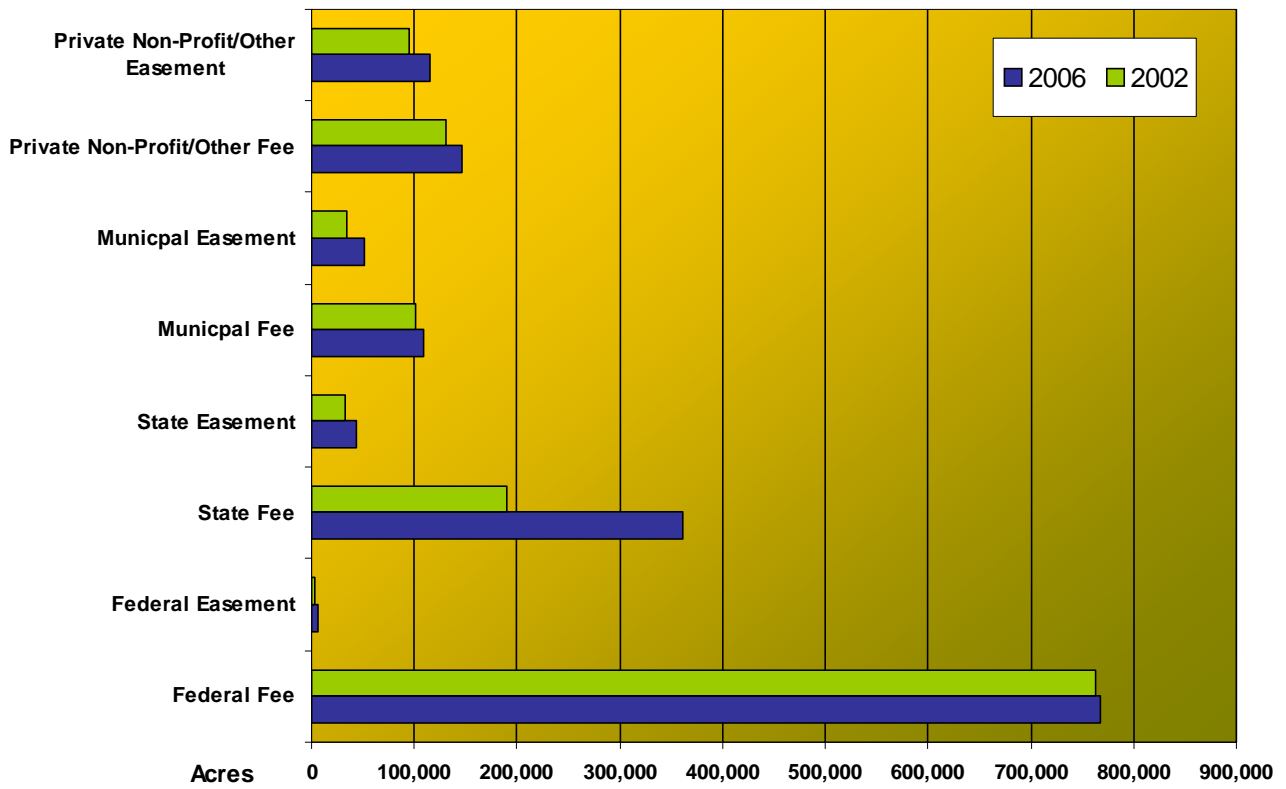
Table 1 and Graph 1 provide a summary of the public and private fee and easement holdings by acreage across the state. The large increase in “State Easements” between 2002 and 2006 is due to the conservation acquisition of the 171,500-acre Connecticut Lakes Headwaters area in northern Coos County (25,000 acres purchased by the Fish and Game Department; 100 acres purchased by the Division of Parks and Recreation; and 146,400 acres conserved by easement).

Table 1. Conservation Lands by Owner and Protection Type			
	Acres		
Ownership/Protection Type	2002	2006	Increase
Federal Fee	762,535	767,830	5,295
Federal Easement	3,808	5,739	1,931
State Fee	189,602	361,828	172,226
State Easement	32,854	43,211	10,357
Municipal Fee	101,413	109,304	7,891
Municipal Easement	34,361	50,627	16,266
Private Non-Profit/Other Fee	130,991	145,910	14,919
Private Non-Profit/Other Easement	94,724	115,871	21,147
TOTALS	1,350,288	1,600,320	250,032

Source: GRANIT, 2006

Open space and conservation lands provide opportunities for many different recreational activities. These can range from developed, intensively used parks to remote wilderness experiences. While some parcels in this inventory may contain areas managed expressly for recreation, a majority of these lands are managed with a broader set of goals in mind. Other, sometimes overriding, management goals might include preserving wildlife habitat, maintaining productive forest or agricultural lands, or protecting water quality or rare or endangered species. In some cases, protected lands may only be available for dispersed low impact recreation. In some cases, public access might not be allowed at all. Access varies and it is important to know and respect the landowner’s wishes before entering into either public or privately held conservation lands.









Graph 1. Conservation Lands by Owner and Protection Type

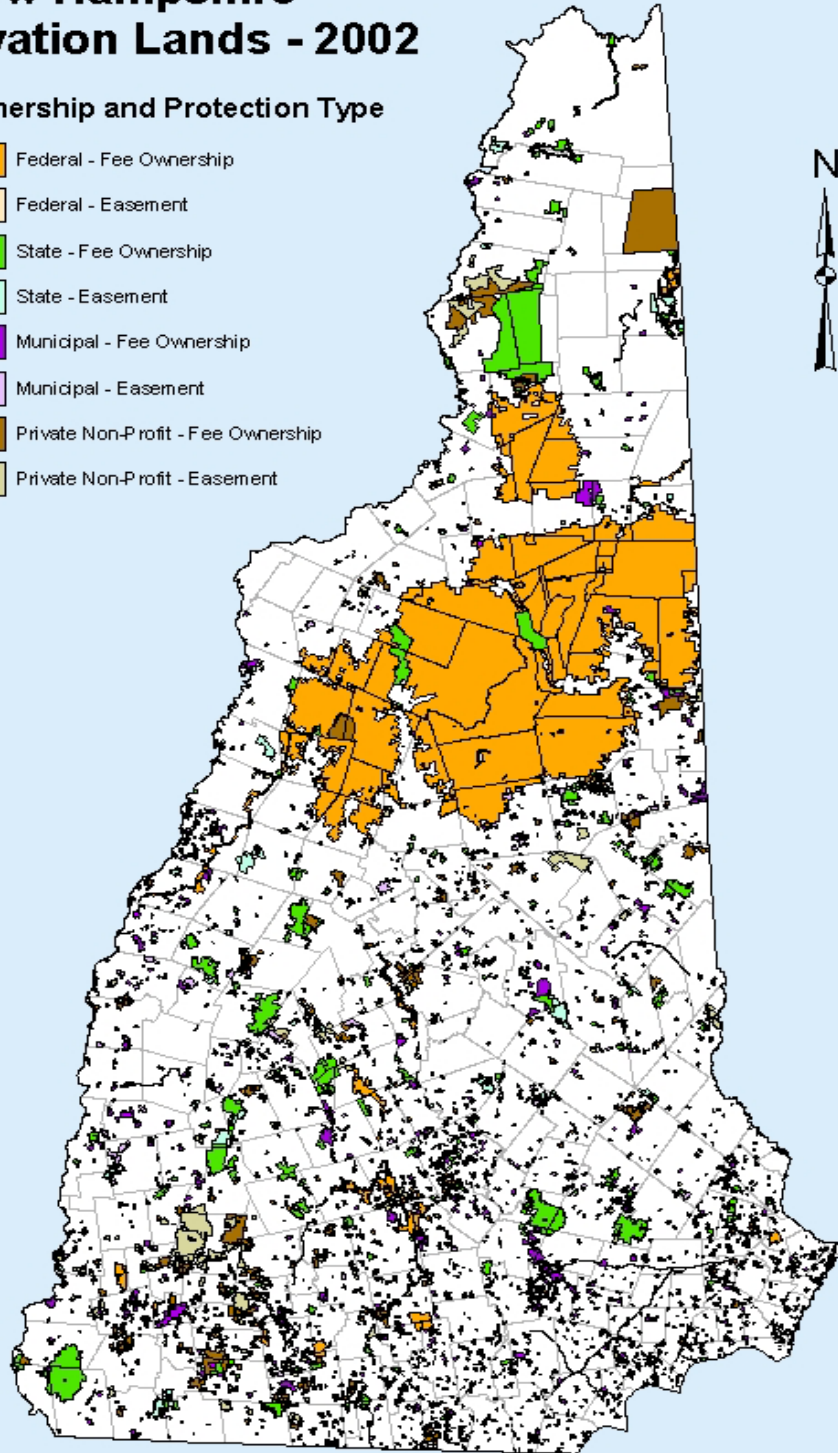


Source: GRANIT, 2006

New Hampshire Conservation Lands - 2002

Land Ownership and Protection Type

-  Federal - Fee Ownership
-  Federal - Easement
-  State - Fee Ownership
-  State - Easement
-  Municipal - Fee Ownership
-  Municipal - Easement
-  Private Non-Profit - Fee Ownership
-  Private Non-Profit - Easement



Map produced at NH Office of State Planning, Oct. 2002.

Figure 2a. Public and Private Conservation Lands in New Hampshire: 2002

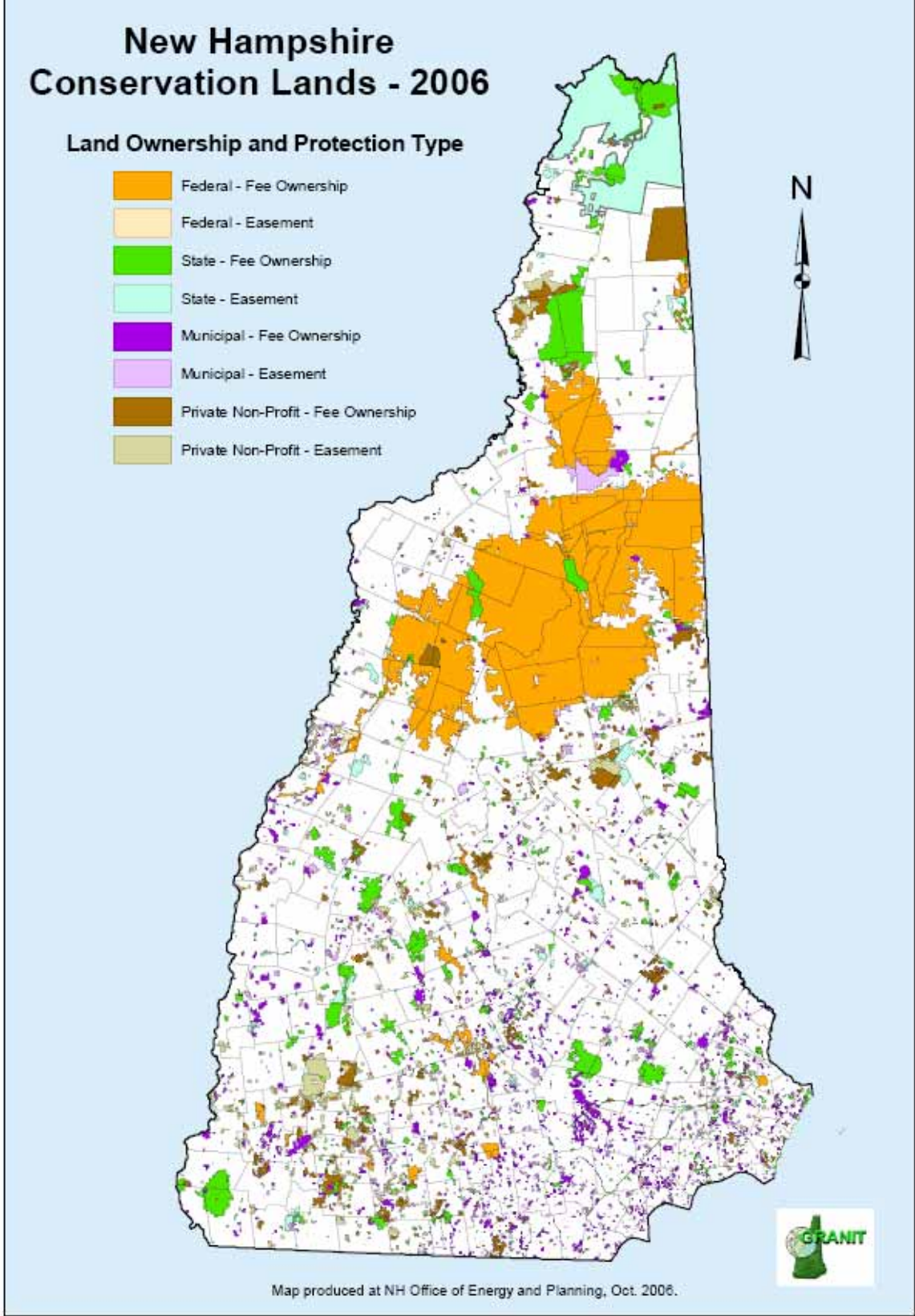


Figure 2b. Public and Private Conservation Lands in New Hampshire: 2006

Figures 2a and 2b provide a visual snapshot of the state’s conservation lands, categorized by private and public ownership and the change since 2002.

OEP Recreation Inventory

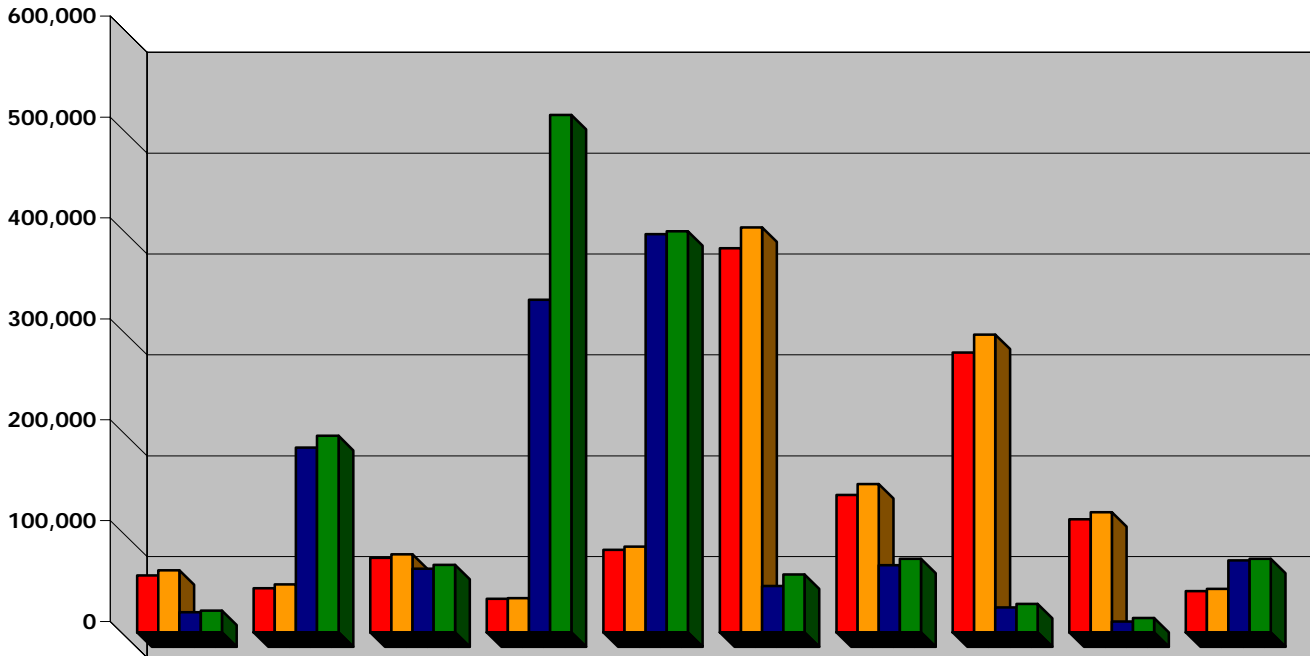
In addition to information on conservation lands, the Office of Energy and Planning periodically updates a statewide inventory of outdoor recreation lands in New Hampshire. The most recent statewide recreation inventory was conducted in 2007, updating the previous 1997 and 1981 inventories. This inventory provides basic information about ownership and self-reported acreage at over 4,000 sites across the state, as well as information about general types of recreational activities available at each site (Table 2). The inventory includes a majority of the conservation and open space lands mentioned in the previous section (up through 2007), along with some privately held recreational facilities/lands, municipal playing fields, playgrounds, and the like. This inventory represents the most current and complete database that is specifically devoted to identifying New Hampshire’s outdoor recreation lands/facilities.

Table 2. State and County Population Statistics Land Acreage and Recreation Supply						
County	Population		Recreation Acreage		Number of Sites	
	2000	2005	1997	2007	1997	2007
Belknap	56,325	61,547	19,884	21,437	251	265
Carroll	43,666	47,439	183,075	194,737	326	328
Cheshire	73,825	77,287	63,056	66,733	339	341
Coos	33,111	33,655	329,618	512,809	271	286
Grafton	81,743	84,708	394,660	397,590	427	447
Hillsborough	380,841	401,291	46,916	57,196	587	625
Merrimack	136,225	146,881	66,411	72,814	427	440
Rockingham	277,359	295,076	24,749	28,232	604	686
Strafford	112,233	119,015	10,752	14,054	253	264
Sullivan	40,458	43,041	71,091	72,835	175	175
TOTALS	1,235,786	1,309,940	1,210,212	1,438,437	3660	3857

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2005 US Census – New Hampshire;
OEP, 1997 and 2007 New Hampshire Outdoor Recreation Inventory

Graph 2 shows that a majority of the recreational lands are in the northern part of the state. Almost 36 percent of lands identified in this inventory are in Coos County. Adding Grafton and Carroll to this, the three northern counties comprise nearly 77 percent of the state’s recreation lands. The White Mountain National Forest and Northern Forest makes up a substantial part of this total.

Graph 2. County Population vs. Recreation Acreage in 1997 and 2007



	Belknap	Carroll	Cheshire	Coos	Grafton
Population 2000	56,325	43,666	73,825	33,111	81,743
Population 2005	61,547	47,439	77,287	33,655	84,708
Acreage 2003	19,884	183,075	63,056	329,618	394,660
Acreage 2007	21,437	194,737	66,733	512,809	397,590

	Hillsborough	Merrimack	Rockingham	Strafford	Sullivan
Population 2000	380,841	136,225	277,359	112,233	40,651
Population 2005	401,291	146,881	295,076	119,015	43,041
Acreage 2003	45,916	66,414	24,749	10,752	71,091
Acreage 2007	57,196	72,814	28,232	14,054	72,835

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2005 US Census – New Hampshire;
OEP, 1997 and 2007 New Hampshire Outdoor Recreation Inventory

In general, the northern part of the state can broadly be characterized by large land holdings with fewer larger individual recreational areas. The southern part of the state by contrast contains a larger number of smaller recreation sites. This difference makes intuitive sense given that the major population centers of the state are generally found in the southern part of the state, and the large tracts of protected land are located towards the north. While this information provides a general understanding of how recreational lands

are distributed across the state, it does not shed much light on the types of recreational lands or their ownership.

Table 3 shows the breakdown of recreation lands by a set of activity types. The activity types presented below are only broad classifications and do not necessarily offer a detailed look at each site. While this statewide inventory provides a sampling of activities available at each site, not all possible (or most popular) recreational opportunities were identified during the inventory process. Because of this, it is important to keep in mind that many of the individual sites may provide opportunities beyond that reflected by the classifications listed below. Additionally, while not an “outdoor” recreation, fitness centers are beginning to be identified as recreational facilities in the state’s recreation database. This trend in fitness (along with walking in malls) may ultimately result in increased demand for recreational facilities.

Table 3. Number of Sites by Selected Activity Types																
	Camp-grounds		Field Sport Areas		Golf Courses		Historic Areas		Natural/Passive Recreation Areas		Parks, Picnic, Playgrounds		Water Access Sports		Winter Sports	
Year	'00	'05	'00	'05	'00	'05	'00	'05	'00	'05	'00	'05	'00	'05	'00	'05
Belknap	36	34	30	31	12	10	1	2	54	57	29	32	76	80	1	3
Carroll	64	59	28	28	10	9	8	9	110	111	21	24	67	68	10	14
Cheshire	27	26	59	56	17	7	3	3	140	146	42	43	44	47	3	1
Coos	29	28	24	24	9	9	2	2	110	122	36	35	44	47	6	6
Grafton	53	53	75	85	15	14	9	9	138	145	34	31	61	66	16	17
Hillsborough	31	28	144	149	20	20	12	14	213	247	96	100	49	54	7	7
Merrimack	23	23	82	76	13	10	19	21	158	173	55	59	61	66	9	7
Rockingham	41	42	160	159	24	23	22	26	191	263	178	178	63	68	5	6
Strafford	21	22	54	46	7	7	6	5	98	104	37	46	22	25	3	3
Sullivan	10	10	25	23	5	6	6	6	52	53	36	35	31	32	2	2
STATEWIDE	335	325	681	677	132	115	88	97	1264	1420	564	583	518	553	62	66

Source: 2007 OEP Recreation Inventory

Sites categorized as natural and passive recreation lands together represent the largest number of recreational lands available in the state. This is followed by sites categorized as field sport areas and then water sport areas. While there are over 1260 field sport areas, parks, and playgrounds identified in the state, many are small in size and probably represent only a small fraction of the total acreage.

An area that has the potential to provide growth in public outdoor recreation is the inclusion of public access rights to lands conserved by easement. The Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Easement guarantees the public’s access for a wide variety of primary uses (so called “traditional uses”) to include hunting, fishing, trapping, snowmobiling, hiking, walking, etc., plus the incorporation of secondary uses such as ATV use.

Looking regionally, Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties have the largest populations and are also home to the largest number of field sport areas, park/picnic areas, and golf courses. Given that people tend to participate (or want to participate) in these activities close to home, it is important that a higher proportion of these sites be located near the larger population bases. Greater supplies of certain types of recreation facilities provide the public with greater opportunities to participate in that recreational activity.

This data also shows that Belknap County had the highest number of water sports and fishing areas, while Strafford County had the fewest. Hillsborough, Merrimack, and Rockingham Counties had the highest total of natural areas or “passive” recreation areas, though many of these are smaller in size than the sites listed in counties to the north or west.

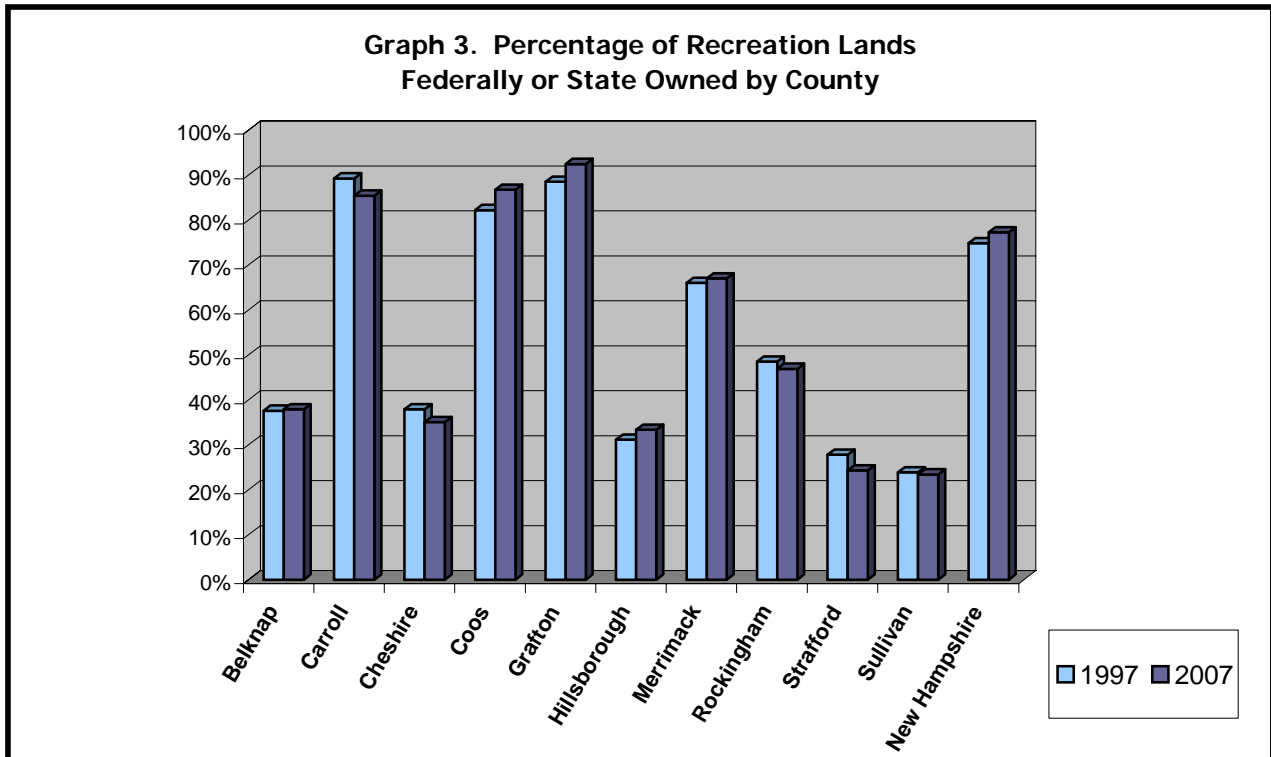
Table 4 provides a county-level breakdown of recreational lands by owner type. These figures provide baseline information about how public and private recreational lands are dispersed across the state. Private lands under Current Use Taxation are not included in this recreation inventory. Current Use lands are examined separately in this report.

According to these 2007 figures, public lands continue to make up the bulk of the identified recreational acreage in New Hampshire. The federal or state government owns about 77 percent of total recreation acres in this inventory. Private non-profit organizations own about 11.72 percent and private for-profit entities own almost six percent, down from nearly seven percent in 1997. Municipalities and schools make up the two smallest distinct categories. Municipalities own approximately 3.85 percent, down from 3.91 percent in 1997, and schools own less than one percent.

Table 4. Recreational Land Acreage by Owner Type								
	Total Recreation Acres	Federal Acres	State Acres	Municipal Acres	School Acres	Private Non-Profit Acres	Private For- Profit Acres	Other Acres
Belknap	21,430	1,740	6,385	3,045	442	5,511	2,508	1,800
Carroll	194,737	148,065	18,244	2,690	346	1,498	13,893	0
Cheshire	66,733	2,521	20,871	5,091	786	34,288	3,167	9
Coos	512,809	231,712	232,940	7,708	430	30,390	29,678	0
Grafton	397,590	342,370	25,167	4,815	268	10,929	13,999	42
Hillsborough	57,198	4,329	14,739	11,563	1,898	17,735	6,432	500
Merrimack	72,814	17,126	31,659	8,279	632	8,541	6,517	60
Rockingham	28,232	1,250	11,995	6,540	1,153	3,404	3,789	1
Strafford	14,054	0	3,416	3,560	330	4,979	1,163	607
Sullivan	72,835	82	16,973	2,067	158	51,256	2,231	68
STATEWIDE	1,438,432	749,195	362,340	55,358	6,443	168,531	83,377	3,087

Source: 2007 OEP Recreation Inventory

Graph 3 shows how this federal and state ownership is divided among New Hampshire's ten counties. The northern counties, largely due to the White Mountain National Forest and some of the larger state parks, have the highest percentage of recreational lands under state or federal ownership. Carroll, Coos and Grafton Counties all report over 80 percent. Strafford and Sullivan Counties have the smallest percentage of state and federal recreation lands, with 30 percent or less.



Source: 2007 OEP Recreation Inventory

Supply of Public Access to Public Waters

In addition to the 1997 Recreation Inventory, the Office of Energy and Planning has completed an inventory of “public” and “other” water access sites in New Hampshire. This inventory provides a range of information about each water access site including ownership, types of facilities, and activity types. This database will be available on-line for recreation planning efforts through the Office of Energy and Planning web site, <http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/SCORP/index.htm>.

This database identifies 771 public and private access sites to recreational water resources. Data collected on activities and accessibility is an integral component of this database. To date, almost half the sites have been evaluated for accessibility. Work will continue with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities to update the database. The goal is to have all the information available to the public either directly on the Internet or in hardcopy publications.

While the database is available online to the general public, it is not easily accessible. Currently, the database is used as a planning tool. An effort to make it easily available to the public is being planned.

In the State of New Hampshire, distinction is made for water access depending upon whether it is state owned or maintained.

- “Public” or state access sites are defined under RSA 233-A:1,III as “...legal passage to any of the public waters of the state by way of designated contiguous land owned or controlled by a state agency, assuring that all members of the public shall have access to and use of the public waters for recreational purposes.”
- “Other” access is defined in the *Public Access Plan for New Hampshire’s Lakes, Ponds and Rivers* (OEP, 1991) as “...legal passage by way of designated land owned or controlled by a public entity (e.g. federal, municipal) or private entity (e.g. commercial, private nonprofit, individual landowner) for the purpose of providing active or passive recreational opportunities and/or use of the public waters of the state, and where such legal passage may or may not involve a fee.”

In addition, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG), the lead agency for public water access, maintains an up-to-date inventory of their state access sites. Though this information does not provide a comprehensive look at all (e.g. private, municipal, federal) water access sites across the state, it does provide a solid base of information about sites guaranteed by the state.

This data can also be examined by region to explore distribution of public access across the state. Table 5 below summarizes the number of public access sites by county. Information about parking is also reported to provide some indication about the type of access provided.

Table 5. NH Fish and Game Public Water Access Sites				
	Sites Listed	Trailer Parking	Canoe/Car-top Parking	Shore-bank, Roadside or Other Parking
Belknap	11	7	4	0
Carroll	10	4	5	1
Cheshire	24	15	9	0
Coos	22	12	9	1
Grafton	29	20	9	0
Hillsborough	19	15	3	1
Merrimack	44	28	9	7
Rockingham	19	12	5	2
Strafford	14	8	5	3
Sullivan	14	10	3	1
NH TOTAL	206	131	61	16

Source: NH Public Access Sites, NHFG (2007)

Overall, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Public Access Inventory lists 206 state-run public access sites on 151 different lakes, ponds and rivers. Merrimack County has the highest number of identified access sites, followed by Grafton County and Cheshire County. Canoe/cartop boat access sites increased from 46 to 61 in the past five years. There are nine canoe/cartop sites each in Cheshire, Coos, Grafton and Merrimack Counties.

This data can also be examined by comparing the number of public access sites in a region/county to the miles of available shoreline. These figures again allow for some general comparisons to be made across different counties in the state. This information provides a baseline of state-owned water access for boating and shore-bank angling. There are many “other” access opportunities provided by other public or private entities not reported in this table. Table 6 shows that, on average, New Hampshire has one public (state) water access site per 7.6 miles of shoreline. Carroll County, by far, has the fewest number of public access sites available per mile of shoreline/riverfront. Merrimack and Sullivan counties have the highest density of state-run access sites.

Table 6. Miles of Shoreline and Public Access Sites to Water			
	Public and Private Sites Listed	Miles of Shoreline and Riverbank	Miles of Shoreline Per Site
Belknap	55	420.6	7.65
Carroll	76	711.4	9.36
Cheshire	78	531.2	6.81
Coos	60	817.4	13.62
Grafton	83	820	9.88
Hillsborough	84	688.5	8.20
Merrimack	134	691.1	5.16
Rockingham	118	549.3	4.66
Strafford	46	354.4	7.70
Sullivan	37	302.6	8.18
NH SUMMARY	771	5886.5	7.63

Sources: OEP Public Access Inventory (2007) and GRANIT

Current Use Lands

The 2007 OEP Recreation Inventory contains a major portion of available recreation lands in the state but does not include the many privately held lands that are kept open at some level of traditional public access. Many activities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and snowmobiling, rely heavily on private as well as public lands. Without access to private

lands, opportunities to participate in many of these activities would be more limited and public lands would become increasingly crowded.

Capturing a true measure of the quantity of private lands open to public access is difficult. Some landowners rely on verbal agreements or informal permits, both of which are difficult or impossible to measure. Though not complete, one proxy measure is to examine lands under Current Use. The Current Use Taxation Program, under RSA 79-A, was established in 1972 to:

“...encourage the preservation of open space, thus providing a healthful and attractive outdoor environment for work and recreation, maintaining the character of the state’s landscape, and conserving the land, water, forest, agricultural and wildlife resources.”

Under this program, parcels of land (10 acre minimum) are taxed based on their current use value as open space rather than on their potential value for development purposes.

Table 7 provides statistics about the percentage of total land acres in each county (water acres not included), acres in Current Use, and the resulting percentage of total land acres that are in Current Use. On average, slightly more than 52 percent of New Hampshire land acres were enrolled in Current Use in 2001. Over the past 5 years, pressures from development have resulted in land taken out of Current Use in Coos, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan Counties, resulting in an overall decrease in land in Current Use from 52.4 percent to 51.3 percent or 63,304 acres. Sullivan County still reports the highest percentage of land in Current Use (67.4 percent), while Rockingham County still reports the smallest percentage at 35 percent.

Table 7. Current Use Lands - 2005			
County	Total Land Acres	Acres in Current Use	Percentage of Land in Current Use
Belknap	257,726.30	136,535.67	53.0%
Carroll	598,386.75	217,825.62	36.4%
Cheshire	452,910.78	290,161.07	64.1%
Coos	1,153,614.25	707,135.48	61.3%
Grafton	1,096,323.54	497,473.39	45.4%
Hillsborough	561,351.43	265,373.37	47.3%
Merrimack	597,481.35	329,236.11	55.1%
Rockingham	446,221.19	156,315.42	35.0%
Strafford	235,092.87	115,517.79	49.1%
Sullivan	344,219.13	231,863.62	67.4%
NH TOTAL	5,743,327.59	2,947,437.54	51.3%

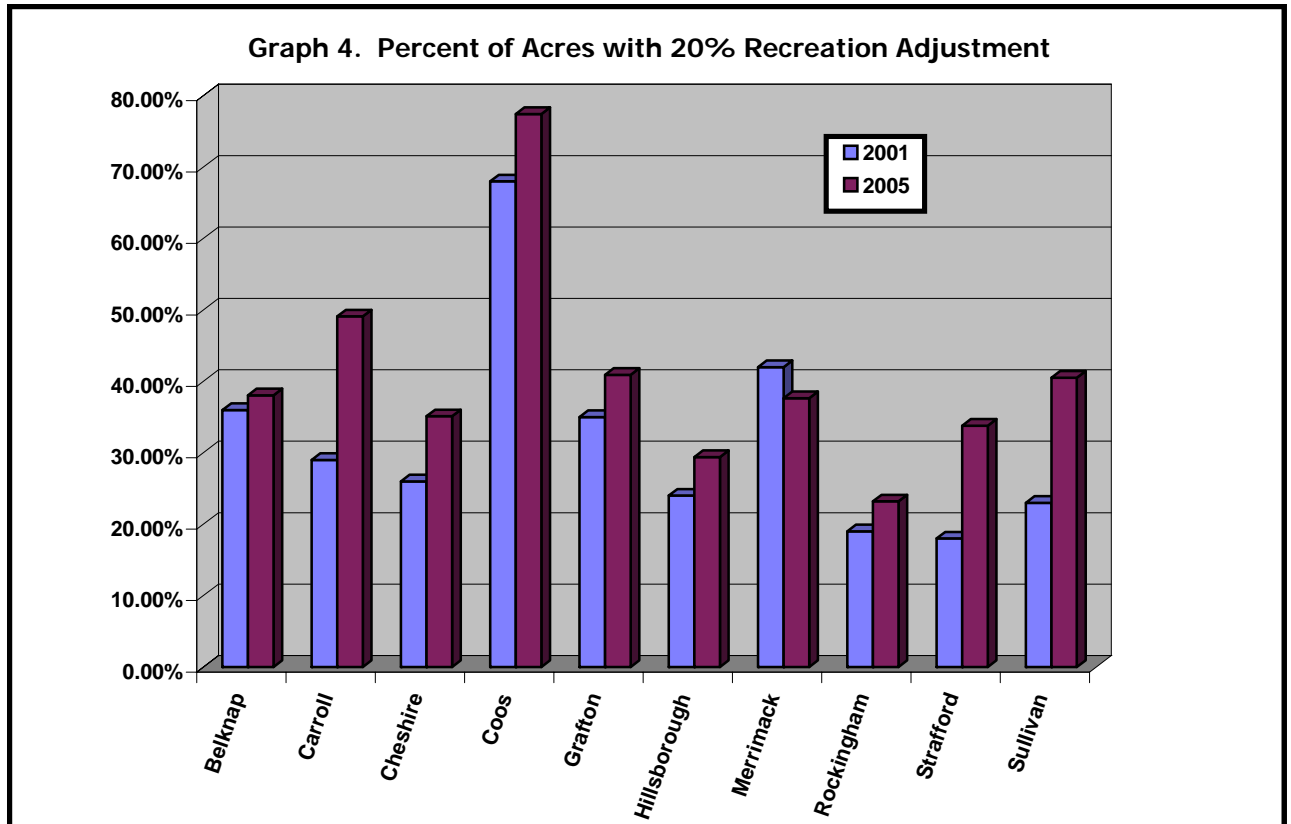
Source: Department of Revenue Administration, Current Use Report 2005

Although the total land under Current Use has decreased, the percentage of land available for recreation has increased because more landowners are taking the “recreation adjustment.” This recreation adjustment lowers a landowner’s tax burden by an additional 20 percent if the land is kept open to the public for traditional forms of recreation. The six traditional forms of recreation are skiing, snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking, and nature observation. Access must be available year-round unless these activities are detrimental to crops on agricultural lands or active forestry operations.

Table 8 summarizes the percentage of Current Use lands that received this recreational adjustment. Graph 4 shows the percent of acres with 20 percent recreation adjustment by county. Statewide in 2005, about 47 percent of Current Use lands received the recreation adjustment, up 8 percent from 39 percent in 2001, an increase of 176,053 acres. All of the counties, except Merrimack, had an increase in recreation adjustment. Coos County is the only county that has a majority of its Current Use lands receiving the recreational adjustment.

Table 8. Current Use Lands with Recreational Adjustment - 2005			
County	Acres in Current Use	Acres with 20% Recreation Adjustment	Percentage of Current Use Acres Receiving Recreation Adjustment
Belknap	136,535.67	51,934.39	38.0%
Carroll	217,825.62	106,940.31	49.1%
Cheshire	290,161.07	101,871.83	35.1%
Coos	707,135.48	547,550.14	77.4%
Grafton	497,473.39	203,593.64	40.9%
Hillsborough	265,373.37	78,010.97	29.4%
Merrimack	329,236.11	123,959.63	37.7%
Rockingham	156,315.42	36,267.51	23.2%
Strafford	115,517.79	39,047.20	33.8%
Sullivan	231,863.62	93,920.05	40.5%
NH TOTAL	2,947,437.54	1,383,095.67	46.9%

Source: Department of Revenue Administration, Current Use Report 2005



Source: Department of Revenue Administration, Current Use Report 2001 and 2005

State Lands

State lands are held and managed by several different state agencies. Some of the main agencies with lands open to recreational use include the Department of Resources and Economic Development, the Fish and Game Department, the Department of Environmental Services, and the Department of Transportation.

The Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) holds, or has an interest in, over 160,000 acres of public lands open to some level of recreational access. Lands held by DRED are identified as state parks, state forests, or other lands. Other lands include state beaches, natural areas, wayside parks, historic sites, campgrounds and ski areas. Table 9 provides a breakdown by major category.

Table 9. DRED Lands and Reservations - 2006		
	Properties	Acres
State Forests	131	95,347
State Parks	48	67,757
Other Lands (wayside parks, natural areas, state beaches, campgrounds, historic sites, ski areas)	36	3,922
Total DRED Lands and Reservations	215	167,026

Source: Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), 2006

While it is useful to know if a parcel is identified as a state park or state forest, it may be more informative to understand how these lands are managed. DRED follows four use-based classifications. These classifications presented in Table 10 below, include recreation lands, forestry lands, conservation easement lands, and agricultural lands.

Table 10. DRED – Use Classifications

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ DRED owns 16,494 Acres of Recreation Lands. Recreation Lands are defined as lands that have or plan to have developed recreation and/or administrative facilities, or provide moderate to high tourist attraction or user interest and include those adjoining areas that are an integral part of the same. See State Parks and Recreation (www.nhparks.state.nh.us/) for more information.➤ DRED owns 150,533 Acres of Forestry Lands. These are lands that are not a part of a developed recreation or administrative area. These lands support multiple uses (e.g. forestry, hiking, snowshoeing) not associated with developed recreation (e.g. picnic areas, developed camping).➤ DRED holds a partial interest on 214,682 Acres of Conservation Easement Lands. These are privately owned lands where partial interest has been deeded to the state for the purpose of protecting the land from development. These lands are often subject to public access rights (e.g. hiking, snowshoeing, nature observation).➤ DRED owns 412 Acres of Agricultural Lands. These are lands leased for agricultural purposes and which are eligible for taxation by local assessing officials as provided by RSA 72:23-l(b), as amended.
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Source: DRED, 2006

Fish and Game Department (NHFG). According to recent estimates, New Hampshire Fish and Game owns 43,467 acres in fee and holds conservation easements on 14,810 acres. Looking more specifically at types of holdings, NHFG owns or manages 909 acres of boat or angling access sites, 4,240 acres of wetlands area, 17,107 acres of upland area, and 831 acres related to fish hatcheries.

Department of Environmental Services (DES). The Dam Bureau within DES maintains 270 state-owned dams and other impoundment structures and 9,688 acres of property associated with many of these dams. There are approximately 60 public access sites at properties owned by DES. The department collaborates with towns, DRED, NHFG, DOT, snowmobile clubs, private landowners, and other states to provide these public access sites. Most facilities are low-impact, providing canoe/car-top access. Some of the uses of these access areas include boat launching, picnicking, snowmobiling, fishing, swimming, scenic viewing and conservation lands. The Bureau also provides assistance to dam owners and others to restore rivers to free-flowing conditions through selective dam removal. Dam removal eliminates barriers to fish and other aquatic species, and creates new, river-based recreational opportunities.

Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT currently manages over 400 acres of recreation and conservation lands at 142 separate locations. Included are sites the Department calls scenic easements, bike paths, scenic overlooks, roads to public waters, one park, and one trail. The park is the 10-acre Hilton Park in Dover, providing a playground, picnic tables, baseball diamond, boat launch, and fishing. The Department also owns 21 scenic easements and overlooks, the largest and most well known being the 70-acre Thirteen Mile Wood Scenic Easement in Cambridge, Dummer, and Errol along the Androscoggin River and Route 16. DOT is currently reviewing and updating an inventory of all their state-owned properties. This data will be available in 2008.

Division of Parks and Recreation-NH State Parks. The Division of Parks and Recreation has been in existence since 1961 when DRED was established, encompassing a variety of agencies with similar objectives. The legislation, RSA 216-A:1 provides management direction:

“It is the intent of the general court that a comprehensive state park system shall be developed, operated, and maintained to achieve the following purposes in order of the following priority:

- I. To protect and preserve unusual scenic, scientific, historical, recreational, and natural areas within the state.*
- II. To continually provide such additional park areas and facilities as may be necessary to meet the recreational needs of the citizens of the state.*
- III. To make these areas accessible to the public for recreational, education, scientific, and other uses consistent with their protection and preservation.*
- IV. To encourage and support tourism and related economic activity within the state.”*

Needs. In the summer of 2002, DRED - Division of Parks conducted a telephone survey of state park managers to assess conditions and trends in the state’s park system. A total of 55 managers and regional supervisors were interviewed across DRED’s three park regions: East, North and West. The East Region includes parks within the Seacoast, as well as Ahern, Bear Brook and Pawtuckaway. The North Region includes parks in Coos County and the White Mountains, as well as Wentworth State Park and White Lake State Park. The West Region includes a range of parks in Cheshire, Sullivan, Hillsborough, and Grafton Counties such as Pillsbury, Pisgah, Monadnock and Sunapee.

The brief telephone survey asked questions about the quality of state park facilities and the resource base, the ability of the park to meet demand, and the greatest needs at individual parks. The questions required managers to rank their park’s facility and resource base conditions based on a five-point scale; ranging from poor to excellent.

In all, 11 percent of park managers felt that the conditions of their state park facilities were poor. Facilities might include restrooms, parking, picnic areas, and the like. About 42 percent felt conditions were fair (rank of 2 on a five-point scale). Approximately 4 percent ranked facilities as excellent, 15 percent said conditions were very good, and the remainder, 27 percent, gave a middle rating of “good.”

Managers in the East Region gave the lowest average rating. Approximately 18 percent rated their facilities as poor and 53 percent rated facilities as fair. The remainder rated their facility conditions a mid-rating of “good.” No one in the East Region gave facility conditions a rating of “very good” or “excellent.”

On average, park managers rated the condition of the natural resource base slightly higher. In all, 13 percent rated the resource base quality as “very good” or “excellent,” 46 percent rated the resource base as “good.” About 26 percent rated the condition of the resource base as fair and 9 percent gave a poor rating. Park managers in the West Region gave the highest average rating, with 70 percent giving their resource base at least a “good” rating while 61 percent in the North Region and 44 percent in the East Region gave at least a “good” rating respectively.

Park managers were then asked if the park they manage is currently able to meet existing recreational demand. Responses were split, with about half (48 percent) indicating demand was being met, half (48 percent) said demand exceeded supply, and 4 percent giving a conditional response.

In May of 2005, a commission was established by Chapter 276 of the Laws of 2005 to study the mission of the state park system and the Division of Parks and Recreation (RSA 216-A:1) including:

- The continued efficacy of self-funding the state park system;
- The leasing of public lands and property to private interests and the circumstances under which such leasing is permissible; and
- The development of a long-term capital improvement plan for the state park system.

The commission’s report, issued in 2006, advised that in order to meet the recreational needs of the ever increasing and changing population, the following recommendations be considered:

- Historic sites: create a separate bureau to address the specific needs of these visitor destinations;
- Capital improvements: allocate substantial bonding to address the most urgent needs in the system;
- Strategic plan: develop a comprehensive strategic plan and update it regularly;

- Funding: review a wide variety of funding sources and public-private partnerships; and
- Oversight and advice: establish a statewide advisory council and expand financial support for the agency as well as the legislative reporting system.

The goals of the process are to enhance the recreational resources and ensure that state parks continue to meet the needs of residents and visitors to New Hampshire

Trails Inventory. The Office of Energy and Planning completed the Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study in 1997, an update of the 1974 Trails Study to address future trails needs and establish a recreation-planning framework for trails. While no overarching study has been done since then, the study provided baseline information from which the planning, acquisition, and maintenance of current and future trails can be measured for progress and development.

All-Terrain Vehicles and Snowmobiles. In 2001 the State of New Hampshire recognized that All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use, as a recognized recreational activity, was on the rise in the state. With registrations increasing 150 percent over the prior 10 years, a way to address the issues brought about by the use of these machines was paramount. Over the following years a number of legislative initiatives were undertaken in response. One of these initiatives was the increase in registration fees with a portion of those fees dedicated to buying land to develop ATV trails.

“A Plan for Developing New Hampshire’s Statewide Trail System for ATVs and Trail Bikes 2004-2008” issued in 2003 by DRED found that:

- The use of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and trail bikes has come to the forefront of New Hampshire’s recreational management issues;
- Approximately 22,000, or 2 out of every 100, New Hampshire residents and 4,500 non-residents currently have wheeled off-highway recreational vehicles (OHRVs);
- Over the prior several years, the state had designated 23 wheeled OHRV trails or trail systems, totaling approximately 700 miles;
- There is a great disparity between trail availability and user demand;
- Based on the number of registrations over the previous 8 years, total wheeled OHRV registrations were expected to increase by 42 percent to more than 37,000 in 2008.

The plan outline recommended steps to embark upon addressing current and future demands and can be downloaded at:

<http://www.nhtrails.org/Trailspages/ATVpages/ATVTrailSystemPlan.pdf>

Jericho Mountain State Park

In 2004 the City of Berlin approached the Bureau of Parks to find land in Berlin to attract ATV riders. The Bureau worked with local officials and found 7,200 acres to purchase. The property encompasses both sides of NH Route 110 west of Berlin proper. The State purchased the land in February of 2006 and began initial trail construction in July of the same year. On August 11, 2006 the first 15 miles of initial trail was opened for public riding. The Bureau hired Horizon's Engineering of Littleton, NH to develop the Master Plan for trail and facility development. The draft plan calls for development of 136 miles of ATV trail with a 200-site campground and other associated facilities. The final plan is not yet complete.

Snowmobiles. Currently there are approximately 6,900 miles of snowmobile trails. In comparing the 1997 data to the 1974 data, the Trails Study found that snowmobile trail mileage had increased from 7,200 miles in 1974 to 10,890 miles in 1997. According to the Bureau of Trails, the current decrease to 6,900 miles is due to land sales that break up larger parcels of land for development, and changing landowner view of public use of private lands. Both the Bureau of Trails and SPNHF anticipate that these trends will continue to be the greatest trail threat over the next five to ten years.

Snowmobile trails are the highest maintained trail mileage category in the state with hiking still ranking second. Snowmobile trail mileage is focused on protection of existing trails and increased maintenance.

Since 2002, snowmobile registrations (both resident and non-resident) appear to be decreasing (see Table 17). Whether this is due to global warming, economic trends or a fluke cannot be determined without an in-depth comparison of the data. However, data shows that there is a correlation between snowmobile registration decreases in two winters (2002 and 2006) and low snowfall totals (Wake, 2006).

Rail Trails. DRED – Bureau of Trails manages about 300 miles of state-owned rail right-of-way under a cooperative agreement with the DOT Bureau of Rail and Transit. Since 1998, the Bureau of Trails, under this agreement, has managed abandoned state-owned lines for recreation purposes. Three hundred miles are listed under this agreement. The majority of the lines have gravel or ballast surfaces, while others still have ties and ballast, requiring snow cover for safe use.²

Bicycle Routes. DOT, in conjunction with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Board and New Hampshire's Regional Planning Commissions, recently updated a set of regional bicycle maps, one for each of New Hampshire's seven travel regions (2007). These transportation maps provide information on both statewide and

² A statewide rail-trail inventory depicting rail-trail ownership and condition would be helpful for determining the quality and usability of these rights-of-way.

regional bicycle routes. This information is available on the web at DOT's Bicycle/Pedestrian Information Center (www.NHBikePed.com) or in hard copy.

Trails and Greenways. There are many different types of trail and greenway efforts underway in the state. Below are several main efforts, though certainly not an exhaustive list. For instance, there is the Monadnock Sunapee Greenway connecting Mt. Monadnock in Jaffrey, NH with Mt. Sunapee in Newbury, the evolving Wantastiquet-Monadnock Greenway linking Mt. Wantastiquet in Hinsdale with Mt. Monadnock in Jaffrey and Rindge as well as the Sunapee Ragged Kearsarge Greenway (SRKG). The SRKG Coalition is working on two new linking trails that will expand their current 75-mile loop around Lake Sunapee.

Some trails not only link New Hampshire communities but also cross state lines. Beyond the well-known Appalachian Trail, interstate trails include:

- The Cohos Trail in the northernmost part of the state, that travels from Bartlett to the Canadian Border in Pittsburg, is envisioned to connect with trails in Quebec; and
- The Quabbin to Cardigan is a public/private initiative to conserve a corridor of interconnected forests in the Monadnock Highlands. The region stretches more than 100 miles from the Quabbin Reservoir in central Massachusetts to Mount Cardigan and beyond into the White Mountains. It is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in central New England and is a key headwater area for the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers. The region features a number of large public and private recreation areas including Pisgah State Park, Mt. Monadnock, Andorra Forest, Mount Sunapee, Mount Kearsarge, Gile State Forest, Mount Cardigan, Smarts Mountain, plus numerous smaller conservation properties that are available for public recreation. Long-distance hiking trails traversing the region include the Monadnock to Metacomet Trail (currently under consideration as a National Scenic Trail), the Wapack Trail, the Monadnock to Sunapee Greenway, and the Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge (SRK) Greenway. Additional through-trail connections, ideally developed in conjunction with permanent land protection, are possible between the SRK Greenway and Mount Cardigan, and from Cardigan to the Appalachian Trail in WMNF. The region also features an extensive, interconnected network of state and club-maintained multi-use trails.

The Heritage Trail, as envisioned, will be a 230-mile walking path extending from Massachusetts to Canada along the Merrimack, Pemigewasset and Connecticut Rivers. Individual community efforts are still underway formalizing the miles of trail that are part of the Heritage Trail system. Smaller river corridor trail systems will include the Winnepesaukee River Trail from Center Harbor to Franklin, the Piscataquag River Trail in Manchester, Goffstown, and New Boston, and the Souhegan River Trail in the towns of Merrimack, Amherst, Milford and Wilton. (While the Heritage Trail is designated and managed through the Bureau of Trails, it has had inconsistent interest from communities.)

A coalition has created a Birding Trail along the Connecticut River. A series of wildlife viewing sites have been created and a series of three maps are available on the website <http://www.ctriverbirdingtrail.org/>.

At the local level, RSA 231-A:1 gives towns the authority to reclassify roads to be used as Class A or Class B trails by a vote of the legislative body. “The difference between the two (Class A and Class B trails) lies in what rights the adjoining landowner retains. “...with Class B, the owners have no special rights...With Class A trails...the owners can continue to use the trail for vehicular access for forestry, agriculture and access to *existing buildings*.” (*A Hard Road to Travel*, 2004, page 157). While this provides towns with the opportunity to expand their trail network, it may not be a permanent designation. The legislative body can also reconvert the trails back to highways.

Beyond hiking and pedestrian trails there are water trails as well. The Connecticut River Water Trail travels along the full length of the Connecticut River in Vermont and New Hampshire. The Connecticut River Joint Commissions revised and published a map and guidebook of this entire trail for boating enthusiasts in 2001.

In 2004, the City of Portsmouth received LWCF funding for the “Portsmouth Canoe-Kayak Water Trail.” This trail will connect, via signage, a new public dock at Sagamore headlands, an improved Pierce Island Boat Launch, and several important open spaces, conservation lands, and cultural resources between the City-owned Peirce Island and Sagamore Headlands. The trip length from Pierce Island to Sagamore Headlands and return is roughly two to three hours. Interpretive signs will be installed along the route to educate paddlers about various waterfronts, natural and historic resources. The plans have been completed for this project and construction is slated for completion in 2008.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail (www.northernforestcanoetrail.org) links the waterways of New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire and Maine. The route’s flat water, swift water, rivers, and lakes provide extensive opportunities for canoe and kayak recreation, complemented by inns, B&Bs and camping facilities.

3. RECREATION DEMANDS AND NEEDS

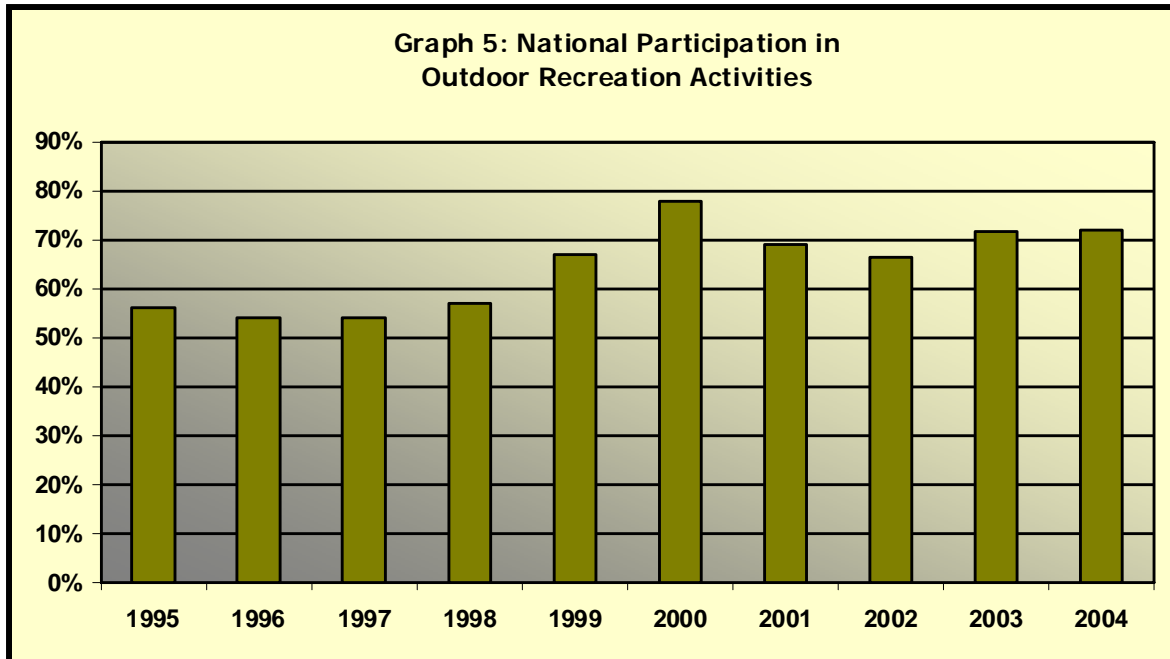
National Facts and Figures

There are several nationwide studies, conducted on a regular basis, that have helped to frame recreational demand in the U.S. These studies are particularly helpful in identifying broad trends and understanding public attitudes. The following section provides a summary of nationwide statistics and is presented to set a foundation for statewide information and data.

Roper-Starch, Inc. and the Outdoor Industry Foundation conducted national surveys on various recreation topics. The 2004 Roper-Starch Inc. and the Outdoor Industry Foundation 2006 surveys measured participation levels for outdoor recreation activities, assessed attitudes about outdoor recreation, and explored outdoor recreation’s relationship to current issues of concern and the environment. This information provides

general insights concerning recreation demand and need in the country and offers some information about trends.

Graph 5 shows the percentage of people who engage in some kind of outdoor recreation activity at least once a month. Over three-fourths (78 percent) of Americans participated in outdoor recreation at least once a month in 2000 as compared to one-half in 1994 (50 percent). After 2001, there was a substantial decrease in participation in outdoor recreation activities. In 2003 and 2004 the participation rate began to increase again, with some exceptions.



Source: Roper Starch Worldwide, Inc., Outdoor Recreation in America 2000 and Outdoor Industry Foundation Outdoor Recreation Participation Study 2003, 2004, 2005

The Outdoor Industry Foundation (2005) reports that young male adults are more likely to participate in more activities than the entire population, while conversely there has been an eight-year decline in young adult female participation. In terms of activity preferences, the activity focus is changing. Cross-country skiing, trail running, snowshoeing, and telemark skiing are increasing. Backpacking has declined.

While recent studies are not available, anecdotal information indicates that walking for exercise in neighborhoods, parks and malls is on the increase.

Participation Trends 1998-2005. To give a more historical context to recreation participation, the Outdoor Industry Foundation has been tracking a wide range of activities since 1998 and identified trends in participation. In the Outdoor Industry Foundation Outdoor Recreation Participation Study (2006) participation is evaluated by the number of Americans who participate as well as by the percentage of the population who participate (Table 11). Reporting on percentage instead of numbers provides a better look at overall demand because it takes population growth into consideration.

Table 11. Number of Participations-General Population								
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Backpacking	16.3	16.4	13.7	15.7	14.2	13.7	13.3	13.5
Bicycling	85.3	82.1	82.4	92.3	86.3	87.3	85.8	85.6
Camping	66.4	59.3	64.5	66.8	65.6	68.9	65.7	68.1
Canoeing	18.0	17.5	08.1	24.0	22.2	22.4	22.3	20.8
X-C Skiing	8.8	7.8	7.4	12.4	13.6	9.4	9.7	10.0
Hiking	72.2	72.6	66.9	75.8	73.1	71.7	75.2	76.7
Rafting	9.7	8.9	9.7	12.4	11.8	10.3	9.5	10.6
Snowshoeing	2.8	3.9	5.2	5.4	5.9	5.9	4.8	5.5
Telemark	1.3	3.8	4.7	3.9	3.2	4.2	3.6	3.5
Trail running	31.1	35.4	33.5	40.2	39.1	37.8	39.6	40.4

Source: Outdoor Recreation Participation Study: Trend Analysis for the US, 2006

The data in Table 11 shows that participation (reported by millions of Americans) has remained stable in this time period. In addition, the Outdoor Recreation Participation Study also collects data on the number of outings for each of the activities. The importance of this is that the number of outings for each of the activities was in the millions, except for the data for bicycling and trail running where the number of outings goes into the billions: 3.1 billion for bicycling and 1.3 billion for trail running in 2005. Both of these activities are close-to-home activities.

Overall participation rates can be modified by several factors including age, gender, income and education. For most activities, participation rates decline with age, increase with income (up to a certain level) and education, and increase with average household size. Males often have higher participation rates than females and Caucasians tend to have higher participation rates for most activities than other racial or minority groups.

These modifiers are certainly oversimplifications and, as always, there are some exceptions. For example, males are more likely to compete in outdoor team sports than females, and those who are 16 to 24 years old are far more likely to participate than older generations. Interestingly, however, as education increases, participation in outdoor team sports decreases.

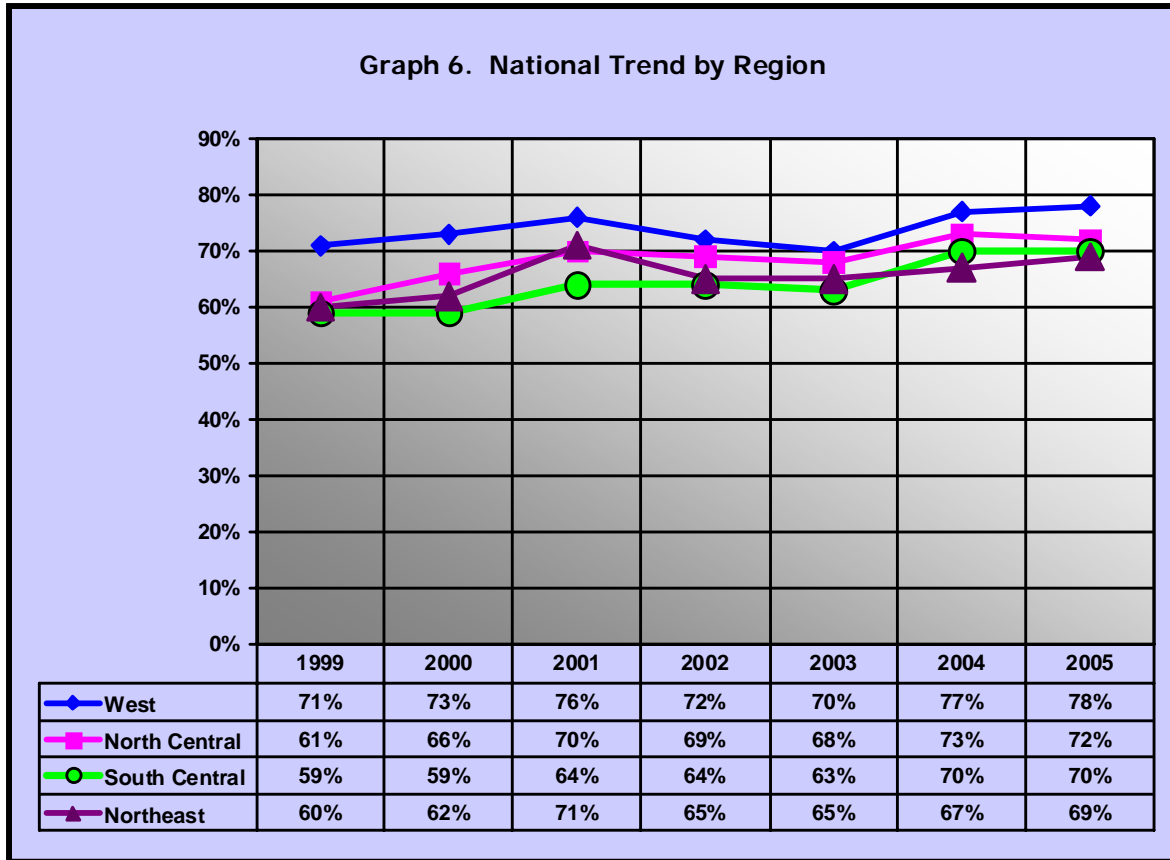
Several other trends of interest include the following:

- 161.6 million (72.1 percent) Americans age 16 and older participated in an outdoor activity in 2005.
- The top five outdoor activities by percent of Americans who participated in the activity at least once in the prior year are: bicycling 38.2 percent; fishing 34.4 percent; hiking 34.2 percent; camping 30.4 percent; and trail running 18 percent.
- Except for bicycling, bird watching, and trail running, the majority of individuals participate only one or two times each year in each activity.

Health and Wellness. The “nature-deficit disorder” trend among children is a growing concern. A national conversation about this phenomenon has been ignited by Richard Louv’s groundbreaking book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. In it, Louv traces the causes and impacts of this separation through interviews with educators, parents and health professionals, as well as with children. He outlines the environmental, social, psychological and spiritual implications of what he calls “nature-deficit disorder,” and describes a growing body of research that reveals the necessity of contact with nature for healthy child development. The Children and Nature Network (<http://www.cnaturenet.org/>), founded by Louv, is dedicated to informing people about the issue, serving as a clearinghouse of relevant research and current initiatives, and providing support.

Participation in the Northeast United States

The 2006 Outdoor Industry Foundation Outdoor Recreation Participation Study (in keeping with other national studies) compares data according to four general regions: West, North Central, South Central and Northeast. The Northeast region ranges from New Jersey and Pennsylvania up through Maine and includes New Hampshire. Thirteen groups of activities were compared across the four regions. For some activities participation was similar across regions, for others there were regional variations. By comparison, the findings indicate that Americans living in the Northeast region are less likely to participate in outdoor activities (Graph 6). It is interesting to note that outdoor activities in the Northeast have not rebounded as much as the other regions after 2001. This study cites the increased use of electronics as a major cause of lowered participation in outdoor activity. However, a definitive study has not been done to determine the comparable impacts of electronics, higher gas prices, the Iraq War, an aging population or other factors on participation in recreational activities.



Source: Outdoor Recreation Participation Study: Trend Analysis for the US, 2006

Some of the findings in the 2006 Outdoor Industry Foundation Study, directly related to the Northeast, include the following:

- Overall participation in outdoor activities in the Northeast is slightly lower than the other three regions.
- Participation in bird watching in the Northeast is consistent with the other three regions.
- Participation in rafting and adventure travel in the Northeast is higher than North Central and South Central but lower than in the West.
- Participation in hunting, camping, and fishing is lower in the Northeast than the other three regions. This continues to be consistent with findings in 2000.
- Participation in cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and kayaking is higher in the Northeast than the other three regions.

Adventure/sports/outdoor activity travel is characterized by the purpose of experiencing an outdoor adventure or adventurous activity. While the West had the highest percentage of participation, the greatest increase from 2004 to 2005 was in the Northeast.

New Hampshire Statistics

The *2006 National Survey on Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* provides national and statewide-level data for several wildlife related activities. A

preliminary report summarizing New Hampshire data is now available through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is summarized below.

These national and statewide surveys provide data about New Hampshire residents as well as data about the state itself. Specifically, data is available on the level of participation and expenditures by New Hampshire residents within the entire United States and on the levels of participation and expenditures by residents and non-residents alike within the State of New Hampshire. Summarized below are participation rates for New Hampshire residents and participation totals and expenditures within the State of New Hampshire by residents and non-residents.

In all, this 2006 survey found that 51 percent of New Hampshire residents who are 16 years of age or older participated in hunting, fishing, and/or wildlife watching activities. About 46 percent of residents take part in wildlife watching (observing, feeding, or photographing wildlife) and 14 percent take part in either fishing or hunting.

Using 2006 data, wildlife-associated recreation contributed \$516 million in expenditures within New Hampshire. This includes expenditures for fishing, hunting, items used for both fishing and hunting, and lastly, wildlife watching. Equipment purchases accounted for \$135 million; licenses, leases, landownership and contributions accounted for \$111 million; and auxiliary and special related expenditures accounted for the remainder of \$54 million.

New Hampshire saw a total of 228,000 anglers in 2006. Combined, these anglers fished for 2.8 million days and spent nearly \$178 million on fishing related expenditures in the state. About 55 percent of all anglers in New Hampshire are residents and about 51 percent are non-residents, though residents account for 70 percent of all fishing days. The average angler fished 12 days a year.

New Hampshire saw a total of 60,000 hunters in 2006. Combined, these in-state and out-of-state hunters participated in 1.46 million days of hunting and spent over \$80 million in hunting related expenses in state. About 83 percent of all hunters who hunt in New Hampshire are state residents, and 17 percent of the total are non-resident hunters. The average participant hunted 17.5 days.

New Hampshire saw a total of 698,000 participants in wildlife watching activities in 2006. Nonresidential participation, defined as at least one mile or more from home, consisted of 323,000 participants. Wildlife watching contributed \$267 million in expenditures in New Hampshire. Breaking this down, approximately \$114 million was spent on trip-related expenditures, over \$68 million was spent on equipment, and \$84 million was spent on "other" expenses such as membership dues, contributions and magazine subscriptions. Participants spent an average of 9.2 days in wildlife watching activities.

Wildlife-Related Recreation Trends

The 2001 version of this dataset can be compared against 1996 data. In comparing broad estimates from both studies, it appears there was little change in participation for fishing, a slight decrease in hunting, and a similar number of total participants in nonresidential

(travel 1 mile or more) wildlife watching. However, of these non-residential wildlife watchers, 258,000 were estimated to be from outside the state in the 1996 study and 320,000 were estimated to be from outside the state in the 2001 study. Residential wildlife watching (within a mile of home) showed an increase. Fishing expenditures decreased in this five-year period, whereas hunting expenditures increased slightly and wildlife watching expenditures increased from a total of \$282 million up to \$343 million.

Statewide Recreational Demand

Since the 1994 SCORP was completed, two public opinion surveys were undertaken related to outdoor recreation in New Hampshire, the *1997 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* and the *1997 NH Public Access Needs Assessment* (more recent studies are not available). Both were completed through the University of New Hampshire and provide much more detailed figures on participation than had ever before been available in the state.

The first study, the *1997 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment*, commissioned by the Office of Energy and Planning, consisted of a statewide assessment of recreation in New Hampshire. This assessment provides baseline information on household participation rates for 60 different types of recreational activities as well as attitudes about spending priorities, major recreational issues, and reasons for participating. A summary report containing details of response rates, data design, and data results can be found in Appendix A.

Participation. The activities listed in Table 12 offer a snapshot of participation in a variety of activities in 2005 in New Hampshire.

Table 12. Nationwide Participation Rates - 2005		
	Number of Participants	Percent of Population
Bicycling: Paved & Off-road	241,100	24%
Camping: RV, Tenting & Rustic Lodge	238,895	24%
Fishing: Fly & Non-fly	142,149	13%
Hunting: Shotgun, Rifle & Bow	51,116	5%
Paddling: Kayaking, Rafting & Canoeing	225,662	22%
Snow Sports: Downhill, Snowboarding, Cross-country & Snowshoeing	254,233	25%
Trail: Trail Running, Day Hiking, Backpacking & Rock Climbing	349,570	35%
Wildlife Viewing: Bird Watching & Other Wildlife	445,000	42%

Source: Outdoor Industry Foundation 2006 Study (2005 Survey)

According to the *1997 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment*, many of the most popular activities in New Hampshire are similar to those identified in nationwide studies. Wildlife observation, driving for pleasure, sightseeing, and jogging/running/walking are extremely popular activities. Additionally, these activities show the highest frequency of participation. For instance, 79 percent of households participated in jogging/running/walking activities in the previous year, and 62 percent of

households had done so at least seven or more times that year. Taking another example, 71 percent of households had gone swimming in a stream or lake in the previous year. Breaking this down further, about 34 percent participated seven or more times a year, and 37 percent had participated one to six times a year.

This study suggests that day hiking may be more popular in New Hampshire than nationally. Seventy three (73) percent of New Hampshire households went day hiking in the previous year. A full 25 percent of all households had done so 7 or more times that year.

Although a comprehensive study has not been done recently, current data for a variety of the activities show that trends are changing. This data can be found in this document under specific activity areas such as snowmobiling, hunting and fishing, off-road vehicles and boating. A comprehensive study needs to be done to evaluate trends that will assist in future planning for the recreational needs of New Hampshire.

Spending Priorities. Another section of the 1997 *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* asked respondents to rank comparatively how future monies should be spent on a range of outdoor recreation and conservation programs and projects. The programs/projects had to be ranked as either a low, moderate, or high priority, with the understanding that funding is limited so if some programs are ranked high, others must be ranked lower.

Programs related directly to protecting the resource base tended to receive the highest average ranking of the list of 20 plus programs. About 82 percent considered the protection or improvement of water quality in rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds a “high” priority. Nearly 57 percent of respondents said that preservation or restoration of native wildlife should be given a “high” priority. Almost 40 percent gave the acquisition of lands for conservation, open space or habitat protection a “high” priority ranking. Other programs that received the greatest average of “high” ratings included enforcement of environmental laws (44 percent) and wetland preservation/protection programs (38 percent).

Several questions looked specifically at priorities for providing, improving or adding additional types of recreation opportunities. While these, in general, received lower average rankings than many of the resource protection programs, some insights can be gained from considering these recreational programs relative to one another.

Table 13 shows that improved maintenance of existing park facilities received a higher average ranking than providing additional facilities for outdoor recreation sports or the construction of more multi-purpose trail systems. This gives some public support for maintaining opportunities that exist over solely expanding and creating new opportunities. About 28 percent of state residents ranked ensuring access to the state’s public waters a high priority. Though this does not provide data on what type of access is desired, residents do feel it is important, in principle, that these waters are made accessible. Residents gave a similar priority ranking to providing wildlife viewing areas, expanding multi-purpose trail systems, and providing incentives to encourage recreation on private timber lands.

Table 13. Perceived Spending Priorities for Outdoor Recreation			
	Low Priority	Moderate Priority	High Priority
Ensure access to NH's public waters	24%	48%	28%
Improved maintenance of existing park facilities	15%	61%	24%
Wildlife viewing areas	37%	46%	17%
Construction of more multi-purpose trail systems	40%	46%	14%
Incentives to encourage the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities on private timber lands	46%	40%	14%
Provide more facilities for outdoor recreation sports and activities (golf, baseball, tennis)	64%	27%	9%

Source: 1997 NH Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment (UNH)(more recent study is not available)

Management Objectives. Another section asked respondents to rank the importance of a variety of conservation and recreation-related management objectives. Similar to funding priorities, management objectives related to protecting New Hampshire's resources received the highest average ranking. Examples include protecting drinking water, native plants/animals, and natural areas from development.

Five questions centered either on recreation or tourism related objectives. Table 14 provides a breakdown by three collapsed levels of importance. In general, a majority of residents felt that providing non-motorized recreation opportunities was of high importance. About 61 percent indicated that providing non-motorized recreation was either very or most important, compared to about 21 percent who felt motorized recreation very or most important, and about 19 percent who felt that opportunities requiring a high level of development were very or most important. Only 7.5 percent of all respondents said that providing for non-motorized recreation was either not important or only of minor importance. This compares to about 53 percent for motorized recreation and 53 percent for recreation that requires a high level of development.

Table 14. Importance of Selected Recreation-Related Management Objectives			
	Not/Minor Important	Important	Very/Most Important
To provide opportunities for non-motorized recreation	7%	32%	61%
To attract tourists to New Hampshire	30%	31%	39%
To provide opportunities for motorized outdoor recreation	53%	26%	21%
To provide a source of revenue for the owners or managers of natural and cultural resources	41%	39%	20%
To provide the opportunity for outdoor recreation activities which require a high level of development	53%	28%	19%

Source: 1997 NH Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment (UNH) (more recent study is not available)

These figures should not be interpreted to mean that motorized recreation or developed recreation opportunities are unimportant and consequently should not be given any consideration. Rather it suggests that a broader range of residents participate in non-motorized recreation and accordingly, a larger percentage feel it is important to maintain these opportunities. Many who participate in activities that require development (e.g. golf, skiing) or motorized activities (e.g. wheeled off-highway recreation vehicle, snowmobile) also enjoy hiking, canoeing and other non-motorized activities. Non-motorized recreation, especially walking/hiking, can be enjoyed without a great deal of equipment or investment. And, as borne out by national and statewide data, these activities tend to have the highest participation rates.

This information suggests that non-motorized activities should continue to be a major focus in New Hampshire's outdoor recreation management. In addition, while overall statewide participation rates tend to be lower for motorized or developed recreation, those who do participate tend to participate quite often and their needs cannot be disregarded. A considerable percentage of state residents (~ 20 percent) indicate that developed recreation and motorized recreation, respectively, are a very, or the most, important recreational management objective.

Regional Considerations. Further analysis of this data conducted by the University of New Hampshire suggests that differences exist between residents, depending on where they live in the state and by how long they have lived here. In this analysis, several different groups were identified. To examine differences between those who have lived in New Hampshire all of their lives versus those who have moved here, groups were developed for New Hampshire 'natives' and New Hampshire 'non-natives'. In addition, responses were also analyzed by classifying respondents as to where they live in the state. The two categories that were developed consisted of 'metro' and 'non-metro'.

This metro/non-metro classification considers the southeastern area of Merrimack, Hillsborough, Strafford and Rockingham Counties as the "metro" area, and Coos, Carroll, Belknap, Grafton, Sullivan and Cheshire Counties as the "non-metro" area. This division was derived based on an examination of average population per square mile. The four-county "metro" area contains 73 percent of the state's population and occupies 32 percent of the land base. The average population per square mile is 313.25. The six-county "non-metro" area occupies 68 percent of the land base but only 27 percent of the population with an average population per square mile of 69.16. This basic classification provides an interesting, albeit rough, starting point for examining potential differences between different parts of the state.

Responses for natives and non-natives, as well as metro areas and non-metro areas, were compared across several classes of outdoor recreation activities. Responses were also examined across motivations for participation and across attitudes about recreation management and the environment. Below is a summary of some recreation participation and attitudinal differences between native and non-native classifications, as well as between the two metro/non metro classifications.

- Natives have higher participation rates than non-natives for several different outdoor recreational activities including hunting, fishing, motor sports, activities that require developed settings, and active pursuits (e.g. swimming, jogging, hiking, rock climbing, etc.).
- Non-metro respondents (Coos, Belknap, Grafton, Carroll Counties) have higher participation rates in hunting than metro respondents.
- Motivations for participation in outdoor recreation are generally the same for natives and non-natives. However, non-metro respondents who have moved to New Hampshire since the 1970's were more motivated to participate in recreation as an 'escape' than were natives.
- Non-metro respondents tend to have stronger preferences for management objectives related to environmental protection than those from metro areas. Native respondents from non-metro areas were an exception.
- Non-natives consider wetland protection more of a funding priority than natives.
- Natives are more supportive of higher fees for non-residents than are non-native residents, but are the least supportive of higher in-state fees to support outdoor recreation management/development.
- Non-metro residents, in general, tend to be less supportive of higher fees than metro residents.

Demand for Water Access

Overview. In the second study, *NH Public Access Needs Assessment (1997)*, the University of New Hampshire completed a statewide assessment for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to examine the need and demand for public access to lakes, ponds and rivers in the state. This study provides baseline statistics about what lakes, ponds and rivers people go to, what they like to do, and general attitudes about public access needs in the state.

Data in the telephone survey portion of the study was collected so that statistically significant comparisons could be drawn across four major regions of the state. The regions represent the four New Hampshire Fish and Game Department management regions and are drawn along county lines. As illustrated by Figure 3, Region 1 consists of Coos County, Region 2 consists of Belknap, Grafton and Carroll Counties, Region 3 Consists of Rockingham, Strafford and Merrimack Counties, and Region 4 consists of Hillsborough, Cheshire and Sullivan Counties.

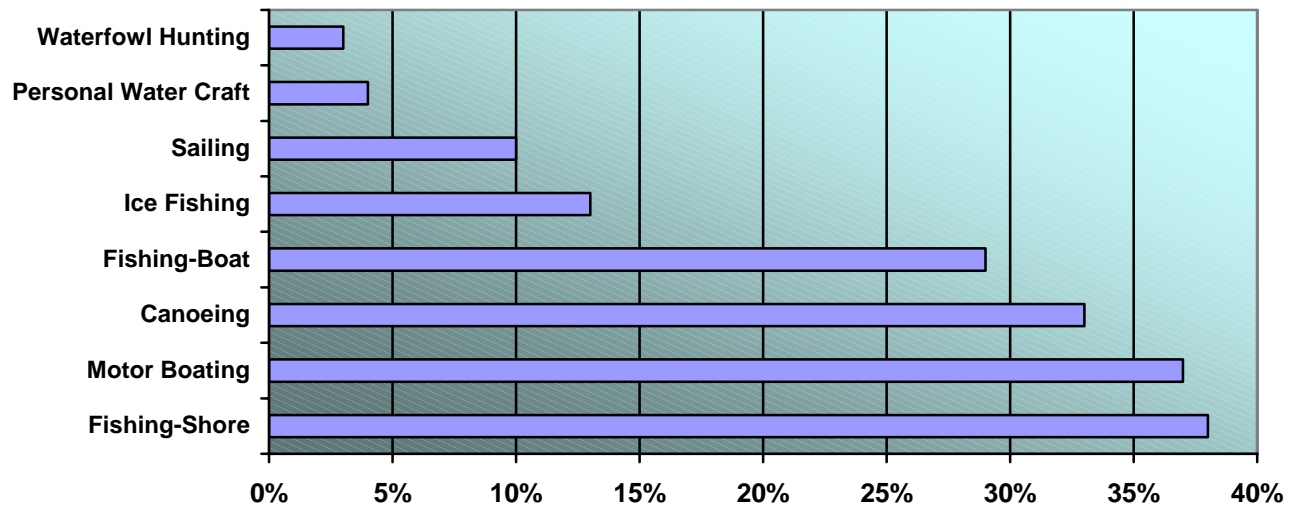


Figure 3. NH Fish and Game Management Regions

Participation. Overall, this survey found that 66 percent of households participated in an outdoor activity on a lake, pond or river in New Hampshire within the previous 12 months. Those who did not participate indicated a lack of time or money as the most important reasons for not participating. Households in Region 2 (Belknap, Grafton, Carroll Counties) had higher overall participation rates (72 percent) than the rest of the state. This is not surprising given the substantial surface water resources available in this region of the state.

Graph 7 provides a sampling of statewide household participation for a range of water-related activities. Of those activities specifically explored in this study, fishing from shore was the most popular, followed by motor boating, canoeing, and fishing from a boat.³

Graph 7. Household Participation in Water-Based Activities



Source: NH Public Access Needs Assessment - Statewide Summary Report (UNH, 1997)⁴

³ Swimming was not explicitly studied in this project. The study’s purpose was to provide the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department with data for estimating boating, fishing and hunting preferences.

⁴ Swimming was not explicitly studied in this project. The study’s purpose was to provide the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department with data for estimating boating, fishing and hunting preferences.

Regional comparisons show that participation rates for several water-based activities varied within the state.

- Residents in Region 1 (Coos County) are more active in ice fishing and fishing from shore than residents of other parts of the state.
- Residents in Region 2 (Grafton, Belknap, Carroll Counties) are more likely to participate in motor boating, canoeing and sailing than residents in other parts of the state.
- Residents in Region 3 and Region 4 (southern counties) show similar overall participation patterns.

Visitation. Survey respondents were also asked to list the water body their household uses most often. Table 15 presents the most visited lakes, ponds and rivers on a statewide level. Lake Winnepesaukee, not surprisingly, was the most popular destination listed statewide. Only residents in Coos County (Region 1) had higher demand for other locations. For these residents, the Connecticut River was most popular followed by the Androscoggin River, Lake Umbagog, Forest Lake and, finally Lake Winnepesaukee.

Table 15. Most Visited Lakes, Ponds and Rivers in New Hampshire
<i>Lake Winnepesaukee</i>
<i>Lake Sunapee</i>
<i>Merrimack River</i>
<i>Connecticut River</i>
<i>Winnisquam Lake</i>
<i>Newfound Lake</i>
<i>Lake Pawtuckaway</i>
<i>Squam Lake</i>
<i>Lake Massabesic</i>

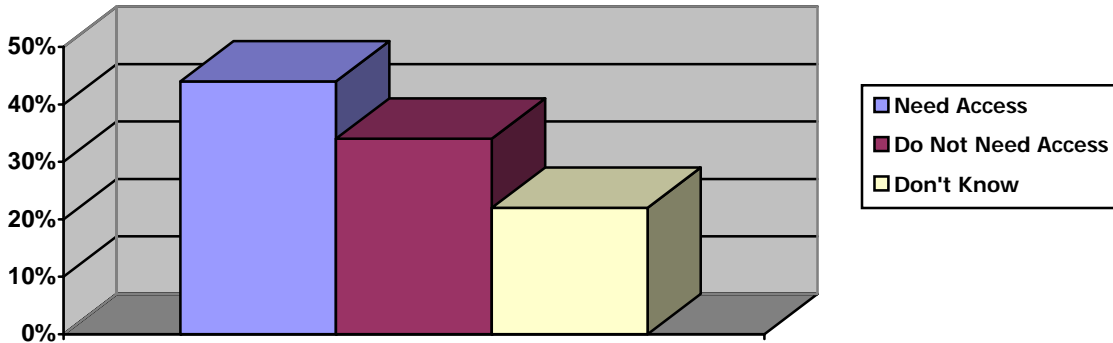
By far, (65 percent) the most popular reason respondents gave for visiting an area most often was that it is close to home/relatives or near someone they knew with access. Only seven percent of respondents visited their favorite area because of nice scenery or clean water, respectively. As with many land-based activities, convenience is a key to participation.

Another question asked respondents if there were specific locations they would like to visit but did not because of problems with access. Lake Winnepesaukee was identified most often in each of the four regions. In Coos County (Region 1) Lake Winnepesaukee and Connecticut River were listed most often, followed by Lake Umbagog, Big Diamond Pond and Phillips Pond. In Region 2 (Belknap, Carroll, Grafton Counties) Lake Winnepesaukee, and Squam Lake were mentioned most often. In Region 3 (Strafford, Merrimack, Rockingham Counties) Lake Winnepesaukee was again listed most often followed by the Merrimack River and Squam Lake. In Region 4 (Cheshire, Sullivan, Hillsborough Counties) Lake Winnepesaukee was listed most frequently followed by the Merrimack River and Lake Sunapee.

Attitudes. Overall, a majority of state residents view public access issues as being important or extremely important. Sixty-eight (68) percent of residents feel that the decisions the state makes about public access issues are important or extremely important. Respondents (Graph 8) were also asked if New Hampshire needs additional

access to lakes, ponds, and rivers. About 44 percent of respondents indicated that New Hampshire needed additional access. This compares with 34 percent who did not want additional access and 22 percent who did not know.

Graph 8. Does NH Need Additional Water Access?

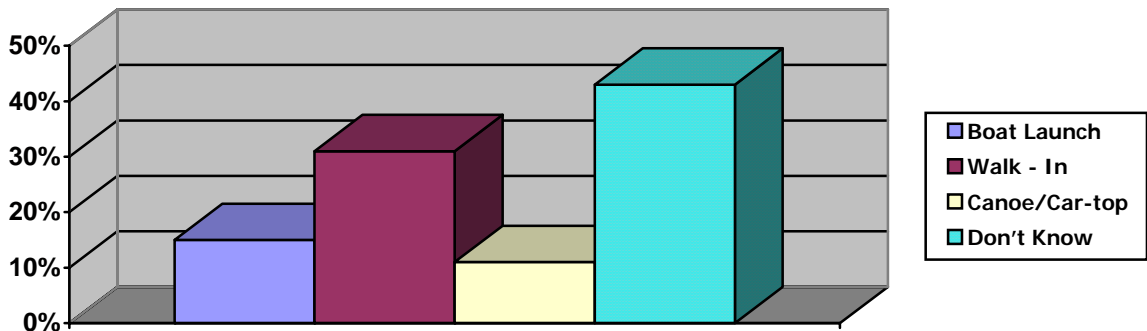


Source: NH Public Access Needs Assessment - Statewide Summary Report (UNH, 1997)

In examining regional variations, residents in Region 1 and Region 2 were less likely to state that New Hampshire needs additional access as compared to those in Region 3 or Region 4. Over 42 percent in Regions 1 and 2, respectively, indicated that there was no need for additional types of access facilities as compared with 34 percent in Region 3 and only 29 percent in Region 4. This is significant because Region 3 and 4, together, make up a majority of the state's population. Managers may want to consider developing opportunities for access in the southern part of the state to provide additional opportunities near the larger population bases.

Respondents were then asked which type of access should be given priority. Graph 9 shows that 43 percent did not know or felt no priority should be given. Thirty-one (31) percent felt walk-in sites should be given priority, while only 15 percent chose boat launches and 11 percent chose canoe/car-top access, respectively.

Graph 9. What Type of Access Should Be Given Priority?



Source: NH Public Access Needs Assessment - Statewide Summary Report (UNH, 1997)

About 51 percent of those who participated in the telephone survey also completed a more detailed follow-up mail questionnaire. Since this group is self-selected, the information that follows does not necessarily represent the 'general public.' However, these findings do provide a good indicator of the viewpoints and attitudes of those residents who tend to be more active or more experienced with water-based recreation. This group, given their interest in the survey, may represent a population that is comparatively more interested in the decisions the state makes about water-based recreation in New Hampshire.

Mail survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of different lake or river characteristics as part of their recreational experience. Overall, the most important characteristics relate to safety and the natural character of an area. Over 70 percent of this sample indicated that having a safe area for recreation was extremely or very important. Other highly important characteristics include the presence of wildlife and birds as well as undeveloped shorelines and natural features.

The most common recreational activities include picnicking, sunbathing, swimming, relaxing/doing nothing, and walking or hiking along shore. Again, these figures support other studies that report on the high popularity of activities that require little equipment, can take place in many locations, and can be participated in by young and old alike.

Respondents were asked to identify their priorities for improving water-based or water-enhanced (e.g. sunbathing, walking/hiking along shore) recreation in the state. A series of nine potential priorities were ranked. The top three priorities, according to this group, include improved information, better design and maintenance of existing facilities, and improved enforcement at public access sites. The lowest priorities within these nine categories centered on building additional types of public access facilities. The lowest ranking was given to building more fishing piers, followed by canoe/car-top facilities, boat launch facilities and shore bank-fishing opportunities. This data suggests that the NH Fish and Game Department's continued focus on refurbishing existing access sites is a good management strategy. Again, residents recognize the importance of providing quality experiences at existing sites, not just expanding on the overall quantity of sites.

When asked about the severity of different management problems on lakes, ponds and rivers in the state, respondents reported that excessive horsepower of powerboats, inconsiderate behavior of others, and human waste were some of the most serious problems based on their experience. Other issues reported most often as "moderate problems" included pollution caused by outboard motors and lack of enforcement of boating rules and regulations.

Another series of questions focused on viewpoints about several public access issues and concerns. One set of issues centered on people-related concerns. Almost two-thirds of respondents agreed that litter is a problem at most access sites. About 54 percent consider public safety to be a concern at boat launch facilities, and nearly 50 percent of respondents felt that there should be more supervision and security at public access sites. These responses add weight to the high priority given for better enforcement at public access sites.

Another trio of questions helped to frame public perceptions concerning the use of a lake, pond or river alongside this use's potential impacts on the resource base. Sixty five (65) percent agreed that water quality is risked when the public opens up a water body to more access. A slightly higher number (68 percent) of respondents said that protecting water quality is more important than providing the public with additional opportunities for water-based recreation. Fifty-eight (58) percent agree that New Hampshire will lose the natural quality of some lakes, ponds and rivers if more water access is developed. Again, many recreationists consider the impacts of additional access and are interested in efforts aimed at protecting the quality of the experience.

New Hampshire Licenses and Registrations

Fishing and Hunting Licenses. National surveys indicate that participation in fishing and hunting has decreased in the last decade. New Hampshire license figures (Table 16) support this general trend. In general both in-state and out-of-state fishing permits and hunting permits have slowly decreased since 1999. While these numbers do not provide any information about the frequency of participation (how many days a year), it appears that the total number of anglers and hunters is not increasing over the years.

Table 16. Fishing, Hunting and Combo Licenses in NH 1991-2001						
	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001
Resident Fishing	71,226	68,180	72,509	74,771	76,175	74,449
Non Resident Fishing	22,757	23,260	24,213	23,710	23,571	23,864
Resident Hunting	25,936	26,421	25,095	24,053	23,416	21,638
Non Resident Hunting	9,641	9,935	9,973	9,785	10,347	8,799
Resident Combo	39,576	38,647	36,957	35,503	34,694	32,192
Non Resident Combo	N/A	N/A	31	1,270	1,548	1,590
TOTALS	169,136	166,443	168,778	169,751	169,751	162,532

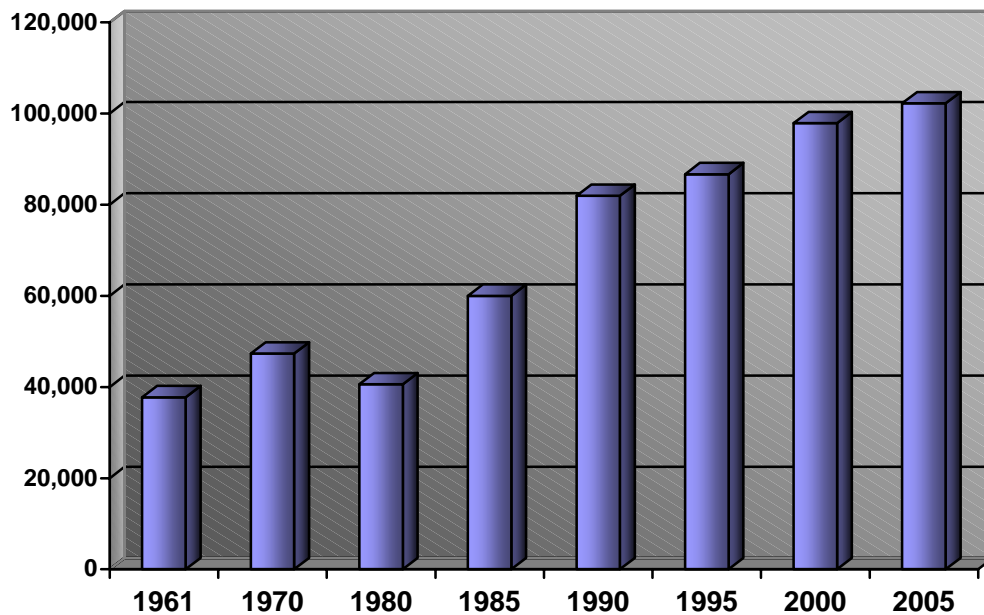
Source: NH Fish and Game Department Files, 2002

Fishing, Hunting and Combo Licenses in NH 2002-2006					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Resident Fishing	67,574	64,567	67,356	66,588	66,021
Non Resident Fishing	22,400	20,113	20,304	19,837	19,159
Resident Hunting	20,404	20,081	20,023	19,346	19,954
Non Resident Hunting	8,596	8,392	8,211	8,038	8,089
Resident Combo	29,093	27,462	26,746	26,043	26,584
Non Resident Combo	1,463	1,373	1,345	1,298	1,381
TOTALS	149,530	141,988	143,985	141,150	140,188

Source: NH Fish and Game Department Files, 2006

Boating Registrations. Boating registrations in New Hampshire have continued to increase since the 1980s. Graph 10 shows that while numbers remained somewhat steady in the 1960's and 1970's, registrations increased sharply between 1990 and 2000. New Hampshire reported approximately 39,000 boat registrations in 1980. This figure rose to almost 98,000 in 2000. Registrations doubled between 1980 and 1990 alone, and increased over 19 percent between 1990 and 2000. However, the number of licenses decreased between 2000 and 2005 by 4.45 percent compared to the growth of 12.93 percent between 1995 and 2000. These years coincide with economic growth on the national level, followed by a short recession after the turn of the century. Even though these demand trends slowed down, the registration of 102,234 motorized vehicles on our lakes, ponds and rivers in a sluggish economy continues to highlight the need for access-site maintenance, enforcement, improved boater information, education as highlighted by respondents to the 1997 Public Access to Lakes, Ponds and Rivers survey, and continued efforts to create additional water access.

Graph 10. Boating Registrations in New Hampshire 1961-2005



Source: Department of Safety, Division of Motor Vehicles. 2007

Snowmobile and Wheeled Vehicle Registrations. Table 17 shows that in-state New Hampshire snowmobile registration had been increasing annually from the 1996/1997 winter season to 2000/2001. Since 2000/2001 it has fluctuated, reaching an all-time low in 2005/2006. Non-resident registration has followed a similar pattern.

Off-highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV). Resident wheeled vehicle registration has risen from 10,556 in 1995/1996 to 21,462 in 2005/2006. According to the Motorcycle Industry Council Retail Sales Report (2006), based on actual sales registrations of distributors, annual sales of all OHRVs (ATVs and trail bikes) has gone from 1,765 in 1996 to 5,943 in 2006, a change of 236 percent. The Motorcycle Industry Council estimated over 51,000 OHRVs in use in 2003. This increase is substantially higher than the national average of 3.97 percent in the same time period, 1996 to 2006.

DRED has begun to address this demand with the purchase of land and the development of Jericho State Park in Berlin for ATV use. This trend will warrant continued monitoring in order to address the continuing popularity and demand for motorized trails.

Table 17. Wheeled Off Highway Vehicle and Snowmobile Registrations 1995-2006				
	Resident		Non-Resident	
	Snowmobile	Wheeled Vehicle	Snowmobile	Wheeled Vehicle
1995/1996	34,468	10,556	8,824	1,362
1996/1997	32,900	13,005	9,422	1,675
1997/1998	36,723	10,054	14,101	1,738
1998/1999	36,406	11,015	13,056	1,888
1999/2000	39,391	14,717	15,320	2,714
2000/2001	46,686	18,744	18,835	3,656
2001/2002	36,294	20,973	18,363	4,670
2002/2003	46,286	21,543	20,880	4,745
2003/2004	40,870	21,452	19,513	4,543
2004/2005	42,034	21,608	19,304	4,776
2005/2006	30,960	21,462	13,567	4,771

Source: NH Fish and Game Department Files, 2007

According to the Motorcycle Industry Council Retail Sales Report, based on actual sales registrations of distributors, annual sales of all OHRVs (ATVs and trail bikes) has gone from 1,765 in 1996 to 5,943 in 2006, a change of 236 percent. U.S. sales have changed 3.97 percent in the same time period (2006).

The Motorcycle Industry Council estimated over 51,000 OHRVs in use in 2003.

Travel and Tourism

Statewide Figures. Tourism represents one of the main sectors of the state's economy. According to the *Travel Economics Report (FY2000)* prepared for DRED, Division of Travel and Tourism Development by the Institute for New Hampshire Studies, the travel and tourism industry ranks only behind retail trade in employment and is the second leading export activity after manufacturing. Recreation and business trips in New Hampshire during 2005 totaled 33.4 million person trips or 51.6 million visitor days (39 percent in summer; 23 percent in fall; 19 percent in winter; and 19 percent in spring). Direct spending in New Hampshire by visitors in 2005 reached \$4.136 billion and paid \$112.5 million in rooms and meals taxes. Traveler spending supported 66,700 direct full-time and part-time jobs.

The state providing the most visitors to New Hampshire in 2005 was Massachusetts. New York, Philadelphia and Connecticut were also significant contributors.

When asked the most important purpose for their trip, 31 percent of respondents indicated, "to visit friends or relatives." However, the second most important reason was for outdoor recreation (22 percent). This was especially important for summer and winter travelers. Respondents were also asked about the activities they participated in while on their trip. Shopping was listed as the top reason, followed by outdoor activities (27 percent), visiting national/state parks (12 percent), and visiting beaches (9 percent). Historic places, skiing, golfing and tennis, and theme/amusement parks were also mentioned by at least five percent of respondents. In general, most of the activities mentioned, besides shopping, relate directly to the outdoor environment. Clearly the ability to participate in outdoor recreation is of prime importance to New Hampshire visitors.

Relationship to Open Space. A 1999 study by Economic Systems Group for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests examined the economic impacts of open space on the New Hampshire economy. Open space was identified as a fundamental aspect for four major sectors: agriculture, forestry, tourism/recreation, and vacation homes. In all, this report found that 54 percent of direct spending on tourism and recreation was attributed to open space. According to 1996/1997 figures, this constituted \$1.7 billion of \$3.2 billion in direct spending on travel and tourism. Spending related to second homes used primarily for vacation or recreational use was 100 percent attributed to open space.

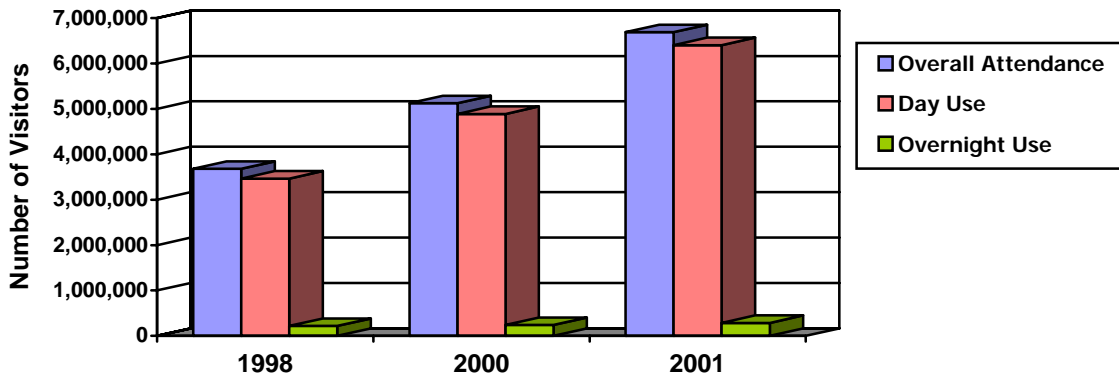
State Parks. Visitation to state parks in New Hampshire also underscores the importance and growing popularity of outdoor recreation in the state for residents and visitors alike. Graph 11 provides a summary of visitation trends to New Hampshire's state park system. State parks have seen an increase in reported attendance. Estimated use was reported at 3.68 million in 1998 and 6.69 million in 2001.⁵ The vast majority of this increase is due to reported increases in day use and better reporting in day use. As demand continues to increase, the impacts on developed park facilities and the

⁵ Figures reported in 1999, 2001, and 2002 *The 2002 Annual Information Exchange*, published by the National Association of State Park Directors.

natural/cultural resource base may also increase, adding further credence to increased focus on major renovations and refurbishments.

New Hampshire state parks are self-funded, operating off of receipts rather than State General Funds. This was formalized when the legislature established the State Park Fund in 1991(RSA 40:2). According to the Department of Resources and Economic Development – Division of Parks and Recreation, the State Park Fund has shown a net operating income gain for 6 out of the last 10 years, and currently offers more opportunity than general funding by the state.

Graph 11. New Hampshire State Park Visitation Trends



Source: *The 2002 Annual Information Exchange*, published by the National Association of State Park Directors

White Mountain National Forest. The White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is a major recreation and tourism destination in New England and is within a day’s drive of almost one-third of the nation’s population. According to the White Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan 2005, the WMNF provides about 1,200 miles of hiking trails, 20 scenic outlooks, 22 campgrounds, 13 picnic areas and over 60 huts, tent sites, shelters, and backcountry cabins. The report notes that shelter site use has increased by 87 percent annually from 1986 to 1999 and hut use increased about 2.4 percent annually between 1986 and 2000.

Since 1996, the WMNF has participated in what is now the Recreation Enhancement Act, which establishes a standard collection of amenities visitors expect in recreation fee sites. This user-pays program charges visitors a small fee for day/weekly use or offers frequent visitors an annual pass. A decade of collecting fees has generated \$5.4 million. Forest managers use fee money to provide services and maintain recreation sites.

The U.S. Forest Service completed a survey in 2005 that examined visitor use in the WMNF. Visitors were interviewed at a variety of sites, providing data about who goes to the WMNF, what they do there, and how satisfied they were with facilities and the experience. Almost 43 percent of visitors were between the ages of 41-50 and an overwhelming majority of visitors were white (93 percent). About 2.4 percent of visitors were Asian, 2 percent African-American, and 2 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native.

A majority (93 percent) of those interviewed indicated that the WMNF was their primary destination for that trip. The most popular activities in the WMNF include viewing wildlife and natural features, sightseeing, hiking and walking, general relaxation, driving for pleasure on forest roads, cross-country skiing, and developed camping. Respondents listed cross-country skiing, developed camping, downhill skiing, picnicking, general relaxing, and hiking/walking most frequently as the primary activity they participated in during WMNF visits.

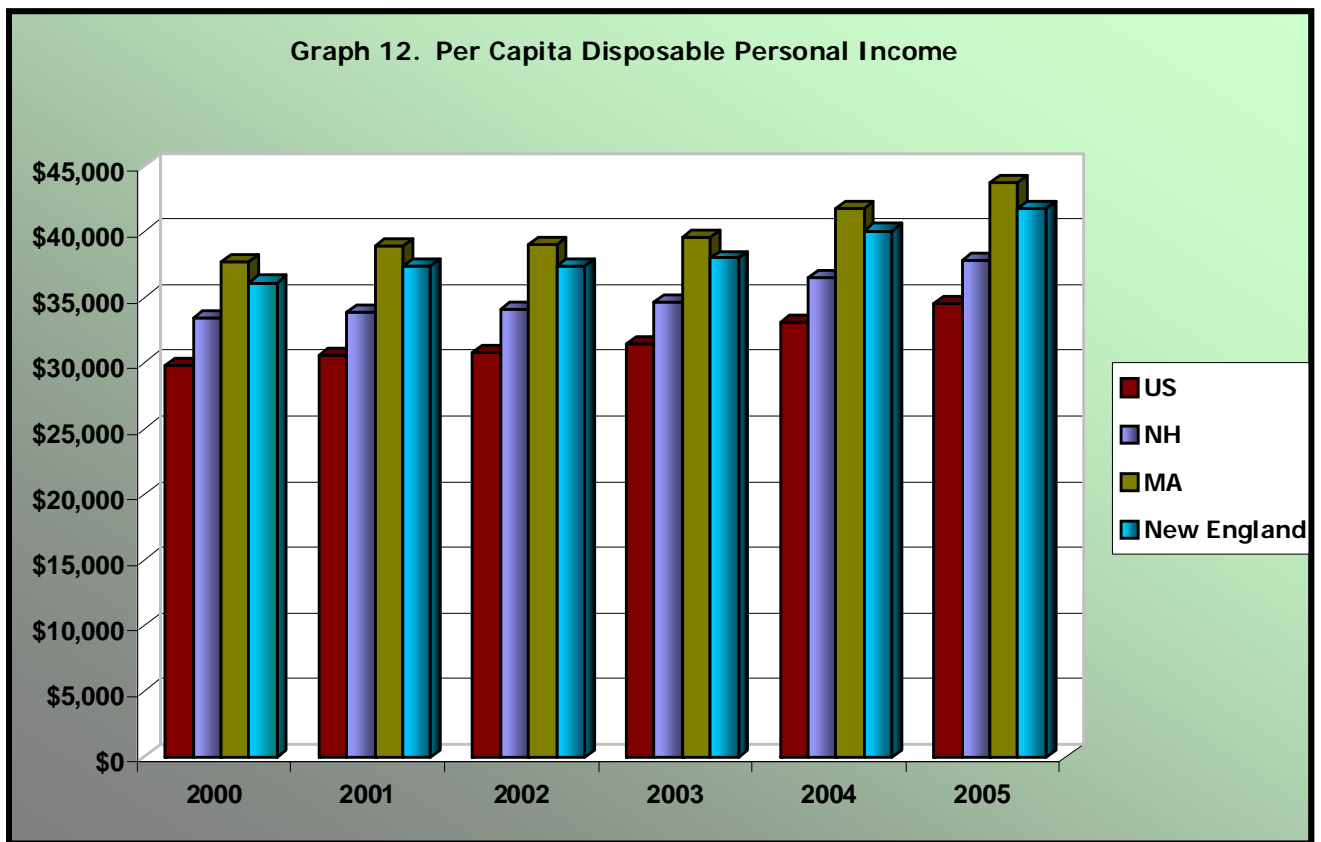
The White Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2005) has set the stage for future planning actions. It looks closely at how changing activities and increasing use can be managed to prevent unacceptable ecological impacts while still providing a range of high quality recreation opportunities through the following recreation goals:

- The WMNF will provide a range of quality recreation activities and opportunities.
- The Forest Service will implement recreation management approaches to provide forest recreation managers a more complete framework within which to consider management actions. Their purpose is to minimize increased development levels in the backcountry and to protect and manage both high and low use areas and facilities. The overall effect of these approaches will be to guide and seek public support for agency actions in response to changing or increasing use.
- Developed recreation will provide a variety of quality campground, day use, and other roadside recreation opportunities where the natural forest setting is an important part of the visitor's experience while ensuring the balanced protection of social and natural resources.
- The Forest Service will provide a range of opportunities from large, more developed campgrounds and day use areas, to smaller, less developed campgrounds and day use areas.
- The WMNF will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile trail network.
- The Forest Service will provide a range of dispersed recreation experiences that most visitors will perceive as rustic, wild, and undeveloped.
- The WMNF has both traditional and sport climbing areas. The Forest Service will recognize the value of both types of climbing areas and will continue to provide a range of climbing opportunities while protecting natural and cultural resources. It will emphasize traditional climbing over sport climbing.
- The Forest Service will work with the private sector through Special Use Permits to provide recreation opportunities that the Forest Service alone is not able to offer, and that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition.

- The WMNF will provide hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities consistent with federal and state law.

Socio-Economic Trends

Income. Figures from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (1994-1995) and the Outdoor Industry Foundation (2006) suggest that participation in many outdoor recreation activities is positively associated with income levels. Participation tends to be higher for those with middle incomes than those with low incomes, though participation rates fall slightly for those with the highest incomes (greater than \$100,000). Graph 12 shows that New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New England, as a region, all have higher income levels than the United States average. Massachusetts, in fact, has one of the highest per capita personal income levels in the country.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Accounts Data, Annual State Personal Income 2006

New England, and Massachusetts in particular, makes up a majority of New Hampshire’s out-of-state tourism base. If these regional income levels remain consistently higher than the national average, this may have positive effects on New Hampshire’s travel and tourism economy and on overall demand for outdoor recreation.

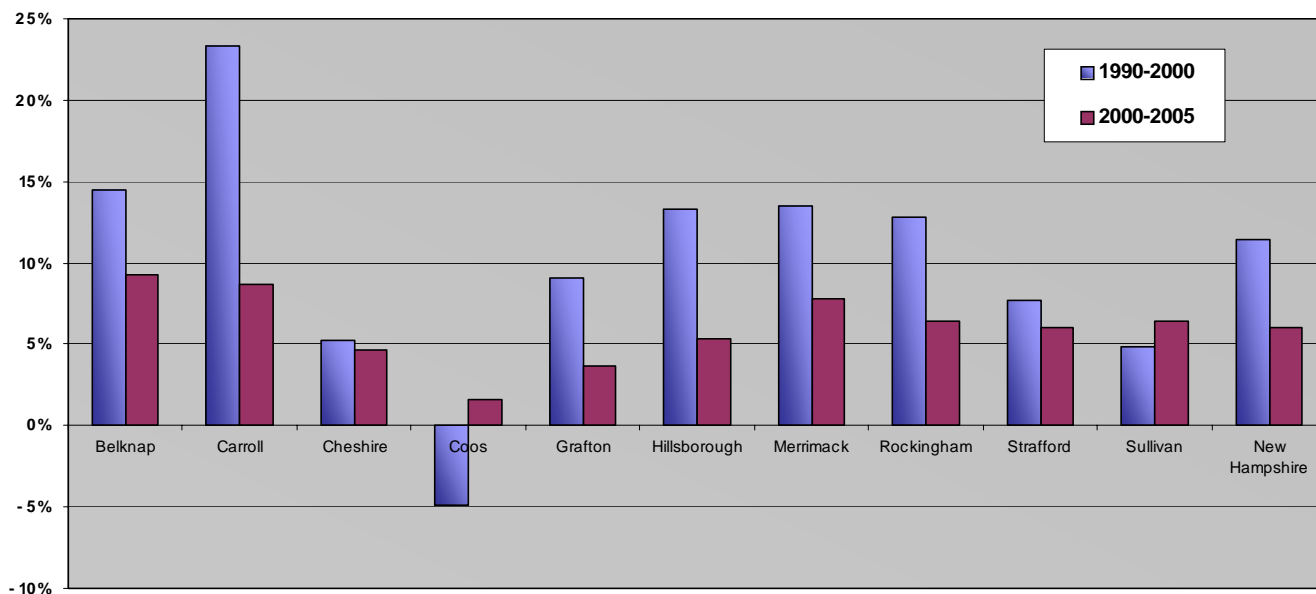
Population. As population increases, overall demand for outdoor recreation (as measured by the number of people participating) is also likely to increase. Table 18 shows that the state’s overall population increased by 6 percent between 2000 and 2005. Much of this increase is represented by the growth in the southern tier of the state.

Table 18. Actual and Projected Population by County: 1970-2020							
	Actual					Projected	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020
Belknap	32,367	42,884	49,216	56,325	61,547	64,838	69,972
Carroll	18,548	27,931	35,410	43,666	47,439	50,369	57,036
Cheshire	52,364	62,116	70,121	73,825	77,287	78,624	84,672
Coos	34,291	35,147	34,828	33,111	33,655	33,170	33,369
Grafton	54,914	65,806	74,929	81,743	84,708	88,862	95,109
Hillsborough	223,941	276,608	336,073	380,841	401,291	417,281	446,586
Merrimack	80,925	98,302	120,005	136,225	146,881	154,109	169,050
Rockingham	138,951	190,345	245,845	277,359	295,076	308,217	331,191
Strafford	70,431	85,408	104,233	112,233	119,015	124,488	134,211
Sullivan	30,949	36,063	38,592	40,458	43,041	45,182	48,804
New Hampshire	737,681	920,610	1,109,252	1,235,786	1,309,940	1,362,140	1,470,000

Sources: 2006 US Census – New Hampshire, US Bureau of the Census
 New Hampshire Population Projections 1990-2020, Office of Energy and Planning, 2006

Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties, the two counties with the greatest overall population levels, accounted for 60 percent of the total population gain between 1990 and 2000. The greatest percentage gain was noted in Carroll County, which grew by over 23 percent or, by more than 8,000 new residents in the 10-year period between 1990 and 2000. Belknap County saw a rise of over 14 percent and only Coos County saw a decline in population. Since 2000, the statewide rate of growth has decreased (from 11.4 percent to 6 percent). The rate of growth has leveled out among the counties with Belknap, Carroll, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford and Sullivan all growing at a rate above the state average of 6 percent. Belknap and Carroll County grew the fastest, 9.3 and 8.6 percent, respectively. The rate of growth in Coos County has gone from a negative 4.9 percent to an increase of 1.6 percent.

Graph 13. Population Growth by County



Sources: 2005 US Census– New Hampshire, US Bureau of the Census

Looking at 35-year trends from 1970 to 2005 (Graph 13 and Table 19), Carroll County shows the highest rate of growth, over 135 percent. Rockingham, Hillsborough, Merrimack, and Belknap Counties were all above the statewide average of 67.5 percent. Only Coos County shows a net loss of population; the population fell by 3.4 percent between 1970 and 2005.

Table 19. Rate of Population Change in New Hampshire Counties		
	2000-2005	1970-2005
Belknap	9.27%	90.15%
Carroll	8.64%	155.76%
Cheshire	4.69%	47.60%
Coos	1.64%	-1.85%
Grafton	3.63%	54.26%
Hillsborough	5.37%	79.19%
Merrimack	7.82%	81.50%
Rockingham	6.39%	112.36%
Strafford	6.04%	68.98%
Sullivan	6.38%	39.07%
New Hampshire	6.00%	67.52%

Sources: 2005 US Census– New Hampshire, US Bureau of the Census
2005 Bureau of the Census, Estimates Bureau

Age. According to the 2005 Census, the median age of the population in New Hampshire was 39.0 years. This compares to a median age of 37.1 in 2000; 32.8 in 1990; and 30.1 in 1980. This trend followed the national trend until 2000 when the trend difference began to widen between the national numbers and the New Hampshire numbers. As of 2005, the New Hampshire median is 2.5 years above the national median. The New Hampshire population tends to be older than the general population in the United States. Additionally, it is well documented that the baby boomers are living longer, healthier lives. This trend towards an older average population is expected to continue; therefore New Hampshire recreation providers will need to consider this aging population in the years to come.

On average, about 75 percent of the state's population is aged 18 or older. Looking at the county level, Grafton County and Coos County had older than average populations, and Hillsborough and Rockingham had the youngest. This younger population base in the southern part of the state can probably be linked to the influx of new residents and families to the area in the 1980s and 1990s. Many are young professionals with children who work in and around the Boston metro area. The older average age of the northern tier of the state suggests that there are, on average, fewer families with small children, and that the population is aging in place.

Race and Ethnicity. New Hampshire has a very small minority population compared to the rest of the nation. While still an overall small percentage, New Hampshire's minority population has grown in the last decade. Census figures for 2005 show minority racial groups representing almost 4 percent of the state's population; up from almost 3.3 percent in 2000, and about two percent in 1990.⁶ The 4 percent represents a statewide minority population. However, Manchester (6.5 percent) and Nashua (9.3 percent) have a greater concentration of minority and/or immigrant population than the state average.

While the census tracks population by race and ethnicity, it is difficult to accurately tease out the demographic details of specific immigrant populations. Still, it is estimated that the immigrant population in New Hampshire is between 20,000 and 30,000 and growing. The immigrant population in New Hampshire is represented by a diversity of race and ethnicity.

This trend makes it increasingly important for communities (especially those with a high minority and/or immigrant population) to consider the needs and demands of a more culturally diverse population. Since various races often seek out differing leisure and recreational activities, research cited in National Recreation and Park Association, *Parks and Recreation, October 2006*, urges communities to identify and address differences in their recreation planning and development.

In order to assist in this process, the National Park Service developed the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPRRP). This federal program is aimed at more urban areas to help with recreation facility/area rehabilitation, planning, and other innovative

⁶ The sum of the five race groups adds to more than the total population because individuals may report more than one race.

projects. Currently, Manchester is the only New Hampshire community eligible to apply for UPRRP monies, but unfortunately, at this time, the federal government has not funded the program.

Community Recreation

Demand For LWCF Funding. Table 20 provides statistics related to New Hampshire’s Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) allocations for municipal projects. After several years of no funding, between 1995 and 1999, New Hampshire has again begun to receive federal LWCF funds. In the last two years, New Hampshire has distributed over \$1.35 million in grants, funding 15 projects. Available grants fell far below the demand for funding. In this two-year period there were 65 local proposals totaling almost \$4.5 million in requests. Clearly, demand for local recreation funding remains strong across the state.

Table 20. Municipal Demand for LWCF Assistance Since 1990 in New Hampshire						
Federal Fiscal Year	NH LWCF Allocation for Municipal Projects	Dollar Value of Grants Requested	Cap	Shortfall	Number of Requests	Number of Grants Funded
1990	\$111,500	\$370,000	\$25,000	\$258,500	19	6
1991	\$170,540	\$437,490	\$25,000	\$266,950	23	8
1992	\$129,509	\$592,428	\$25,000	\$462,919	30	8
1993	\$170,000	\$719,812	\$25,000	\$549,812	39	9
1994	\$168,096	\$587,984	\$25,000	\$419,888	30	9
1995 to 2000	\$0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2001	\$600,000	\$1,955,072	\$100,000	\$1,355,888	30	7
2002	\$750,000	\$2,500,000	\$100,000	\$1,750,000	35	8
2003	\$676,416	\$1,955,072	\$100,000	\$1,278,656	29	10
2004	\$535,277	\$1,329,427	\$100,000	\$794,150	15	6
2005	\$571,691	\$909,691	\$100,000	\$338,000	14	9
2006	\$98,200	\$118,200	\$20,000	\$20,000	6	5

Source: DRED, 2006

Community Needs. In 1993 and again in 1997 the Office of Energy and Planning conducted a Recreational Leaders Survey to gain a better understanding of local recreational demand and need. Of the 130 communities surveyed, 46 responses were received (35 percent response rate). While New Hampshire communities vary significantly depending on location and size, this data does provide some clues about general recreational trends and needs facing New Hampshire communities, as identified by recreation leaders.

This survey asked recreation leaders (e.g. recreational directors) about recreational facility needs in their communities. Table 21 shows that play fields (ball fields) were identified most frequently as a “need” in the community. Specifically, about 70 percent of respondents indicated that their town needed at least one ball field. Other facilities identified most often include outdoor ice skating areas, bicycle trails, playgrounds, hard

court games and picnic areas. Golf courses and campgrounds received the lowest priority rating (4.3 percent respectively).

Questions posed to recreation leaders also centered on community need for local recreational programs and activities. The most frequent programmatic needs included elderly programs (57 percent), followed by concerts, plays, and shows (41 percent). About 39 percent of respondents indicated that their community needed youth programs, programs for the disabled, and environmental education programs, and 35 percent identified arts and crafts programs and adult sports leagues as needing expansion, respectively. When asked what was the best thing about recreation in their town, 48 percent of respondents indicated that they felt recreation programs were well supported in the community. When asked about the worst thing, 33 percent indicated insufficient funds for recreation.

Table 21. Reported Community Recreational Needs			
1997 Top Facility Needs		1993 Top Facility Needs	
Rank	Facility	Rank	Facility
1	Ball Fields	1	Softball/Baseball Fields
2	Outdoor Ice Skating	2	Tennis Courts
3	Bicycle Trails	3	Trails
4	Playgrounds	4	Outdoor Basketball
5	Picnic Areas	5	Playgrounds
6	Hard Court Games (Basketball)	6	Swimming Pool/Beach
7	Trails (Hiking, Nature Study, X Country Skiing)	7	Community Center
8	Gymnasium	8	Gymnasium
9	Tennis Courts	9	Skating Rink
10	Parks	10	Track

Source: OEP Recreational Leaders Survey, 1997 and 1993

The survey above (Table 21) was directed towards recreational directors and committees. Given this, many questions focused on developed recreation facilities and programs, typically the responsibility of recreational leaders, rather than on a broad set of structured and unstructured activities (e.g. trails in town forests, conservation lands) that are available within a community.⁷

Other Local Indicators. In 2001, the University of New Hampshire, through the Master’s in Public Administration program, conducted a survey of community recreation directors/leaders in New Hampshire who are part of the New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (NHRPA). In all, 72 communities at the time were members of the

⁷ Future OEP surveys may want to explore a wider range of activities and be directed to both local recreation leaders and conservation leaders. This broader range of perspectives may provide additional guidance about how community leaders jointly perceive open space needs, unstructured recreational needs, and developed or structured recreation facility needs.

NHRPA. Forty-five agreed to participate in the telephone interview, resulting in a participation rate of 62 percent.

The survey asked questions related to program organization, structure, and effectiveness, rather than asking for information about specific recreational needs. This data provides some context and information about how recreation-related decisions are made locally. For instance, approximately 56 percent of the surveyed recreation leaders report to the Town Administrator, 13 percent report to the Board of Selectmen, and 11 percent report to the parks and recreation committee in their community. The remainder (20 percent) report to various other entities in the community. Almost three-quarters (73 percent) have a parks and recreation committee in their community. Of these, 60 percent are appointed. About 67 percent of those surveyed indicated that their community has a recreation master plan.

The survey also asked several questions about community recreation facilities and programs. When asked for their personal opinion, only 24 percent of respondents indicated that the existing facilities inventory met the current demand. A majority of recreational leaders felt that local demand currently exceeds supply. Recreational programs were perceived differently. A majority (69 percent) felt that the existing recreation program inventory met the current demand.

When asked about maintenance and joint-use, 44 percent of leaders indicated that the parks and recreation department maintain town facilities and 18 percent of communities surveyed have facilities maintained by the public works department. A majority of the communities surveyed have some level of access to (or utilize) school district facilities (91 percent), though the extent of access or shared use is not known.

In terms of budgets and fees, almost 89 percent of surveyed park and recreation departments charge fees for some programs/facilities, and 69 percent charge different fees for residents than non-residents. Of the fees generated, about 64 percent of respondents said the money went into the community General Fund and only 13 percent said it went into a designated parks and recreation fund.

Community Profiles

In the last decade, UNH Cooperative Extension has completed Community Profiles in over 60 communities across the state. Community Profiles provide a forum for local leaders and residents to identify key issues in their community and generate action steps to address those issues. UNH Cooperative Extension recently reviewed these 60 profiles to identify common threads among communities. As part of this process both major and minor themes were identified.

Though not a major theme for communities, outdoor recreation was identified as a prevalent issue within larger themes. This review found that recreation is often expressed as an issue within larger themes of economic development or community development. In terms of community development, increasing recreational opportunities was often identified as a way to develop a stronger sense of community and participate in shared activities. Increasing community access to important resources such as trail systems or boat ramps was also identified as a theme in many communities. In several communities

in the northern part of the state, recreation was discussed in terms of economic development. Improving recreation is seen as a mechanism for increasing tourism in the region.

Natural resource protection was an important theme discussed by many communities across the state. Often, resource protection was discussed in concert with discussions about the opportunities for economic development through tourism, the need to plan for managed growth, and needs related to community development through improved recreational access. This intertwining of issues on paper reflects the real-world integration of resource protection issues with recreation, community, and economic development and the need to plan for smarter, balanced growth locally.

Health and Wellness. A steering committee facilitated by New Hampshire Fish and Game hosted a “Leave No Child Inside” Summit in May 2007 to kick off a New Hampshire initiative to combat the “nature-deficit disorder” trend. Dr. Susan Lynch, New Hampshire’s First Lady, served as honorary chair, and participants represented the fields of education, health, recreation, environment, media and culture, and the built environment. Working groups have formed to address the top priorities identified at the Summit, including messaging, networking, and providing an Internet clearinghouse of existing programs, activities, and locations for engaging children and their families with the outdoors.

State Parks has begun to implement the “Leave No Child Inside” initiative with a six-week program, “The Great Park Pursuit”. Teams of two or more participated in three self-guided challenges and three activity-driven events at a different state park each week to earn points and win prizes. During this six-week adventure, eighty-five teams competed in three-legged and wheel barrow races; created origami birds and built bird houses; inspected specimens netted from ponds; went on hikes; learned how to tie knots and fish; built castles and creatures in the sand; kayaked; and explored the Flume (a natural gorge extending 800 feet at the base of Mount Liberty, with walls of Conway granite that rise to a height of 70 to 90 feet and are 12 to 20 feet apart).

CHAPTER 3: RECREATIONAL ISSUES OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

Changing conditions and trends have far reaching implications for recreation and open space planning. According to *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*⁸ (1996) developed for the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, this has meant a greater emphasis on comprehensive open space and greenway planning, and a greater integration of recreation, open space, and transportation goals. There is also a growing trend towards more collaboration among recreation providers and between community parks and schools. Other trends include greater inclusion of green spaces as part of downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and a heightened recognition of the role recreation and open space play in contributing to more livable, sustainable communities. These trends are reflected in the feedback received for the 2003 and 2008 SCORP.

The six issues discussed in this chapter include information and data from a variety of sources along with input from the SCORP Steering Committee, the larger SCORP Public Advisory Committee, and comments received during the course of the planning process for the 2003-2007 SCORP. Open-ended responses from the SCORP Stakeholder Group Survey (Appendix B-2) were helpful in framing objectives and strategies aimed at addressing issues.

While working with the Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee for the 2008-2013 SCORP, it was confirmed that these issues continue to be important for this SCORP as they were for the 2003-2007 SCORP. The six issues are listed below:

1. Stewardship of the resource base for outdoor recreation;
2. Providing different, sometimes competing, recreational opportunities;
3. Applying limited financial and human resources to address a range of recreation needs;
4. Educating recreational users, municipalities and landowners about responsible behavior, laws, and liability;
5. Impacts of existing land use patterns on recreational opportunities; and
6. Importance of local outdoor recreation opportunities and open space protection in promoting increased health and wellness.

Under each of the following six sections, discussion starts with a section summary of the issue, highlighting major points and general trends expressed during the early stages of the SCORP public involvement process. This is followed by a more detailed discussion of the issue, especially as it relates to New Hampshire.

⁸ The *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* (1996) is the most recent publication of guidelines by the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. It replaces *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*.

This discussion is then followed by a defined goal, objectives, and strategies that have been identified with the assistance of the SCORP Steering Committee and SCORP Public Advisory Committee to help address each issue in New Hampshire. Some of the recommended strategies are specifically targeted towards the allocation of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies.⁹ Others represent broader policy or practical recommendations.

LWCF Administration. LWCF administration in New Hampshire is coordinated through the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) – Division of Parks and Recreation. DRED oversees the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) to aid state allocation of LWCF monies. This process is informed through SCORP planning efforts.

The OPSP process utilizes a set of criteria and point awards used to rank projects and allocate LWCF funds. These selection criteria are reviewed and revised by an OPSP Advisory Panel and the SCORP recommendations provide guidance for modifying or adding criteria based on updated information. Membership on the OPSP Advisory Panel includes a range of agencies and organizations representing recreation and conservation interests. Please refer to Appendix H for more information about the OPSP process and how decisions about LWCF allocations are made in New Hampshire.

While helping to set LWCF priorities is a required function of a SCORP, New Hampshire's plan goes beyond this requirement to also establish recommendations aimed at addressing a wider set of New Hampshire's outdoor recreation issues. These recommendations are targeted towards many different agencies and organizations. This reflects the fact that outdoor recreation issues far outreach any single agency, and resolving issues will require coordination, partnerships, and collaboration. A resource list containing information about a range of recreation-related organizations and agencies is found in Appendix E. Not every agency and organization has been included in this list. Efforts will be made to update and expand this list over time.

While emphasis must be placed on addressing these individual issues, there is also an overarching need to improve upon the way outdoor recreation is incorporated into larger, broader decision making in the state, and on the way the SCORP planning process is undertaken in future years. SCORP planning should be an ongoing effort with *emphasis on implementation*. The state should also continue to improve upon its efforts to include a wide range of perspectives in recreation planning work. The Stakeholder Group Survey (Appendix B-1 and B-2) was a first step in involving a larger audience in the planning process.

⁹ Strategies denoted by LWCF represent recommendations targeted towards New Hampshire's statewide apportionment of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies.

1. STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL RESOURCE BASE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Summary

New Hampshire is facing pressure on its existing resource base. Tourism continues to play a key role in the state's economy even though visitation rates decreased in 2003 and 2004. Development pressures and population growth continue, especially in the southern part of the state.

- Any recreational use can have a negative impact on natural resources (e.g. trail erosion, introduction of exotic species, impacts on flora and fauna).
- Some feel that certain recreational activities have greater negative impacts on the resource base and should be limited or restricted.
- Others feel that all types of use should be allowed on any publicly held land.
- Some of the most popular recreational activities in the state (e.g. walking, wildlife watching, hiking) as identified in the *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*, conducted by UNH in 1997, are highly dependent on open space and tracts of undeveloped lands.
- This same statewide outdoor recreation assessment shows that residents view the protection of natural landscapes and natural areas as highly important management objectives. About 71 percent felt that setting aside natural areas from development was either a very or most important management objective of the state. Seventy-six percent felt it was very or most important to protect typical examples of New Hampshire's natural regions.
- Protection of existing greenways and trail corridors has become an increasing challenge due to changes in land ownership, private land closures, and increased development. (*Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study*,¹⁰ 1997).
- Private lands play an important role, alongside public lands, in protecting the resource base and providing for certain traditional forms of recreation.
- According to *New Hampshire's Changing Landscape* (2005), New Hampshire is projected to add an additional 358,000 residents between 2000 and 2025, an increase of more than 28 percent. The four southeastern counties will absorb four-fifths of this new population. New Hampshire is gradually losing the values provided by extensive forests, including their contribution to water and air quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, scenic values, and recreation opportunities.
- The Fish and Game *Wildlife Action Plan* (2006) can be used to guide land use, stewardship and protection efforts. It points out risks to wildlife and habitats so that ways can be found to reduce or avoid those risks. In this way it helps communities plan for recreation and development while protecting critical resources.

¹⁰ The *Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study* is the most recent "comprehensive" study completed by DRED.

Overview

Continued conservation and stewardship of the resource base is critical to maintaining a wide range of recreational opportunities. Without concerted efforts to protect open space, both the quality and quantity of many of the most popular outdoor recreational opportunities is likely to deteriorate. This stands to become an even greater issue as competing pressures on existing open space grow and demand for outdoor recreation continues to rise. Of course, the benefits of land and water protection extend beyond outdoor recreation opportunities. Protected lands and open space help protect our water supplies, preserve important wildlife habitat, as well as rare and endangered species, help maintain community identity, and protect our natural and cultural heritage. Given all of these reasons, it is of utmost importance to identify and protect important natural resources and practice good stewardship in order to maintain the health of these resources for future generations. In short, open space is critical to maintaining New Hampshire's quality of life.

As population increases and undeveloped land is converted to other uses, large tracts of un-fragmented open space are lost. Open space planning on a local, regional, and statewide level will become ever more important to help identify critical areas, identify how they can be protected, and understand how these areas can be linked together through greenways and natural corridors. From a recreation perspective, it is often the trail linkages found within the corridors and greenways themselves that are of key importance. Planning for trail corridors and greenways should be considered hand-in-hand with open space planning efforts.

The relationship between land and water conservation and recreation is not necessarily static. Unmanaged recreation can also bring negative impacts to the very resources on which it depends. Once land is placed under permanent conservation, it still needs long-term management and stewardship to protect important resources. Good planning, management and stewardship are important to limit potential impacts to ecologically sensitive areas and wildlife as well as to maintain quality recreational experiences.

New Hampshire Conditions and Trends

Land protection and resource conservation are important to New Hampshire residents. Some of the most popular recreational activities in the state (e.g. walking, wildlife watching, hiking) as identified in the *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* (UNH, 1997) are highly dependent on open space and tracts of undeveloped land. This same statewide outdoor recreation survey shows that residents view the protection of natural landscapes and natural areas as highly important management objectives. About 71 percent felt that setting aside natural areas from development was either a very or most important management objective of the state. Seventy-six percent felt it was very or most important to protect typical examples of New Hampshire's natural regions.

Planning for Resource Protection. Open space planning is an important aspect of identifying key parcels and developing strategies for their protection and these efforts can also be incorporated into larger town master planning efforts. Identifying major resource protection needs, setting priorities, and producing a plan for addressing these needs are all important aspects of planning for how the community wants to use its natural resource

base. An important tool for assessing key parcels is the *NH Wildlife Action Plan (2006)*. It includes mapping that prioritizes wildlife habitat based on the ecological condition of the habitat.

When planning for resource and land conservation, consideration should be given to identifying and seeking protection on land that adjoins existing conservation land, in-fill land that helps bridge two conserved areas, and land that helps to create open space corridors and networks of green space.

It is also important to give consideration to lands that can act as buffers around ecologically significant resources (e.g. upland buffers around wetlands, riparian buffers, etc.). Many of these lands and buffers not only protect significant resources themselves, but can also provide important opportunities for recreation. For instance, a riparian buffer could help protect important natural resources while also offering an opportunity for a riverbank walking trail or shore bank fishing.

A historic example of this is the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP). The RMPP is a partnership that includes state designation of a river corridor and enables the development of a corridor management plan for the corridor communities. The RMPP enables multiple communities to communicate about the ecological significance of the riparian resource and affords an opportunity for communities to develop riverbank-walking trails.

Public and Private Conservation. Resource conservation efforts in New Hampshire have a long tradition in both the public and private arena. Likewise, land under public and private ownership both offer important outdoor recreation opportunities. Different types of ownership often bring different management objectives. This, in turn, brings different opportunities for outdoor recreation and varying levels of public access.

Parks, for example, often provide opportunities for a wide range of activities such as picnicking, swimming, camping, or mountain biking, while many conservation easements or privately held tracts of open space may only offer access for traditional activities such as hiking, bird-watching, and cross-country skiing. A main function and purpose of many public park lands is to provide and promote opportunities for public recreation while maintaining important green space. While the primary focus of many private lands or lands under easement may be on maintaining a working forest or protecting water supply land, provisions are often made to permit (or guarantee) certain forms of public access.

Public lands in New Hampshire are owned and managed by a range of federal, state, regional and local agencies. Other undeveloped lands, though not permanently protected, include those that qualify for important tax incentives to remain undeveloped (e.g. Current Use). Private lands with permanent protection include those owned by private conservation organizations such as the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) or The Nature Conservancy, and those under easement with a private or public organization.

About 22 percent of the land base in New Hampshire is permanently protected through a public entity or private non-profit organization. Looking closer, about 53 percent of these protected lands fall under federal control within the White Mountain National Forest. This is down 3 percent from the 2003 SCORP due to an increase of state and local protection, not due to loss of protected land. Over 70 percent of New Hampshire's protected lands lie within the northern half of the state.

Even with this range of efforts, undeveloped land continues to be developed at a fast pace and is cause for continued concern. According to *New Hampshire's Changing Landscapes* (2005) (<http://www.forestsociety.org/research/research-projects.asp>), prepared by SPNHF and the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, New Hampshire, with a population growth of 6 percent between 2000 and 2005, is the fastest growing state in the Northeast.

The report also indicates that overall forest cover in New Hampshire is declining. Forest cover, at a high of 87 percent in 1983, fell to 83 percent in 1993 and 79 percent in 2001. Compounding this general trend is the increased fragmentation of existing undeveloped land. This trend is expected to continue, with the greatest loss and fragmentation of forested land anticipated in the southeastern tier of the state (Rockingham, Hillsborough, and Strafford Counties).

Additional analysis found that 21.5 percent of wetland habitat was protected in 2004. This is an increase from 17.5 percent in 1998. These wetlands provide critical wildlife habitats and flood control protection. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, through its Non- Game and Endangered Wildlife Program, the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau, along with private organizations such as the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, and SPNHF, are all working to enhance understanding of important rare and endangered species across the state and foster protection of resources that protect wetland habitats.

Webster Farm

A collaborative effort between SPNHF, the Trust for Public Land, the Fife family, and others, protected 180 acres of the Daniel Webster Farm. SPNHF now holds a conservation easement on 122 acres surrounding the built area of the Webster Farm Property and a 58-acre easement on abutting farmland.

These conservation easements protect prime farmland, outstanding wildlife habitat and more than a mile of Merrimack River frontage, which provides car-top carry-in access to the River. What makes the land extraordinary is its rich history. It includes the site of the Salisbury Fort, built in the newly granted town of Stevenstown in 1745 to help defend the northern frontier against Indian attacks. The property later was known as "Elms Farm," statesman Daniel Webster's home from 1797 until his death in 1852.

In October 2005, the NH Fish and Game Department published the *NH Wildlife Action Plan*, which addresses the condition of and threats to wildlife and habitats. Created in partnership with many conservation and university partners, the plan identifies specific issues and lists strategies to address them. The plan identifies 123 species of greatest conservation need and 27 critical habitats. Many of these are mapped, with habitat assessed for condition to identify those currently best able to support a diversity of species. Additional tools, such as profiles of each species and habitat, are also available for conservation planning and habitat management.

Wildlife Action Plan

The completion of New Hampshire's *Wildlife Action Plan* (WAP) comes at a crucial time in the state's history. *New Hampshire's Changing Landscape 2005*, a report from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), chronicles the increasing human footprint on the state's natural habitats and documents the immediate need for improved habitat conservation. In 1983, the reforestation that followed farming and logging of the 19th and 20th centuries reached its peak, with 87 percent of the state's lands forested. By 1997, the U.S. Forest Service estimated that the state's forest cover dropped three percent, to 84 percent. Unlike the 18th and 19th century conversions of forests to field, today's land conversion to roads, housing, and businesses permanently alters natural habitats and degrades their value to native wildlife. The WAP's comprehensive wildlife assessment points to where the most vulnerable species and habitats are in relation to these rapid changes to the natural landscape.

After completing the analysis, risks that were common among species and habitats were identified and strategies were developed to address these risks. While rapid urban development in many parts of the state was identified as the most potent risk to our wildlife, various recreational activities were also identified as challenging issues facing various habitats:

- Caves and mines: spelunking and geocaching;
- Cliff habitats for nesting birds and plant communities: hiking and rock climbing;
- Dunes: recreation activities, oil spills, and rising sea level resulting from climate change (dunes are one of the most at-risk habitats in New Hampshire); and
- Rocky ridges and talus slopes: hiking and climbing.

LCHIP. Concerns about these trends are underscored by the creation of the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). Leaders in New Hampshire recognized the important role natural and cultural resources play in promoting a good quality of life in New Hampshire, and the need to support statewide funding efforts to help communities and non-profit organizations make a difference at a local or regional level. This program, established in 2000 under RSA 227-A, has provided \$24.5 million in grants (to date) aimed at protecting important natural, historical, and cultural resources across the state. LCHIP has awarded its appropriated funds to 150 projects in 103 communities across the state.

The level of future funding for LCHIP remains in question. The Land and Community Heritage Authority, created by the legislature in 1998, recommended that LCHIP be permanently funded at \$12 million annually to meet the growing and pressing needs for resource protection in New Hampshire. Thus far, LCHIP has received annual funding far short of this recommended level. Recent state budget shortfalls and expected economic tightening makes LCHIP an important topic in this legislative and budget session. Governor John Lynch included \$12 million in his 2008-2009 biennium budget, a level that the legislature ultimately approved for this program.

Total appropriations were significantly less in 2007 than in recent history. In 2003, at the peak of funding state matching grants through LCHIP, town meeting voters approved more than \$35 million for land conservation. In 2004 the total dropped to \$25.9 million; in 2005, to \$24 million; and in 2006 it dropped again to \$8.2 million. SPNHF suggests that the downward trend in town funding indicates that LCHIP may have a strong leveraging effect when adequately funded.

Conservation Efforts. In 2003, New Hampshire succeeded in protecting large tracts of land in northern New Hampshire through a mix of federal, state, and private efforts and in-kind contributions. The largest and best example is represented by the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters project in the northern part of the state. This significant conservation effort consists of 146,400 acres of private timberland encumbered by a state-held conservation easement, a 25,000 acre natural area owned by the state and encumbered by a Nature Conservancy easement, as well as a 100 acre piece that will be added to an existing DRED-operated campground.

This large-scale conservation effort will benefit the entire state. In addition to preserving important landscape-scale natural habitats, the headwaters of the Connecticut River, and productive forestlands, these lands will retain deeded rights to public access in perpetuity. Management or stewardship plans will be developed for forestry, as well as recreation, to help ensure this significant area will be well managed into the future.

In 2007, the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development completed the “Public Access and Recreation and Road Management Plans” for this tract of land. It will guide public access, recreational use and road management on the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest over the next five years. Among its purposes is, “i. To conserve open spaces, natural resources and scenic values, particularly the conservation of the 146,400 acres and the productive forest on the Property, for the enjoyment, education, and benefit of the general public...”

As important as these large-scale efforts are in protecting state resources, they alone will not ensure that New Hampshire’s natural and cultural resource base is maintained. Local and regional efforts are also critically important to help New Hampshire communities maintain individual identity, retain rural or traditional character, keep costs of community services from rising quickly, and keep lands open to traditional types of recreational activities.

SPNHF has produced a working paper entitled *New Hampshire Everlasting; An Initiative to Conserve Our Quality-of-Life (2001)*

<http://www.forestsociety.org/pdf/nheverlasting.pdf>. This paper reflects upon the importance of undeveloped lands to communities in New Hampshire and offers a series of goals to “...guide the selection and conservation of lands for communities, forestry, habitat, clean waters, and farming.” The vision, statewide, is to protect an additional one million acres in the next 25 years. A set of five goals is offered to address this vision. The first goal has direct links to outdoor recreation:

“Support every community in conserving, with partners, at least twenty-five percent of its lands for a network of trails, parks, farms, and forests where people can connect with the natural world” (*NH Everlasting*, pg 6).

Recreation lands identified in this 25 percent goal include village and downtown parks, outdoor recreation fields, town forests, lands with scenic beauty and community character, and recreation and commuter trail networks. These lands are part of a larger “green infrastructure” that provides critical benefits to both individuals and communities.

This 2001 paper emphasizes that a range of conservation lands and parks, including those lands that are close to home, are needed to support a good quality of life. Currently, about 39 percent of communities in New Hampshire have less than 10 percent of their lands permanently conserved. Of those that have 25 percent of their lands permanently conserved, most are located in the northern part of the state.

The good news is that almost all of New Hampshire’s communities have at least 25 percent of their land base still undeveloped. The possibility for permanent land protection that provides for outdoor recreation close to home remains strong. Meeting this goal will take creative partnerships and concerted efforts by agencies, municipalities, and private organizations alike.

Partnerships. Regional and local land trusts, as well as local conservation commissions, are becoming increasingly important players in protecting critical habitats and open space lands in New Hampshire communities. On a local level, there is an increase in community leaders partnering with a local or regional land trust to protect local lands or secure conservation easements on lands of significance. This partnership takes advantage of a land trust's expertise in both completing sometimes complicated land transactions and holding conservation lands in perpetuity while utilizing local knowledge, planning efforts, and financial resources of the community.

In general, public/private partnerships are critical to protecting natural resources. Limited funds and staffing of public agencies and municipalities limit the ability of government to not only protect lands, but also weave together networks of conservation lands. Private organizations, be it on a national, state, regional or local level, all play key roles in both identifying and protecting important natural resources.

One good regional example of public/private partnerships is the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (GBRPP), formed in 1994. The Partnership is a group of organizations committed to protecting the important habitats of the Great Bay region. It is comprised of state and regional private non-profit conservation organizations and land trusts, federal and state public agencies, and municipalities. The Partnership has undertaken a successful comprehensive, landscape-scale approach to conservation and habitat protection. Habitat protection strategies are developed and implemented through the integration of scientific field studies and ongoing communication with local, regional, state and national conservation representatives.

A collaborative effort is key to the Partnership's successful conservation activities which include promoting creative solutions for habitat protection, building upon the conservation efforts of already protected and restored lands, coordinating resources, identifying and pursuing a variety of funding opportunities, and promoting communication and cooperation between partnering entities.

Over the last several years, the GBRPP has produced a "Habitat Protection Plan" that identifies over 14,000 acres of important habitat organized into 25 Significant Habitat Areas. These Significant Habitat Areas range from 400 to 10,000 acres in size. In addition, the completion of ecological studies for Significant Habitat Areas has provided valuable field data that helps to direct the conservation activities of the Partnership.

Center for Land Conservation Assistance

The Center for Land Conservation Assistance, a resource center located in Concord, serves to build the capacity of New Hampshire land trusts and acts as an information and resource center for local and regional land protection efforts. Contact the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (www.spnhf.org/) for more information.

The information is available for regional and community planning efforts, as well as for use in the long-term stewardship and management of protected conservation lands. As of January 2007, this public/private partnership has protected over 5,000 acres through fee purchase, easements, and donations.

Local Financing. Communities are using a range of methods to help fund their conservation goals. Over half of New Hampshire communities (at least 141 in 2007, up from 117 in 2003) are currently taking advantage of RSA 36-A:5.1, which allows a town to dedicate a portion or all of the Land Use Change Tax (RSA 79-A:7) to a local Conservation Fund. Land use change tax monies are derived from penalties assessed on lands taken out of Current Use. Funds placed in the conservation fund are allowed to accumulate from year to year and may be expended by the Conservation Commission without further approval of the town meeting. A current list of communities that allocate some or all of the land use change tax monies to the local conservation fund can be found on the Department of Revenue Administration's web site (<http://www.revenue.nh.gov/>).

These land use change tax monies, while often substantial, do not always provide the necessary funds at the necessary times to secure important tracts of undeveloped lands. Land values in many parts of the state are skyrocketing and undeveloped, buildable parcels are often on the market for only a short time. Even conservation-minded landowners cannot always wait for a town vote in March to sell their property.

Communities in the more populated areas in the southern part of the state have chosen to pursue open space bonds as a means of addressing this issue. In 2007, the communities of Gilford, Hinsdale and Kensington passed open space bonds for a total of \$1,213,000. These measures allow communities to pay back the bond over a period of years at a set interest rate while providing present day access to funds that can be used to help purchase important natural lands or conservation easements over the next few years. Given escalating land values, many communities have been successful in securing broad-based resident support.

Local Efforts. The overall number of towns with land conservation measures on their warrants has been consistent over the last five years.

- In 2007, there were 35 towns with conservation appropriation articles on their warrants, 30 passed.
- In 2006, 33 towns had articles, 30 passed.
- In 2005, 35 towns had articles, 20 passed.
- In 2004, 32 towns had articles, 23 passed.
- In 2003, 34 towns had articles, 28 passed conservation appropriations.

Hanover's Open Space Priorities Plan

The Town of Hanover prepared an award-winning open space plan in 2000. Hanover understood that while there were a number of different organizations and private landowners involved in land protection efforts, there had never been a concerted town-wide open space planning effort. The Open Space Priorities Plan was developed to provide guidance for acquisition of fee or easement properties using the town's Conservation Fund, to provide a common understanding of existing areas of open space and possible linkages with surrounding towns, and to set a common vision for future land protection efforts in Hanover. The Plan explicitly recognizes that efforts to implement the ideas and strategies will only be achieved in cooperation with willing landowners, will require many years to implement, and will require public funds as well as private, individual efforts. Priorities are established for conservation/recreation action areas as well as in-town open space action areas, including connectors to link downtown and conservation/recreation areas.

Stewardship. Natural resource stewardship has many different facets, including land management, conservation easement monitoring, research, education, planning, and enforcement. Looking after lands and resources in the long run requires a concerted effort and often a substantial investment. State and federal lands are stewarded by agencies charged to do so, but most of New Hampshire's land is privately owned (about 80% of New Hampshire's forests are privately held) and the care that private owners give their land is crucial to the state's environmental health and the citizens' quality of life. The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Forestry and Wildlife program provides education and technical assistance to private forest landowners helping them steward their land. Recreation, planning, and long-term land protection are just a few of the stewardship topics.

Without adequate long-term monitoring, lands and resources that have been protected on paper may still be subjected to ground events that can threaten long-term protection. Too often in the past, land has been acquired for conservation purposes without adequate consideration of long-term stewardship.

Awareness of stewardship issues has grown dramatically across the state in the last several years. Land managers are aware that there are real costs in managing conservation lands, especially managing for public recreational use. It is now standard practice for conservation easement holders to seek contributions to a stewardship endowment to help offset the real costs associated with looking after an easement in perpetuity. The Office of Energy and Planning's Conservation Land Stewardship Program (<http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/CLSP/index.htm>) is partially funded through an endowment to ensure that funds will be available to monitor conservation lands into the future. Communities holding conservation interests are seeking similar arrangements within the municipality's administrative structure to ensure these lands are protected in perpetuity. Alternatively, some communities are establishing arrangements with private conservation organizations to conduct easement stewardship over the long-term.

While these are all positive aspects of resource management, there is a continuous need to improve awareness. Public agencies and private organizations alike often face issues of inadequate staffing and resources needed for management, stewardship, research, education and enforcement. In addition, there is some concern that as private landholders (including land trusts and conservation organizations), who are faced with increasing costs associated with allowing public use of their lands, there will be a trend towards further restricting or prohibiting public use.

Clearly public use of the resource base, whether publicly or privately held, can bring with it management and stewardship challenges. It is important to expand and broaden the discussion about shared concerns and recognize that both public and private entities face many of the same challenges. Sharing knowledge about stewardship concerns is a first step. Concerted efforts should be made to continue a statewide discussion about this topic and develop better ways of promoting information exchange.

Surface Water. Protecting both the quality and the health of our wetlands and surface waters remains a high priority in the state. The New Hampshire Comparative Risk Project in 1996 found that three of the top five environmental risks involve water resources of the state. Surface waters provide important sources of drinking water, important habitat for a variety of species, and abundant opportunities for recreation for local residents and tourists alike. As water-based or water-enhanced recreation continues to rise, it becomes increasingly important to consider efforts to protect these water resources.

Both public and private organizations are deeply involved in protecting the quality of the state's water resources. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) is the agency with the main responsibility for protecting the state's water resources. A mission of DES is, *"...to ensure that New Hampshire's lakes and ponds, rivers and streams, coastal waters, groundwater and wetlands are clean and support healthy ecosystems, provide habitats for a diversity of plant and animal life, and support appropriate uses."* Several programs, including the New Hampshire Lakes Management and Protection Program and the Rivers Management and Protection Program, are in place to help coordinate efforts to protect water resources. DES also enforces existing laws aimed at protecting water resources, including The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act.

The DES Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) is a cooperative program between DES and lake residents and lake associations. Currently about 165 lakes are monitored under this program. In addition to taking samples from the lake, volunteers sample the streams and rivers that act as tributaries to the lake. Because of VLAP, New Hampshire can better assess the surface waters of the state through the Section 305-B Surface Water Quality Report to Congress. VLAP also helps limnologists evaluate water quality trends. The result is the production of watershed protection programs and best management practices that help protect our lakes.

The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension coordinates the volunteer Lakes Lay Monitoring Program. Through this joint effort between UNH Cooperative Extension, the UNH Center for Freshwater Biology, and the State of New Hampshire, over 100 lakes are sampled each year using citizen volunteers. This coordinated

volunteer effort helps scientists understand water quality trends over time as well as diagnose individual lake problems. Water samples are taken on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis and analyzed for chlorophyll-a and total phosphorus, as well as monitoring of water clarity and dissolved oxygen. The Great Bay Watch, in existence for over 10 years, involves volunteers in monitoring water quality in Great Bay and its tributaries.

With increased recreational use of surface water, resource managers are continually focused on preventing the introduction of exotic species such as milfoil, fanwort, and zebra mussels. Currently, \$5.00 for each boat registration is divided into three programs: Clean Lakes, Exotic Aquatic Plant Control, and Prevention Programs. Prevention programs support projects to help educate recreational users about the spread of exotic plants and on-site prevention efforts such as “Lake Hosts,” whose functions are to conduct courtesy boat inspections and educate boaters about exotic species and ways to prevent introduction. New Hampshire leads the nation in efforts to research new control mechanisms to mitigate variable milfoil infestations. A recent \$1 million dollar federal grant obtained by Senator Judd Gregg will help those states suffering from this noxious plant better understand the plant’s morphologic characteristics and be better equipped with new tools to control variable milfoil.

The DES Exotic Species Program provides information on different types of exotics that have been found in New Hampshire and those that have been found in neighboring states. The Program also oversees a volunteer Weed Watcher Program to encourage recreationists, lakes and river associations, and others to monitor lakes and rivers as an early detection method. Figures 4a and 4b show maps depicting locations where exotic species have already been identified and the changes since 2002.

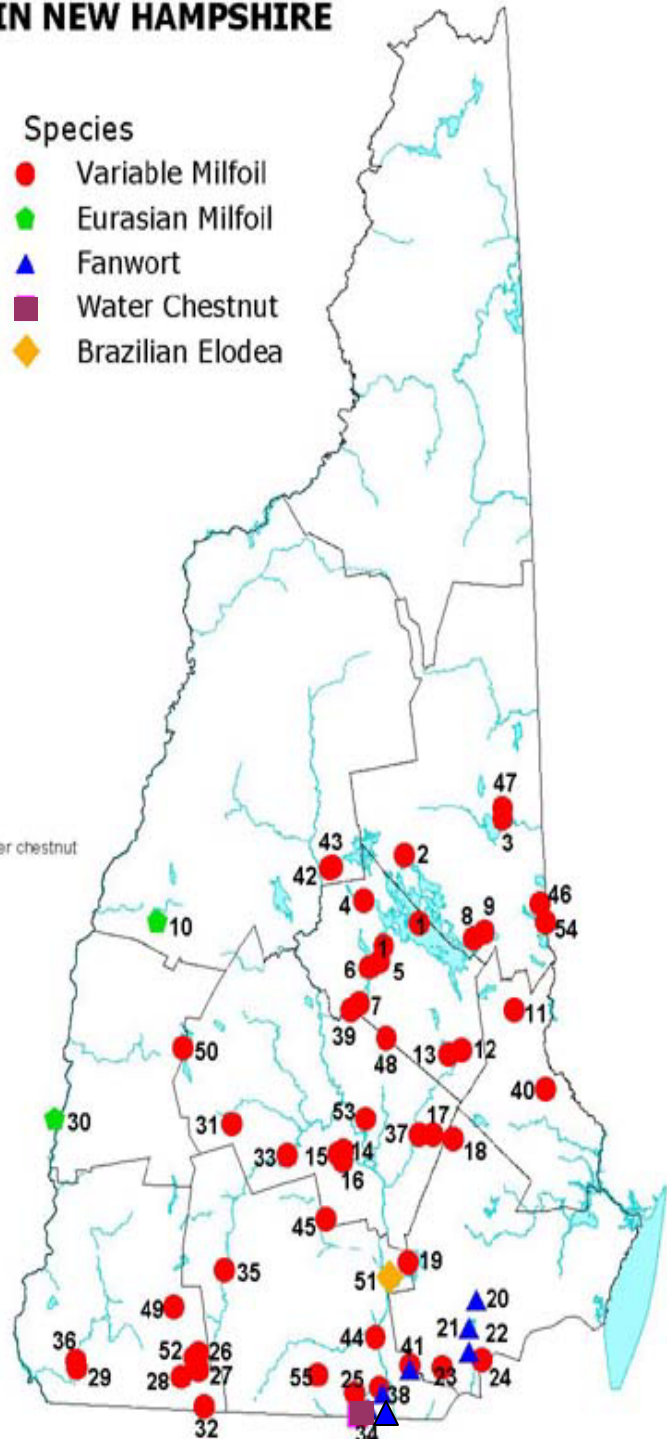
Recognizing the important role surface waters play in the state’s economy, the NH Lakes Association, NH Rivers Council, NH Department of Environmental Services, NH Fish and Game, and several other agencies and organizations have collaborated over the last five years to examine the economic impacts of lakes, rivers, streams and ponds in New Hampshire. Over the past five years, the value of swimming, fishing, and boating on the state’s economy, as well as the economic impacts of shorefront property and drinking water supplies, has been determined to be \$1.8 billion dollars (2002 dollars) annually to the state’s economy. In addition, through a phone survey of NH residents, researchers determined that people would change their behavior if they perceive a change in water quality. Through one-on-one interviews, researchers calculated that the state will lose \$51 million in sales, \$18 million in income and more than 800 jobs statewide if boaters, swimmers and anglers decide to leave the state because of a change in water quality (DES, 2007).

EXOTIC AQUATIC PLANT SITES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Site#	Year	Waterbody (town)	Species
1	1970	Winnepesaukee Lake (Gilford)	Variable milfoil
1	1990	Paugus Bay (Laconia)	Variable milfoil
2	1975	Lees Pond (Moultonborough)	Variable milfoil
3	1995	Ossipee Lake-Broad Bay (Freedom)	Variable milfoil
4	1980	Waukewan Lake (Meredith)	Variable milfoil
5	1990	Opechee Lake (Laconia)	Variable milfoil
6	1995	Winnisquam Lake (Meredith/Belmont)	Variable milfoil
7	1995	Silver Lake (Tilton)	Variable milfoil
8	1980	Crescent Lake (Wolfeboro)	Variable milfoil
9	1995	Wentworth Lake (Wolfeboro)	Variable milfoil
10	2000	Mascoma Lake (Enfield)	Eurasian milfoil
11	1998	Sunrise Lake (Middleton)	Variable milfoil
12	1990	Locke Lake (Barnstead)	Variable milfoil
13	1995	Suncook Lakes (Barnstead)	Variable milfoil
14	1990	St Paul's School Pond (Concord)	Variable milfoil
15	1990	Little Turkey Pond (Concord)	Variable milfoil
16	1990	Big Turkey Pond (Concord)	Variable milfoil
17	1998	Bixby Pond (Epsom)	Variable milfoil
18	1990	Northwood Lake (Northwood)	Variable milfoil
19	1995	Massabesic Lake (Auburn)	Variable milfoil
20	1980	Phillips Pond (Sandown)	Fanwort
21	1985	Big Island Pond (Derry)	Fanwort
22	1985	Arlington Mill Reservoir (Salem)	Fanwort
23	1995	Cobbetts Pond (Windham)	Variable milfoil
24	1996	Captain Pond (Salem)	Variable milfoil
25	1990	Flints Pond (Hollis)	Variable milfoil
26	1995	Cheshire Pond (Jaffrey)	Variable milfoil
27	1990	Contoocook Lake (Jaffrey)	Variable milfoil
28	1975	Pearly Pond (Rindge)	Variable milfoil
29	1998	Forest Lake (Winchester)	Variable milfoil
30	1995	Connecticut River (Charlestown)	Eurasian milfoil
31	1995	Massasecum Lake (Bradford)	Variable milfoil
32	2000	Monomonac Lake (Rindge)	Variable milfoil
33	2000	Hopkinton Lake/Dam (Hopkinton)	Variable milfoil
34	2000	Nashua River (Nashua)	Variable milfoil, Fanwort, Water chestnut
35	2000	Powder Mill Pond (Hancock)	Variable milfoil
36	2000	Ashuelot River (Winchester)	Variable milfoil
37	2000	Little Suncook River (Epsom/Northwood)	Variable milfoil
38	2000	Mine Falls Pond (Nashua)	Variable milfoil, Fanwort
39	2000	Winnepesaukee River (Tilton)	Variable milfoil
40	2000	Cocheco River (Rochester)	Variable milfoil
41	2000	Robinson Pond (Hudson)	Variable milfoil, Fanwort
42	2000	Squam River (Ashland)	Variable milfoil
43	2000	Little Squam Lake (Holderness/Ashland)	Variable milfoil
44	2000	Horseshoe Pond (Merrimack)	Variable milfoil
45	2000	Gorham Pond (Dunbarton)	Variable milfoil
46	2000	Belleau Lake (Wakefield)	Variable milfoil
47	2000	Danforth Pond (Freedom)	Variable milfoil
48	2000	Rocky Pond (Gilmanton)	Variable milfoil
49	2001	Dublin Lake (Dublin)	Variable milfoil
50	2001	Sunapee Lake (Sunapee)	Variable milfoil
51	2001	Nutts Pond (Manchester)	Brazilian elodea
52	2001	Contoocook River (Jaffrey)	Variable milfoil
53	2002	Turtle Pond (Concord)	Variable milfoil
54	2002	Balch Lake (Wakefield)	Variable milfoil
55	2002	Melendy Pond (Brookline)	Variable milfoil

Species

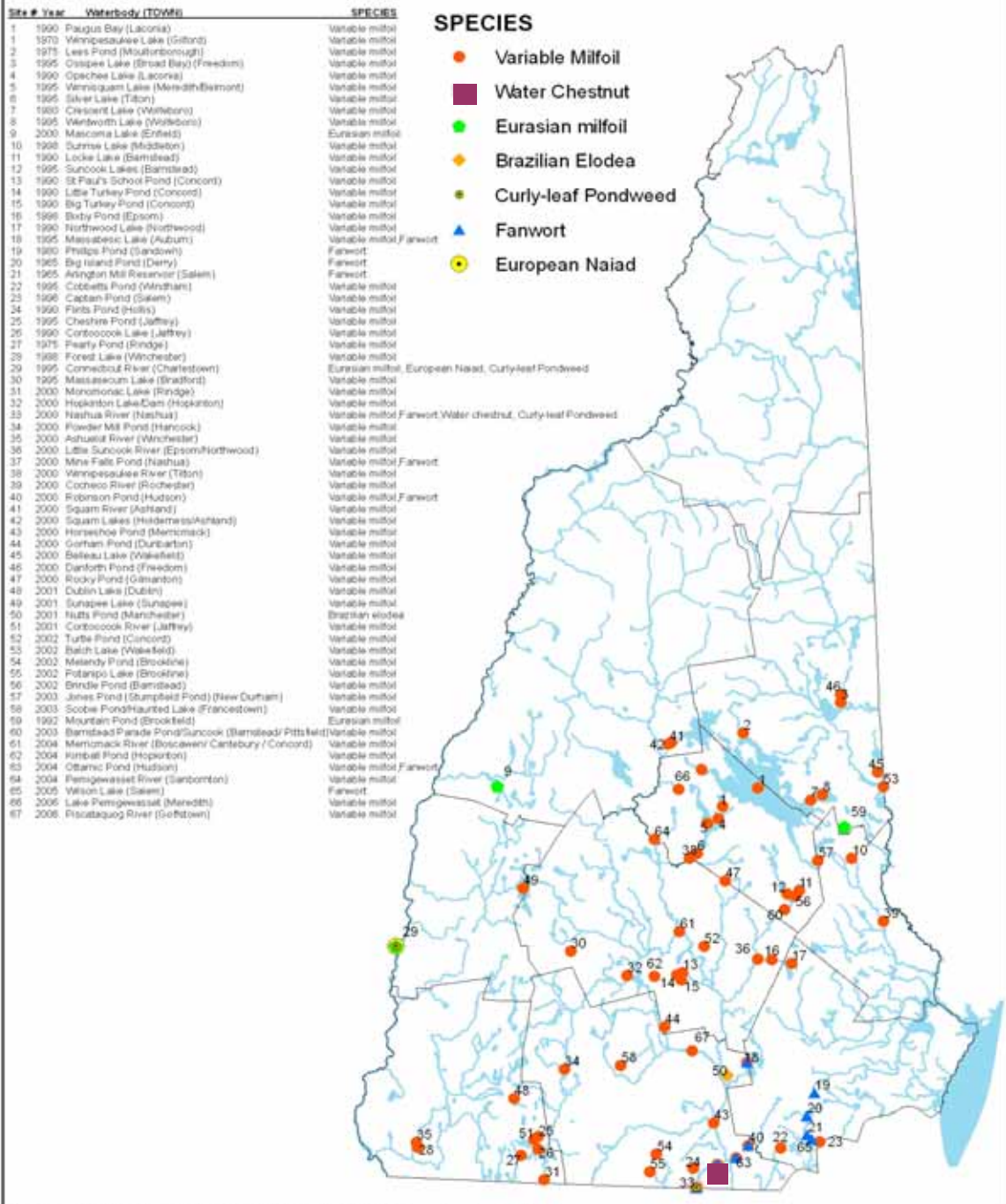
- Variable Milfoil
- Eurasian Milfoil
- ▲ Fanwort
- Water Chestnut
- ◆ Brazilian Elodea



Source: DES Exotic Species Program Website, 2002.

Figure 4a. Locations of Exotic Aquatic Plant Sites in New Hampshire: 2002

EXOTIC AQUATIC PLANT SITES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



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Source: DES Exotic Species Program Website, 2007.

Figure 4b. Locations of Exotic Aquatic Plant Sites in New Hampshire: 2007

Air Quality. Air quality can also have impacts on outdoor recreation and tourism. In 1996, New Hampshire's Comparative Risk Project examined issues pertaining to regional air quality. Pollutants include particulate matter, ground level ozone, acid deposition, nitrogen, and sulfur oxides. The report highlighted that, as air quality decreases, there will be greater impacts on public health, our economy, ecological integrity, and on our quality of life. Currently there are increasing issues and environmental indicators pointing to correlations between air pollution (specifically greenhouse gases) and climate change. With regard to outdoor recreation and quality of life, there are concerns over the negative effects of smog on visibility and aesthetics and the health of the population.

Visibility is an issue for tourism. New Hampshire is currently involved in the development of the regional haze State Implementation Plan (SIP). A recent cooperative project relating to visibility was undertaken by the Appalachian Mountain Club, NH Department of Environmental Services, and NH Department of Resources and Economic Development in an effort to educate the public, raise awareness of air quality and monitor visibility at Miller State Park.

The shorter winters typical of our changing climate have an impact on tourism-related activities, i.e., a shorter skiing season, ice-fishing, snowmobiling and all forms of winter recreation as well as foliage viewing and maple sugaring. Negative impacts on recreational and scenic qualities (i.e., decreased visibility and aesthetics) and growing concern over health risks could also translate into real economic impacts. Worsening outdoor air quality could reduce the tourism appeal of some of our most popular destinations. Decisions about air quality take place well beyond state boundaries. Federal air quality and emission standards and the actions of power plants in other parts of the country have direct impacts on New Hampshire's air quality. This is a growing topic of concern as discussions about federal air quality standards and air quality problems in the Northeast continue.

There are also concerns over human health, particularly for children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems during poor air quality days in the White Mountains and along the Seacoast.

Climate Change. Mounting evidence indicates that the impacts of climate change are characterized by marked alterations in the region's seasonal cycle, weather patterns, and extreme events such as floods and nor'easters. In the northeast, temperatures have been rising, particularly in winter, and the number of extremely hot days during the summer months has been increasing. Snow cover is decreasing and spring is arriving earlier in the year (*Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast, 2006*).

Outdoor recreation is a very important component of the winter economy in New Hampshire. On an annual basis, data from the Travel Industry Association of America, the nation's largest tourism research organization, has shown that tourists in New Hampshire are twice as likely to engage in outdoor recreation as those nationally. Because of the state's location and climate, outdoor recreation during the winter months includes skiing, snowmobiling and ice fishing (*Winter Recreation and Climate Variability in New Hampshire: 1984-2006*). This research paper further cites a spectrum

of research that documents an average decrease in winter temperatures of 4.4 degrees over the last 30 years and data that shows a concurrent decrease in snow cover. Currently, the direct effects of these winter weather-related changes not only impact winter recreational activities but also impact water-related recreational facilities. For instance, without the blanketing cover of snow, the ice layer on water bodies gets thicker and as pressure from this process builds, the forces reverberate back to shore and damage boat docks and boat ramps.

The *Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast* (2006) report estimates that the temperatures in New Hampshire will be similar to Connecticut by 2010 to 2039 with a 9 percent increase in precipitation. While no research is available in New Hampshire on the recreational impacts of these changes, other regions of the country have begun researching the impacts of global warming on recreation; i.e., Great Lakes Regional Assessment Group; Center for Environmental Policy, Economics and Science, Ann Arbor Michigan; and the Department of Forest, Range and Wildlife Science, Utah State University.

Recreational Vehicle Emissions. There are also concerns about the impact of motorized recreational engines on air quality (as well as water quality). Marine gasoline engines and non-road recreational engines and vehicles (including boats, snowmobiles, off-highway motorcycles, and ATVs) contribute to regional haze and visibility problems in high use areas (e.g. parks, marinas), as well as to ozone formation and particulate matter and carbon monoxide levels. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued guidelines for marine gasoline engines and non-road recreational engines. Manufacturers continue to improve design and production of less-polluting models.

An effort is underway in New Hampshire to meet these new requirements for outboard marine engines. Prior to the EPA's 2006 mandate, New Hampshire's Clean Marine Engine Initiative, a public/private partnership between DES and the Marine Trades Association, aimed at phased-in low-pollution engines.

The partnership and voluntary agreement is a good model for other types of recreational engines. The state should explore the feasibility of forging a similar partnership with boat, snowmobile and ATV recreational equipment dealers. Such a partnership would help to phase in these upcoming federal requirements in a proactive manner and send a positive message about the commitment of riders to cleaner burning recreational engines.

Along with the efforts of the marine dealers, the state has been converting its fleet of watercraft to be outfitted with low pollution outboard engines. DES, Fish and Game, and particularly the Marine Patrol, deserve praise for their efforts to put cleaner outboard engines on their watercraft. Over the last several years, these agencies have been replacing old carbureted engines with new 4-stroke and 2-stroke engines. In the state fleet with outboard engines, 80 percent are running cleaner, low polluting engines.

Health and Wellness. Concerned individuals and groups in New Hampshire representing health, environment, education, media and culture, and the built environment have entered into partnerships to address this issue through the children and outdoor initiative. Working groups are developing a media campaign and message, a website clearinghouse of opportunities, and annual events including summits for continued discussion and work. Dr. Susan Lynch, First Lady and pediatrician specializing in childhood obesity, has championed this effort.

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

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

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to land acquisition efforts focused on natural areas/lands identified in existing local, regional, or state plans (e.g. wildlife habitats identified in the *NH Wildlife Action Plan* habitat mapping as Highest Ranked Statewide or Highest Ranked in the Biological Region should be prioritized for protection for low impact recreational uses and should be avoided for high-use recreation. Lands might include forests, wetlands, rare natural communities, coastal areas, agricultural lands, etc.). (LWCF)
- B. Support efforts to secure permanent state funding for LCHIP (e.g. encourage groups to endorse and support Citizens for Land and Community Heritage).
- C. Support efforts to secure continued funding for federal programs (e.g. statewide LWCF funding, Forest Legacy, SAFETEA-LU, EPA Brownfields, Farm Bill, etc.).
- D. Support comprehensive statewide, regional and local planning for open space, recreation corridors, and greenways, and implementation of existing plans (e.g. state, regional, and local open space plans, trail plans, Designated River Corridor & Watershed Management Plans, *NH Wildlife Action Plan*, etc.).
- E. Educate the public on plans that currently exist (e.g. *NH Wildlife Action Plan*, Designated River Corridor & Watershed Management Plans, Hanover Open Space Plan, etc.).
- F. Expand efforts to fund conservation for outdoor recreation at the local level (e.g. encourage communities to consider open space bonds and/or earmarking all or a portion of the local land use change tax for conservation purposes).
- G. Encourage state, regional, and municipal partnerships with non-profits and land trusts to acquire and protect locally significant open space lands (e.g. New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, Center for Land Conservation Assistance).

- H. Target specific purchases in areas of the state where the fastest growth and usage is taking place (e.g. protect lands near areas experiencing increased development pressure to protect open space lands and recreational opportunities close to home).
- I. Target purchases that protect hydrological units or create or link large contiguous blocks of land for wildlife and people.
- J. Support efforts to protect scenic views (e.g. encourage and give incentives to landowners to keep fields mowed - examples might include the NH Fish and Game small grants programs for wildlife or establishing incentives through existing programs like Current Use).
- K. Encourage communities to include recommendations from the *NH Wildlife Action Plan* in their planning efforts. (NH Fish and Game)
- L. Encourage communities to include Designated River Corridor & Watershed Management Plans in their Master Plans as authorized by RSA 483:8-a, III (c).

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

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that help redistribute recreational use away from ecologically sensitive areas. (LWCF)
- B. Address impacts to important resources such as wildlife, water quality, rare or endangered species, cultural/historic resources, and sensitive areas when planning and designing trails/facilities, and coordinate with affected agencies early in the planning process (e.g. coordinate efforts with NH Natural Heritage Inventory, Division of Historical Resources, NH Fish and Game Department, etc.).
- C. Evaluate the role tourism and outdoor recreation marketing and development play in creating both positive and negative environmental and cultural resource impacts (e.g. Institute for New Hampshire Studies, UNH Cooperative Extension, Northern Forest Center, etc.).
- D. Expand coordinated state review efforts of new development plans on state lands and implement Long Range Management plans for state owned lands within designated river corridors and their tributary drainage areas (RSA 483:10-a) (e.g. State Land Management Team).
- E. Continue existing programs focused on resource protection (e.g. Volunteer Lake Assessment Program, Volunteer River Assessment Program, Lakes Lay Monitoring Program, DES Exotic Species Program, State Conservation & Rescue Archaeology Program, etc.).

- F. Expand partnerships and initiatives aimed at promoting the use of recreational equipment that utilize cleaner, more environmentally friendly technologies (e.g. NH Clean Marine Initiative).

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

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that have a prepared stewardship plan in place. (LWCF)
- B. Continue to address enforcement and enforceability of existing environmental laws (e.g. support increased enforcement by state agencies and examine existing limitations given current staff and funding levels).
- C. Encourage and assist landowners in preparing stewardship plans on existing parcels.
- D. Emphasize the importance of stewardship when lands are protected by the state, municipalities and other organizations (e.g. LCHIP requires a stewardship plan to be developed in order to receive grant funding for fee-owned lands and easements).
- E. Utilize and promote technical assistance programs for providing consultation when parcels are protected (e.g. Center for Land Conservation Assistance, local land trusts, NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture, NH Office of Energy and Planning).
- F. Develop partnerships with recreational user groups to steward lands.
- G. Improve information and educational efforts aimed at addressing stewardship concerns and issues faced by both public and private entities.

Selected Contacts and Information Resources

- National Center for Recreation & Conservation (www.ncrc.nps.gov/)
- National Park Service, Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/)
- Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (www.lchip.org/)
- New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development – Division of Parks and Recreation (www.nhparks.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (www.des.state.nh.us/)
- Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (www.spnhf.org/)
- The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (www.nhacc.org/nhacc.htm)

- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Non Game and Endangered Wildlife Program (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/nongame_page.htm)
- New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory (www.nhdf.org/formgt/nhiweb/index.htm)
- New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (<http://nature.org>)
- Audubon Society of New Hampshire (www.nhaudubon.org/)
- New Hampshire Lakes Association (www.nhlakes.org/)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com)
- New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development – Division of Forest and Lands (<http://www.dred.state.nh.us/divisions/forestandlands/>)
- Appalachian Mountain Club (<http://www.outdoors.org/>)
- Conservation Law Foundation (www.clf.org)
- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (www.extension.unh.edu)
- New Hampshire Rivers Council (<http://www.nhrivers.org/>)

2. PROVIDING DIFFERENT, SOMETIMES COMPETING, RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Summary

- New Hampshire needs local, close-to-home recreational opportunities, especially alternatives to those opportunities marketed as tourist destinations.
- Issues and conflicts can arise when multiple activities compete for the same resources. This is particularly evident along trails and on public waterways.
- There is a tendency to place restrictions on use as pressure increases or conflicts develop.
- The resource and recreation management concerns may vary depending on location. Concerns may be more related to impacts of tourism in the northern half of the state, and more related to increased development pressure and population growth in the south.
- Universal Design is required under state and federal law when recreational opportunities are developed or improved.
- According to the *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* (UNH, 1997) some of the most broadly popular activities in the state include wildlife viewing, walking/jogging/running, picnicking, day hiking, and swimming. These activities tend to be globally popular because they are unstructured, require little facility “development”, require no specialized gear or skills, and can be enjoyed by young and old alike. Many of these activities take place close to home.
- U.S. data shows that participation in most outdoor recreational activities is on the rise, either due to population increases, increases in popularity or both (Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2006). This suggests that both recreational facilities and acquisition of lands for a range of activities are needed.
- New equipment and technology are expanding the type and range of activities people enjoy (Cordell et. al, 1999).

- Wheeled OHRV registrations by New Hampshire residents have more than doubled in the last 10 years and tripled for non-residents in the same time period (NHFG, 2006).
- Nearly 50 percent of respondents to the *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* (UNH, 1997) agreed or strongly agreed that outdoor recreation areas in New Hampshire are too crowded.
- Forty six percent of respondents in this same 1997 survey indicated that they would be willing to pay higher user fees if the increase would be dedicated to maintenance, acquisition and development of recreation programs and properties.
- The 1997 *Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study* completed by OEP found that existing trails are inadequate to meet the current range of recreational activities.

Overview

Planning for recreation requires the consideration of many factors, including an understanding of changing environmental, cultural, economic, social, and technological conditions and trends. A number of sources explore these trends and changing conditions. According to *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* (1996) published by the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, there are numerous trends that impact outdoor recreation planning. Examples include a greater focus on preserving natural resources, increased citizen participation in decision making, an aging society, great strides in information technology (e.g. internet), and increased focus on growth management.

Outdoor Recreation in American Life, A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends (Cordell et. al, 1999) underscores the need to address increased recreational use, changing participation patterns, and the potential for greater conflicts of use. This report states that recreation providers should expect that the most popular sites will experience greater congestion in the future and that there will likely be more conflicts among recreationists as they vie for use of the same areas at the same times. Pressure is expected to be particularly heavy at already popular water sites, especially with advances in technology. Travel and tourism should continue to grow as long as transportation and access to resources remains affordable and available.

Other predicted trends identified in this report include the following: access to both developed sites and dispersed areas will become an even more important management issue; cultural and socio-economic changes will continue to change the type of demand for recreation opportunities; and the number of organized groups (representing a wider variety of outdoor recreation interests) will continue to grow and have an increasingly large voice in public land management.

Universal Design and Accessibility. Beyond general trends, recreational providers, by law, must consider the universal accessibility of recreational opportunities. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, communities were given the legal responsibility to provide a reasonable level of access to all users of public facilities and programs. This includes access to public park and recreation facilities.

Guidance for facility design is available from the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Access Board, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Center for Universal Design, in addition to accessibility standards that are published by the International Code Council. More general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act can be found at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) website (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>) which provides access to a wide range of information and technical assistance about the ADA, including a link to *ADA Standards for Accessible Design* (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/stdspdr.htm>). Additional resources of interest to communities are the *ADA Guide for Small Towns* (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/smtown.htm>) and the ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/pcatoolkit/toolkitmain.htm>). These provide overviews of basic ADA requirements with cost-effective tips on how small towns can comply with the ADA.

In New Hampshire, the Governor's Commission on Disability provides information and education about the Americans with Disability Act and other regulations that affect the lives of citizens with disabilities. The Commission's stated mission is to "remove the barriers, architectural or attitudinal, which bar persons with disabilities from participating in the mainstream of society."

The Architectural Barrier-Free Design Committee of the Governor's Commission on Disability (under RSA 275-C and RSA 155:39) writes, distributes and enforces the Architectural Barrier-Free Design Code for New Hampshire (ABFDC-NH). This code incorporates by reference the accessibility guidelines, "Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities ANSI A117.1-1998" – from the American National Standards Institute, Inc. For assistance with disabilities, contact the Commission at 1-800-852-3405 (in NH) or 603-271-2773.

In September 2002, the State of New Hampshire adopted the State Building Code, which incorporates accessibility standards for all new construction, additions, and alterations that apply to all facilities including recreation facilities.

New Hampshire Conditions and Trends

As population grows, tourism remains strong, and participation rates for many activities continue to rise, New Hampshire and its communities must consider how to provide for an increasingly diverse range of outdoor recreational activities. This includes providing outdoor recreation experiences in tourist destinations along with more localized efforts that provide residents with opportunities close to home. According to the *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* conducted by the University of New Hampshire in 1997, about 50 percent of all outdoor recreation activities take place within 10 miles of home.

Local opportunities for outdoor recreation, particularly human powered recreation, can be important aspects of encouraging physical activity and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Providing close-to-home, convenient opportunities for walking or biking, for instance, helps to incorporate outdoor recreation into people's daily lives instead of just as a weekend or occasional hobby. This helps ensure that participation takes place not only when one travels to a destination, but also when one walks down the street or out the

front door. This type of activity is one way to address the obesity epidemic and meet the needs of our aging population. Trails, paths, and bikeways have dual impacts. Pathways serve as a recreational opportunity in and of themselves and provide important connector or transportation linkages between other local resources.

According to a 1995 National Park Service report titled *Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*,¹¹ there are numerous economic benefits of trails and greenways, such as increased property value of nearby homes. In addition to property value increases, studies have shown that trail users spend money on food, beverages, camping, hotels, and bike rentals, which stimulates the local economy. Greenways also reduce flood damage and costs related to damage. Throughout the state, dozens of regional and community-based trail groups have sprung up. Local conservation commissions are also increasingly becoming involved in the development of trails and greenways.

Tourism and Recreational Use. Outdoor recreation areas marketed as destinations provide an important source of tourism-related income for the state. Tourism-related dollars are generated both from in-state visitors as well as out-of-state visitors and are an important part of the economy. These destinations, such as the trails and scenery of the White Mountain National Forest and Mount Monadnock, the beaches of the Seacoast, and the clear lakes of the Lakes Region, help define the character of the state and are an important reason why residents call New Hampshire home.

A forum sponsored by the NH Historical Society, SPNHF and the NH Distance Learning Network was held in 2003 to discuss the history and future of the state's tourism industry. In particular, there was discussion about tourism promotion and the importance of managing for potential impacts of tourism growth and development. There was broad awareness and recognition of the important role our natural and cultural resources play in the continued health of our state's tourism industry. If these resources are ignored, our tourism industry and our quality of life will be impacted.

The importance of the topic was underscored by the broad organizational representation at the table. The Business and Industry Association, Lodging and Restaurant Association, Monadnock Conservancy, Plymouth State University, University of New Hampshire, and North Country Resource Conservation and Development made presentations to an audience of agency, non-profit and business interests.

A fair number of state residents are concerned about existing use levels of recreational areas and a substantial number would pay higher fees to alleviate pressure and impacts of use. Nearly one-half of respondents in a *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* (UNH, 1997) agreed or strongly agreed that outdoor recreation areas in New Hampshire are too crowded. Forty-six percent, in this same survey, indicated that they would be willing to pay higher user fees if the increase would be dedicated to maintenance, acquisition, and development of recreation programs and properties.

¹¹ National Park Service, *Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors* (1995) is the most recent national survey regarding the economic impact of protecting rivers, trails and greenways.

In this 1997 study, three destination areas in the state, White Mountain National Forest, Lakes Region, and Seacoast, were examined individually to explore perceptions of crowding and use. Almost 89 percent of residents have visited the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). While almost all (96 percent) still rate their last visit as good or excellent, about 23 percent said the environmental conditions in the WMNF are declining and almost 32 percent said crowding and congestion are becoming a bigger problem. Nearly 19 percent indicated that they use the WMNF less now in response to crowding.

Almost 81 percent of state residents have visited the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. Most ranked their last visit as either good (55 percent) or excellent (33 percent). Similar to the WMNF, about 24 percent of respondents said the environmental condition of the Lakes Region is declining. Almost 43 percent indicated that crowding and congestion are becoming a bigger problem in this area, with about 17 percent saying they visit the Lakes Region less in response to crowding or congestion.

Approximately 84 percent of respondents have visited the Seacoast. About 53 percent rated their last visit as good and 27 percent excellent. Again, similar to the other two areas, about 22 percent indicated that environmental conditions of the Seacoast are declining. Nearly 44 percent said that crowding and congestion are becoming more of a problem in this area and 25 percent of residents visit the Seacoast less now because of this.

These three profiles suggest that while residents still view these experiences positively, a significant number of state residents are becoming sensitive to crowding and congestion, in some cases changing their visitation patterns. As use continues to grow or expand in these areas, these issues could become more pronounced and will pose challenges to recreation providers. These trends also suggest that the visitor profiles of these regions may be changing as well.

While many resource and recreation management concerns may be statewide, some may be more evident in one area of the state than another. For example, many communities towards the northern part of the state tend to be dominated by large tracts of publicly owned lands such as the White Mountain National Forest, or large tracts of un-fragmented privately held lands. Tourism promotion, the impacts of recreational use, and the management decisions made on these lands are all of great importance to local communities. Comparatively, there is much less publicly held conservation land in the southeastern part of the state, and the sheer number of large un-fragmented parcels is dwindling. Communities in the southeast must increasingly deal with issues surrounding growth, including loss of open space, loss of community character, and increased development pressure.

Keeping Lands Open to the Public. The 1996 *New Hampshire Forest Resources Plan*, produced by the Forest Resources Plan Steering Committee and the DRED Division of Forests and Lands, identified a host of action strategies aimed at sustaining New Hampshire's forests and forest economy. (DRED is working on a plan revision to be completed in 2008.) One specific action step identified in the plan focuses on continuing the tradition of keeping lands open to the public. Public use generally includes low-

impact activities such as hiking, bird watching, fishing, hunting, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

The plan recognizes that New Hampshire has a long held tradition of public use of private lands for recreation, but changes in land use and liability concerns are restricting these opportunities. Smaller parcel sizes and increased posting due to fear of liability raised concern that these trends would increase pressure on existing public lands, some of which already experience a great deal of use. This increased use of public lands, in turn, may negatively impact both the natural resource base and the recreational experience.

The plan suggests the continued promotion of recreational use of private lands by addressing landowner concerns and statewide recreational opportunities. Sample action steps identified in the 1996 plan include continuing efforts to build coalitions between forest landowners and people who recreate on private lands, provide information about the rights and responsibilities of forest landowners in education programs, and develop programs on responsible use. These concerns mirror those identified by the SCORP Public Advisory Committee and give credence to continuing efforts to address issues related to public use of private lands in the SCORP.

This emphasis is supported by a 2001 survey completed for the Statewide Program of Action to Conserve our Environment (SPACE) by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. This survey found that 55 percent of Current Use landowners cite recreational use as the number one public benefit they provide (a 19 percent increase from the 1993 survey). About 59 percent of Current Use landowners indicated that their land is not posted against hunting, fishing, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, or nature observation. Forty-four percent indicated their land is being used most frequently for “recreational uses,” compared to 37 percent who indicated their land is primarily used for “extractive uses” (e.g. forestry) and 19 percent who indicated “passive uses” (e.g. wildlife habitat).

As background, the Current Use Taxation Program, under RSA 79-A, was established in 1972 to:

“...encourage the preservation of open space, thus providing a healthful and attractive outdoor environment for work and recreation, maintaining the character of the state’s landscape, and conserving the land, water, forest, agricultural and wildlife resources.”

Under this program, parcels of land (10 acre minimum) are taxed based on their current use value as open space (e.g. active farm or forest land) rather than on their potential value for development purposes.

Under New Hampshire’s Current Use Program landowners can also accept an additional 20 percent “recreation adjustment” to their taxes. This recreation adjustment lowers a landowner’s tax burden by an additional 20 percent if the land is kept open to the public for traditional forms of recreation. As defined by RSA 79-A:4,II, the six traditional forms of recreation consist of skiing, snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking, and nature

observation; available year-round unless these activities are detrimental to crops on agricultural lands or active forestry operations.

During the 2005 Legislative Session, New Hampshire's landowner liability statute RSA 212:34 "Duty of Care" was amended to include paragraph IV, effective January 1, 2006. Prior to the amendment, the statute provided liability protection for landowners if action was taken against them but did not preclude them from being taken to court. The legislature responded to landowner concerns with the following new provision:

IV. Except as provided in paragraph III, a person using the premises as provided in paragraph I or given permission as provided in paragraph II, shall not maintain an action against the owner, occupant, or lessee of the premises for any injury which resulted while on the premises.

Water Access. In 1991 OEP developed and published the *Public Access Plan for New Hampshire's Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers* in conjunction with the then-called Public Access Advisory Committee. It includes an evaluation of past and future access efforts and provides a series of recommended strategies for identifying priority sites and sources of funding for improving public access in the state. The plan provided a detailed set of recommendations related to administrative needs, funding, and 10 different goals for improving water-related access. Some examples of main goals include: to provide and improve year-round access, including for those who are disabled; to provide access for boaters and non-boaters alike; to minimize abutter conflicts; to identify, analyze and minimize environmental impacts associated with public access; and clearly define roles of public and private access providers.

Two recommendations identified in the Public Access Plan have since become law. In 1992, the New Hampshire legislature passed RSA 233-A, which established the New Hampshire Boat Access Program. The legislation also provides a non-lapsing dedicated fund for public access development taken from a \$5 surcharge on boat registrations. The law allowed the NH Fish and Game Department to use the funding for the acquisition of lands for access, development of access facilities, and staffing. Another recommendation of the Public Access Plan, also an important aspect of RSA 233-A, is the establishment of a Public Water Access Advisory Board (PWAAB). The Board is comprised of 20 members representing state agencies, legislators, hunters, fishermen, lake and river associations, and various boating groups. This Board is charged with advising and monitoring all state agencies in their efforts to increase and expand access to New Hampshire's public waters. Public access includes not just boat access but any opportunity for the public to access these water bodies for recreational purposes including swimming, shore-bank walking and fishing and picnicking.

The PWAAB meets regularly to review and make recommendations that impact water access. Currently, a subcommittee is addressing the issue of accessibility, capacity and stewardship of public waters.

Over 15 years have passed since the Public Access Plan was developed. Given the changes that occur over time, the priorities, recommendations and strategies set forth in this 1991 plan should be reviewed by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the Public Water Access Advisory Board (PWAAB) to determine accomplishments

to date and reaffirm or revise priorities, goals and strategies.

Trails Issues. OEP, in cooperation with DRED, produced a *Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study* in 1997. This study served as an update to the 1974 Trails Study and was an outgrowth of the 1993-1999 SCORP. This study was completed with input and guidance from the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee. The New Hampshire Statewide Trails Advisory Committee, authorized under RSA 216-A, was established to advise DRED and the Commissioner on matters related to state trails. Membership includes a variety of interests from state agencies, motorized and non-motorized trail user groups, and non-profit organizations. This Committee helps improve coordination between agencies and recreational trail user groups and inform state decisions related to trails planning and development.

An important part of the Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study planning effort included the development of statewide issues, goals, and recommendations related to trails. Issues identified related to several main categories including the protection of resources, user needs, compatibility of trail activities, trail maintenance, funding, laws, and municipal trails. Some main recommendations of this 1997 study included: encourage the development of trail corridors to accommodate the needs of different trail users; encourage trail organizations and towns to work with land trusts to protect trail and greenway corridors; encourage links between places where people work, live and play; encourage towns and communities to develop trails within 15 minutes of home; and develop trail monitoring plans for evaluating trail maintenance needs on trail systems. These examples, along with others identified in the plan, remain pertinent today and serve as an important foundation for addressing trail issues in the SCORP.

Issues related to trails are not always about competing *recreational* uses. For instance, many tracts of undeveloped land in New Hampshire are working forestlands. These lands provide forestry-related income to landowners and many also offer public recreational opportunities. Active forestry on lands open to the public can sometimes impact recreational experiences. Trails may be closed for a period of time during active harvesting, or harvesting along existing trails can change the look and aesthetic appeal of an area. Issues can arise on publicly and privately held lands.

For example, in a municipality in southern New Hampshire, it was decided it was time to harvest timber in the town forest and a forest management plan was developed. However, in the ten years since the town acquired the parcel, the town forest had been used primarily for public recreation: hiking, bird watching and cross-country skiing, etc. Trails were developed and marked for recreational use. When harvesting began, little explicit consideration was given to the existing recreational use of the property. The resulting cut had significant visual impacts on the property, especially as viewed from these public trails. This created conflict and disagreement in town over the purpose and management objectives of the land.

While no single prescription exists, some interested landowners are giving consideration to trail buffers as a way (management strategy) to help protect recreational corridors. Trail buffers might, for instance, limit or restrict forestry along existing trails or planned trails. Under such a scenario, a landowner could, for example, agree to maintain a buffer

of 50' or 100' along an existing recreational corridor and limit forestry within this buffer zone to salvage cuts only. Such a tool helps protect the existing recreational opportunities (e.g. hiking, cross-country skiing, etc.) by protecting the aesthetic appeal while still maintaining a majority of a property's use as a working forest.

Motorized Access. In 2001 the State of New Hampshire recognized that All Terrain Vehicle use, as a recognized recreational activity, was on the rise in the state. With registrations increasing 150 percent over the prior 10 years, a way to address the issues brought about by the legitimate use, and abuse, of these machines was paramount. Over the following years, a number of legislative initiatives were undertaken to try to do so. One of these initiatives was the increase in registration fees with a portion of those fees dedicated to buying land to develop ATV trails.

While a relatively small proportion of people participate in wheeled OHRV activities as compared to non-motorized activities, its increasing popularity and its relatively large impact on other use or interests demands increased attention from managers. Ignoring the growth of these recreational uses would only create greater management challenges and greater controversy in the future. Compounding this increase in resident interest is the growing trend towards restricting wheeled OHRV use in Massachusetts and Vermont. Managers feel that wheeled OHRV policies in other states may be diverting additional use into New Hampshire.

A wide variety of opinions about wheeled OHRV management exist in New Hampshire. Some view existing trail and wheeled OHRV area access as insufficient given the growing demand and substantial registration fees paid by OHRV users. They feel that more state resources and wheeled OHRV fees should be directed to expanding and improving access for wheeled motorized access.

Others view wheeled OHRV use as a growing statewide problem and concern. Existing use is seen as detrimental to the environment (wetlands, wildlife, air pollution) and trail conditions, and negatively impacts other interests (other trail users, abutters). There is also growing concern over trespass, litter, safety, and problems with enforcement on privately and publicly held lands. There is concern that the state is paying too much attention to this use and will ultimately promote and expand OHRV use across the state.

Several communities, especially in the southern part of the state, are expressing concern and frustration over growing OHRV use and their lack of control over this use. There is also a concern over the lack of state enforcement (NH Fish and Game) available to address trespass and safety issues, among others. This lack of state funding for enforcement is seen as placing a disproportionate burden on local law enforcement. There is a fear that growing recreational use and continued lack of local control will only exacerbate already problematic local issues in the future.

DRED has begun to address this demand with the purchase of land and the development of Jericho State Park in Berlin for ATV use as a destination park for OHRV riding. (Fifteen miles of the proposed trails were opened in August 2006 in Jericho State Park.) In addition, the Bureau of Trails, in collaboration with more than twenty ATV clubs across the state and the NH Off Highway Vehicle Association, are working together on

an education program that informs riders of state laws, rider ethics, and responsible trail usage.

Legislation. Increased use and demand for motorized trail access heightens the need to better understand the needs of these users, the relationship of ATV/Trail Bike use to other uses, impacts on existing trails, other trail users, and the resource base.

House Bill 1273 (Chapter 233 of the Laws of 2002) provides legislative guidance for planning and procedures related to state-owned or leased trails ATV as well as OHRV registrations. A key aspect of the law includes a mandated ATV and Trail Bike Trails Plan. The plan, completed in 2003, is scheduled for updates every five years. The plan must emphasize self-contained trails and include the following components:

- a. Provides an inventory of the ATV and trail bike trails open to the public in the state, including the length and condition of the trails, persons or organizations responsible for maintenance, funding levels for maintenance, and estimated ATV and trail bike use.
- b. Provides an assessment of the amount of ATV and trail bike trail expansion required to reasonably accommodate the public need in the next five years.
- c. Proposes additional sites of strategically located lands where public/private partnerships will allow development of ATV and trail bike trails.
- d. Proposes sites for the acquisition by the state of strategically located lands for the development of ATV and trail bike trails.
- e. Assesses the level of funding necessary for grants-in-aid and purchases of land, easements, and rights-of-way for the purposes of the 5-year plan, and makes recommendations for fee structure changes to the legislature.

The Plan is available on-line.

<http://www.nhtrails.org/Trailspages/ATVpages/ATVTrailSystemPlan.pdf>

Fee and Non-Fee Activities. This discussion about the state's management of OHRV use brings to light a larger issue: how to manage for recreational activities with user fees versus those without user fees. Some feel that the state's attention and focus on these two broad classes of activities is out of balance, though there are perspectives on both sides of the issue. There is one general perspective that the silent majority (e.g. wildlife watchers, hikers, bicyclists, non-motorized boaters, etc.) has too small of a voice in resource management decisions. The feeling is that more attention should be placed on preserving the more popular non-fee activities instead of the less popular fee-based activities (OHRV, motor boating, etc.).

Some feel the state focuses attention on supplying opportunities for fee-based activities but does not fully recognize the negative impact these activities can have on other uses. Some feel the state is even promoting fee-based use because it is a revenue source. The concern is that continued promotion of certain fee-based activities could ultimately damage the majority's ability to enjoy these other more popular (non-fee) activities.

There is another broad perspective, however, that recreationists who pay fees to participate in their activities should be given more state time and attention. Their fees should be used expressly to enhance and improve their ability to participate in these activities and state resource managers must be responsive to their needs. Some feel there still is not enough consideration given, based on the high fee rates charged. Perspectives vary and discussions and debate about state management of fee and non-fee activities will likely increase in the future as recreation pressures and demands grow.

Local Open Space and Trail Planning. Many communities already identify, inventory, and plan for recreation needs such as ball fields, playgrounds and bicycle paths, through their master planning process. In addition to this important planning effort, communities may also want to consider conducting an open space trails plan to identify and plan for open space (and trails) more explicitly. A manual, produced by the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC), is available to provide guidance.

The *Guide to the Development of a Municipal Open Space Trail System Plan* helps communities plan for a municipal trail system and to promote the conservation of lands of special significance. The guide provides recommendations for how to protect open space and create a trail system in a community. This is useful on a municipal level and can also help neighboring communities develop a more regional approach to open space and trails development. Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission assisted eight communities in completing an open space trail plan between 1999 and 2001. It is not known how many communities have taken advantage of the on-line guide.

An open space trails plan consists of an inventory and maps of a town's existing conservation easements, public lands, right-of-ways, and privately conserved lands, along with an inventory and maps of existing formal trails and informal trails. Examples include preserved private and public lands, lands that abut Class VI roads, snowmobile trails on private land, railroad corridors, and utility easements. Inventories and maps help a community decide upon new trails and provide a holistic view of the town's existing resources to aid the creation of an open space and trails network. The planning process is sensitive to issues of private property and landowner liability and attempts to minimize individual concerns over certain lands being identified in the plan.

Open Space Trail Plans can be adapted to meet the needs of individual communities and can be used alongside an existing master plan or adopted as part of a master plan. Such a plan can also provide recommendations for changes to a municipality's site plan review regulations or subdivision regulations. This guidebook is available on-line through the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (www.cnhrpc.org).

GOAL: Ensure that a variety of recreational opportunities are provided, even as pressures and potential conflicts arise.

I. Objective: Support, protect, and maintain existing outdoor recreation opportunities.

Strategy:

- A. Focus efforts on renovating eroded or deteriorated facilities (e.g. boat ramps, playgrounds, etc.) and recreational areas (e.g. beaches, parks, trails, etc.). (LWCF)
- B. Protect existing access (e.g. water access, trails, trailheads, etc.) and preserve and maintain existing recreational areas (e.g. parks, playfields, etc.).
- C. Work with recreational clubs, organizations, and the Department of Environmental Services to produce and promote best management practices (BMPs) for different recreational uses (e.g. work with different trails groups to develop BMPs for trail development/maintenance).
- D. Encourage stewardship of recreation areas/facilities through local initiatives.

II. Objective: Support additional recreational opportunities to address existing problems or deficiencies.

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that provide for identified public recreational needs and/or unavailable recreational opportunities. (LWCF)
- B. Give priority to projects that identify and address existing problems with overuse or mitigate conflicts of use. (LWCF)
- C. Encourage the state and local communities to use an opportunity spectrum method¹² to determine recreational needs based on desired levels of service, resource availability and maintenance capacity.
- D. Educate communities about existing legislation that can promote and designate local recreational opportunities (e.g. Class A and B Trails and 20 percent recreational adjustment under Current Use).

¹² The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a framework now commonly used as the basis for recreation and open space planning. The basis of ROS is that the varied needs, tastes and preferences of the community are most likely to be satisfied if a wide range of experiences are provided through a range of recreational settings (Clarke and Stankey, 1979).

III. Objective: Encourage keeping private lands open to the public.

Strategy:

- A. Build coalitions between landowners and people who recreate on private lands (e.g. SPACE, NH Timberland Owners Association, state agencies, trail groups, etc.).
- B. Continue to encourage private landowners to keep their lands open to recreational uses via Current Use and its 20 percent Recreational Adjustment.
- C. Encourage interested landowners to properly post signage on their property based on acceptable uses (e.g. encourage an organization to provide landowners with signs that post for specific uses. Often landowners can only find, and therefore post, generic ‘No Trespassing’ signs though the intent is to only limit a particular use. Making use-specific signs more readily available will help keep lands from being posted against all public access. Also encourage participation in the NH Fish and Game sign program).
- D. Better enforcement of laws to support landowners’ rights on lands held in easement (e.g. regarding hiking, hunting, snowmobiles, ATVs, etc.).

IV. Objective: Promote the use of education and information-based strategies to manage or avoid conflict.

Strategy:

- A. Encourage shared use and cooperation among different recreationists by incorporating educational messages into maps, guides, and public information sources (e.g. NH Fish and Game Public Access Sites map, NH Horse Council brochure, “Share with Care” program, etc.).
- B. Support ongoing public education efforts focused on enforcement of existing recreation-related laws and penalties (e.g. continue mandatory education programs on boating laws, OHRV laws, hunting laws, etc.).
- C. Improve public access to recreational information, especially via the web, to increase awareness of available recreational opportunities statewide (e.g. examine the feasibility of placing OEP’s Inventory of Outdoor Recreation Facilities or Public Water Access sites on the web).
- D. Develop a resource directory that provides information about which agencies are responsible on a statewide level for different recreation programs and enforcement.

V. Objective: Insure that recreational opportunities are available to those with disabilities.

Strategy:

- A. Involve persons with disabilities in the planning of new and/or the rehabilitation or modification of existing outdoor recreation facilities and programs (e.g. DOT, Governor’s Commission on Disability, Granite State Independent Living, etc.).
- B. Develop a guidebook to outdoor recreation facilities that provides information for persons with disabilities about accessibility levels.
- C. Provide technical assistance and incentives to recreation providers to improve accessibility of recreational facilities and lands (e.g. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement of ADA accessibility, Governor’s Commission on Disability).
- D. Identify funding sources that can be used to improve accessibility and universal design (e.g. SAFETEA-LU, LWCF, etc.).
- E. Work with partners to support and encourage universal design.

Selected Contacts and Information Resources

- New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development – Division of Parks and Recreation (www.nhparks.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development – Trails Bureau (www.nhtrails.org) - also provides links to many trail clubs
- Governor’s Commission on Disability (www.state.nh.us/disability/index.html)
- Granite State Independent Living (www.gsil.org/)
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation – Bicycle/Pedestrian Program (www.NHBikePed.com/)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com/)
- New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (www.nh.gov/oep)
- Regional Planning Commissions (www.nh.gov/oep/resourcelibrary/regions.home.htm)
- White Mountain National Forest (www.fs.fed.us/r9/white)
- Appalachian Mountain Club (www.outdoors.org/)
- US Department of Justice – ADA information (www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com)

3. APPLY LIMITED FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO ADDRESS A RANGE OF RECREATION NEEDS

Summary

Funding is needed to support a wide range of local and state recreational opportunities. These needs include facility rehabilitation, new facility development, land acquisition for both organized (e.g. ball fields) and unorganized recreational opportunities (e.g. open space for hiking, bird-watching), as well as efforts focused on protecting important natural and cultural resources.

- Funding is needed to support statewide open space and greenway planning efforts.
- Enforcement and stewardship costs are often not fully considered when lands are protected.
- Human resources (partnerships, volunteerism), in addition to financial capital, are fundamental to successful local recreational efforts.
- In a 2002 DRED survey of state park managers, rehabilitation and facility construction were listed as a more pressing funding need than new acquisition.
- Funding for natural and cultural resource protection is an important topic statewide and locally as underscored by the broad-based support for LCHIP, increased role of local/regional land trusts, and increased emphasis locally on land protection (open space bonds, local conservation funds).
- In the *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* completed by the University of New Hampshire in 1997, survey respondents listed programs and initiatives aimed at land, water and species protection as higher overall funding priorities than those related to recreation development.
- In this same survey, funding for non-motorized recreation was listed as a higher priority statewide than funding for motorized recreation or recreation opportunities that require a high level of development.
- The 1997 *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* is out of date. A new survey of recreation consumers should be undertaken to reflect current trends.

Overview

High quality recreation requires an investment of both financial and social capital. Resources are needed for adequate planning, new acquisitions, ongoing maintenance, or facility refurbishment, as well as long-term stewardship and enforcement. All of these are legitimate needs and have merit. However, external grant funds are always limited and often target only certain needs or priorities. The challenge remains to find ways of creatively financing recreation in communities and making use of a wide range of volunteer and non-financial resources that has the potential to be tapped.

Federal Funding

LWCF. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, 78 Stat 897) was enacted “...to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility for all Americans” to outdoor recreation resources. The LWCF program provides matching grants to states and through the states to local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. At the federal level, the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior administers the program. At the state level, the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), Office of Recreation Services, administers the LWCF. This program provides matching grant funding to state parks and communities.

The LWCF represents the major source of federal funding for outdoor recreation and land acquisition. Enacted by Congress in 1965, the Act contains two components: (1) it is the source of federal funding for additions of lands to the National Park System, National Forests, Wildlife Refuges, Trails, Wild and Scenic River systems, and public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (federal side); and (2) it is a source of federal grants to state and local governments (statewide program) for open space and recreation planning, land acquisition, and the development of outdoor recreation facilities.

SAFETEA-LU. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, signed into law in 2005 is a continuation of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). Administered federally through the Federal Highway Administration, SAFETEA-LU continues and improves upon programs of ISTEA and provides new initiatives aimed at both enhancing communities and the natural environment.

Several programs within SAFETEA-LU provide funds focused on enhancing recreation opportunities and/or transportation alternatives. The Transportation Enhancements (TE) program, administered in New Hampshire by the Department of Transportation, provides funding to promote alternative transportation and more livable communities. Projects include a variety of initiatives including sidewalks, multi-use paths, bicycle lanes, acquisition of rail line, and the renovation and reuse of historic transportation buildings (depots, etc.).

Examples include a project in Lincoln where 2.5 miles of sidewalk and multi-use path were constructed along the Kancamagus Highway; a project in Nashua (Manchester Street) that connected sidewalks from schools to surrounding neighborhoods and improved safety for pedestrians of all ages, and the acquisition of 43.2 miles of the Cheshire Branch Railroad corridor in the towns of Fitzwilliam, Troy, Marlborough, Swanzey, Keene, Surrey, and Walpole.

The Recreational Trails Program, administered in New Hampshire through the Bureau of Trails in the Department of Resources and Economic Development, provides funding for motorized, diversified, and non-motorized trails. Projects can focus on new construction, maintenance and restoration, fee acquisition, or easements for new trail corridors.

In order to receive funding, all states must establish a state recreational trails advisory committee that represents both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users. Federal requirements mandate that states administer funds so that 30 percent are used for motorized use, 30 percent for non-motorized use, and 40 percent are used for diversified trail uses. The program provides 80 percent of the total project cost and soft match or in-kind match is allowed. New Hampshire received approximately \$844,316 in 2007. Trail grants range from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$30,000.

The National Scenic Byways Program is coordinated in New Hampshire through the Scenic and Cultural Byways Program at the Department of Transportation. The New Hampshire Scenic and Cultural Byways Program was established in 1992 under RSA 238:19,

"... to provide the opportunity for residents and visitors to travel a system of byways which feature the scenic and cultural qualities of the state within the existing highway system, promote retention of rural and urban scenic byways, support the cultural, recreational and historic attributes along these byways and expose the unique elements of the state's beauty, culture and history."

New Hampshire has over 1,000 miles of road designated as Scenic Byways, including the White Mountain Trail/Kancamagus National Byways and a bi-state national byway (with Vermont), the Connecticut River Byway. Designation to this national or statewide network makes a byway eligible for federal SAFETEA-LU funds that provide funding to byways for projects such as upgrading bicycle or pedestrian facilities, protecting byway resources, or developing promotional material. Sample projects in New Hampshire include byway gateway centers in North Conway and Lincoln, a corridor management and promotion project for the Connecticut River Byway, and the production of byway maps and brochures.

Forest Legacy. The Forest Legacy Program is administered through the USDA Forest Service in cooperation with State Foresters. The DRED - Division of Forests and Lands is the main contact in New Hampshire. The program protects important working forestlands threatened by conversion to non-forest uses by purchasing rights to restrict development of the land, or through outright purchase from willing sellers.

Forest Legacy funds have been leveraged with other funds and contributions to protect large tracts of working forest land in the state, including the 141,400 acre Connecticut Lakes Headwaters easement and the 10,000 + acre Pond of Safety lands in Randolph. This program continues to play an important role in funding the protection of working forestlands and un-fragmented open space in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire Coastal Program. The New Hampshire Coastal Program is administered through the Department of Environmental Services. The program's stated mission is to *"balance the preservation of natural resources of the coast with the social and economic needs of this and succeeding generations."* Providing for public access to coastal lands and waters is listed as one of five major goals of the program.

Technical assistance grants are available to the Rockingham Planning Commission and the Strafford Regional Planning Commission to provide assistance to the 17 coastal communities in planning efforts such as master plan updates, local development ordinances, and open space plans. Competitive grants are also available to coastal communities for resource planning and management, education and outreach, and small construction projects or land acquisition. One recreation-related example includes a \$50,000 grant to the town of Hampton Falls. Grant funds were used to acquire a 14-acre wooded lot that abuts the Taylor River Salt Marsh and is adjacent to another large conservation parcel known as the Marsh Lane Conservation Preserve. The new lot will expand the preserve and offer passive recreation such as hiking, picnicking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

New Hampshire Estuaries Project. The New Hampshire Estuaries Project, also administered through the University of New Hampshire, is a joint local/state/federal program established under the Clean Water Act. The main goal is the protection and enhancement of estuarine resources identified to be of national significance by formulating and implementing a realistic management plan for the area. Grants are focused on implementing high priority aspects of the management plan, a number of which deal with open space and shore land protection efforts. These grants are available to municipalities, local community groups, environmental/watershed associations, non-profit organizations, schools and educational institutions, county conservation districts, and regional planning commissions within the coastal watershed.

State Funding

Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). The stated intent of the program is to:

“...conserve and preserve this state’s most important natural, cultural, and historical resources, through the acquisition of lands, and cultural and historical resources, or interests therein, of local, regional and statewide significance, in partnership with the state’s municipalities and the private sector, for the primary purposes of protecting and ensuring the perpetual contribution of these resources to the state’s economy, environment, and overall quality of life”.

LCHIP was instituted in May 2000, (RSA 227-M) establishing a competitive grants program that provides a 50/50 match to communities and non-profit organizations for natural, cultural and historic resource protection. The legislature has appropriated \$24.5 million to date. LCHIP has awarded all the appropriated funds to 150 projects throughout the state. Project examples include a grant to the town of Merrimack to support the acquisition of 544 acres of open space, one of the last remaining open space areas in town, and a grant to the town of Boscawen to rehabilitate and restore the 1866 Penacook Academy.

Moose Plate. The New Hampshire General Court, under RSA 261:97-c, established the Conservation License Plate Program, also know as the Moose Plate Program, in 1998. The purpose of this volunteer program is to enhance existing conservation and

preservation efforts via the sale of special license plates. Revenues are used by state agencies for the following purposes:

- Preserve or purchase significant publicly owned historic properties, archaeological sites, artifacts or articles.
- Research and manage non-game wildlife species as well as native plant species. Efforts also focus on public education relative to these species.
- Grants for county, municipal or non-profit conservation projects.
- Expand the roadside wildflower program.
- Assist in administering the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP).

Beyond providing critical funding needed to administer LCHIP, a portion of the license plate receipts is used for a small grants program. The Conservation License Plate Grants Program utilizes a portion of the conservation license plate funds for local and regional conservation projects. Funds are available for resource conservation, education and outreach, and improvements to conservation areas. Applicants are pooled into one of two categories. The first category grants awards to communities, conservation related non-profits, and schools. The second grants awards to conservation districts and county extension offices.

In 2002, the State Conservation Committee through the Rockingham County Conservation District awarded its first allocation of funding from the conservation license plate program. In all, about \$90,000 worth of grants were awarded in 2002. The Committee estimates approximately \$150,000 may be awarded in 2008. Eligible projects vary widely and reflect a broad range of conservation-related initiatives. While some projects focus strictly on resource protection efforts, others relate to enhancing low impact recreation opportunities on conserved lands. Two specific projects funded in 2006 include developing a public water access and resource guide to a watershed in southeastern New Hampshire, and a trail/boardwalk design and construction project on school property. Grants tend to be small and focus on specific conservation projects that improve conservation land management or enhance conservation education rather than provide direct funding for land or easement purchases.

DRED also uses Moose Plate funds for recreation-related projects. An existing project is a series of “Visiting New Hampshire’s Biodiversity” interpretive trail guides. This series of guides interprets places where people can view unusual and high-quality natural plant communities. Brochures are developed in collaboration with willing landowners. Sites are chosen that have facilities such as parking and trails, allowing people an easy way of experiencing the state’s diverse and unusual natural habitats. They are available for free download at the Natural Heritage Bureau’s website (www.nh.gov/dred/divisions/forestlands/bureaus/naturalheritage).

Grant-in-Aid Program. The Bureau of Trails, under DRED, administers a grant-in-aid program to provide assistance to organized, non-profit off highway recreational vehicle (OHRV) clubs and municipalities. The stated purpose of this program is to encourage

development, maintenance, construction, grooming, and safety of OHRV trails in the State of New Hampshire. Monies may be used for the development and maintenance of OHRV trails on private, state, federal, and municipal lands. Grant-in-Aid funding for major trail construction and maintenance requires written landowner permission.

Local Funding

Parks, recreational facilities, and open space are important components of retaining community character, promoting health and wellness, and making a community livable. Communities have many tools available to help finance parks and open space, beyond external grant funds. The few discussed in more detail below are offered as options, or potential strategies, to be considered.

Capital Reserve Funds. Authorized under RSA 35, Capital Reserve Funds can be used to help communities to appropriate money for construction, reconstruction, or acquisition of capital improvements related to recreation or equipment.

Recreation Revolving Loan Funds. Authorized under RSA 35-B:2 II, Recreation Revolving Loan Funds allow communities to charge fees for recreation services and facilities, with all generated revenue then deposited into a special non-lapsing fund. The revolving loan fund must be established by the municipality's legislative body but can be expended by the recreation commission or other designated board without further approval.

Impact Fees. Impact fees, authorized under RSA 674:21,V, allow communities to assess fees on new developments and construction to help cover the costs associated with this new growth (this includes the development of public recreational facilities). The fee must be directly proportional to the capital improvement needs related to the new growth. Fees cannot be charged to correct existing deficiencies. Refer to OEP's on-line reference library for additional information about impact fees:

<http://www.nh.gov/oep/resourcelibrary/referencelibrary/SubjectListing.htm>.

Open Space Bonds. Open space bonds are receiving increased attention among New Hampshire communities, particularly the southern tier. In areas of fast growth, land protection efforts are often outpaced by development. When a tract of open space goes on the market, the local conservation commission does not always have the resources or the time to purchase the land or an easement outright. This is compounded by the fact that many landowners, who might be willing sellers and interested in conservation, do not have the luxury of waiting until the next Town Meeting to see whether the town can purchase the property.

Open space bonds can help to bridge this time gap by providing substantial, and more readily available, funds for pressing land conservation efforts. In 2007, several towns passed open space bonds. Gilford passed a bond in the amount of \$990,000 to purchase an easement on the Bean property; Hinsdale, \$60,000 for acquisition of a conservation/park property; and Kensington, \$1,163,000, for an easement on Kimball Farm. Every year there are a few communities that pass similar bonds. The sums are impressive and mark a new chapter in local land conservation efforts. While land protection efforts have many goals in mind beyond recreation, traditional recreational

activities (hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing, etc.) are often preserved along with the land itself. Conservation of open space is central to many popular outdoor recreation pursuits.

Land Use Change Tax – Conservation Fund. Under RSA 79-A communities can elect, by majority vote, to place a percentage or all of land use change tax monies into a conservation fund in accordance with RSA 36-A:5, III. Currently, about half of New Hampshire communities have tapped into this funding option. The land use change tax is applied when lands enrolled in Current Use opt out of the program. Some communities cap the percentage or total dollar value that can be added to the local conservation fund; others dedicate 100 percent of these local land use change penalties to conservation.

Human Resources. A great deal can be done with limited funds if in-kind human resources can be organized to make a project happen. For example, Volunteer Friends of Recreation groups can be helpful to local recreation departments or commissions in fundraising efforts and in providing local recreation programs. These groups operate independent of town government and have more flexibility to initiate programs or special events and raise money for special recreation facilities or projects. These “friends of” groups are also important for state parks. According to DRED’s 2002 state park managers survey, about 50 percent of state parks have a friends group or other volunteers associated with the park such as snowmobile clubs, Boy Scouts, and garden clubs.

Volunteer action and public/private partnerships are central in making local and statewide conservation goals a reality. Local land protection efforts are often based upon partnerships between local land trusts, local residents, community groups, and elected officials alike. Beyond making good practical sense by building upon individual strengths, these partnerships are often attractive to external funding agencies/entities (e.g. LCHIP, LWCF). Many grant programs look for local collaborative efforts and partnerships as a sign of community commitment. Partnership and broad based support increase the likelihood that a project will be successful over the long term and will be money well spent.

This also rings true for larger-scale statewide efforts. The Connecticut Lakes Headwaters project reflects an effort that involves the collaboration of state agencies, legislators, the Governor’s office, local communities, and a variety of private non-profit organizations. This impressive project protects 171,500 acres of land in the northern reaches of the state. These lands protect habitat for 67 rare species, protect large tracts of working forest, and protect opportunities for outdoor recreation. The state purchased an easement on 146,400 acres of land to be owned and managed by a timber company. The state also purchased 25,000 acres of the most sensitive habitat to be set aside as a natural area. The Nature Conservancy holds an easement on these lands. Finally, the remaining 100 acres has been added to the state-run Deer Mountain Campground to expand recreational facilities.

The success of this project is credited to both public and private efforts. Substantial public funds were secured through state and federal sources. Private fundraising raised money to complete the project and fund endowments. The Nature Conservancy, SPNHF, and the Trust for Public Lands jointly spearheaded this campaign. Private foundations, major donors, and supporters all contributed to this effort.

The growth and expansion of trail clubs supporting both motorized and non-motorized recreational activities underscores the growing interest in many trail-based activities. These groups are not only involved in voluntarily maintaining trails, but are also key partners in securing access and developing trails. There are over 100 snowmobile clubs in the state, growing numbers of ATV clubs, outdoor clubs, statewide and regional bicycling organizations, equine clubs, rail-trail groups, and hiking trail organizations, among others. More information on active trail clubs can be found on the DRED Trails Bureau's web site (www.nhtrails.org) or at 271-3254. Many of these clubs are represented on the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee that has been meeting since the mid-1900s to coordinate volunteerism within these groups and expand public/private partnerships.

Hillsborough

For his Eagle Scout service project (2006), Caleb Howard of Hillsborough found 20 people to help him cut a new trail on Mount Monadnock. The project rerouted three-quarters of a mile of the lower section of the Dublin Trail. The new route brings the Dublin Trail to the recently built new parking lot at the base of the mountain. It also routes hikers around an area that gets muddy and is used to harvest timber.

GOAL: Wisely use financial and human resources (e.g. volunteers, partnerships, youth programs, etc.) to meet a wide range of recreational needs.

I. Objective: Prioritize renovation/refurbishment of state park facilities over funding new land acquisition.

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that have been identified in a state park master plan or through other planning efforts. (LWCF)
- B. Encourage renovations that use Universal Design, environmentally friendly designs, reduce long-term expenses, or cost less to maintain (e.g. native vegetation, energy efficient materials, etc.). (LWCF)
- C. Continue to estimate the existing backlog of projects at a statewide level through a software program called Fixed Asset Resource Maintenance System (FARMS).
- D. Educate the public on present funding mechanisms of state parks (e.g. provide information about status of self-funding of parks on DRED website).

II. Objective: Continue to provide renovation/refurbishment funding to improve local land and water based recreational facilities/areas.

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that have an operations and maintenance plan and have shown sound stewardship on existing facilities. (LWCF)
- B. Give priority to projects that use Universal Design, environmentally friendly designs, reduce long-term expenses, or cost less to maintain (e.g. native vegetation, energy efficient materials, etc.). (LWCF)

III. Objective: Continue to provide acquisition funding to support new local land and water based recreational lands/facilities.

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that have been specifically identified in local or regional plans. (LWCF)
- B. Continue to give priority to communities that have had less benefit from LWCF funding in the past. (LWCF)
- C. Give priority to projects that use Universal Design, environmentally friendly designs, reduce long-term expenses, or cost less to maintain (e.g. native vegetation, energy efficient materials, etc.). (LWCF)
- D. Give priority to projects that consider stewardship costs in new projects and initiatives. (LWCF)
- E. Consider methods of giving priority to projects with a higher level of use, even in low population areas (e.g. OEP will consider possible methods and provide suggestions to DRED and the OPSP Advisory Panel for review). (LWCF)

IV. Objective: Encourage leaders to support financing and implementation of local, regional, and statewide plans for open space, recreation trails, and greenways.

Strategy:

- A. Educate the public about the benefits of open space, recreation trails, and greenways (e.g. Dollars and Sense of Open Space, economic impacts of trails in communities, etc.).
- B. Investigate expanding efforts of the Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP) through the Regional Planning Commissions.
- C. Encourage local and state public/private financing of these efforts (e.g. LCHIP, etc.).

D. Encourage the adoption and increased support for the development of designated river corridor and watershed management plans (Rivers Management and Protection Program, RSA 483:8-a, III(c)).

V. Objective: Promote the importance of collaboration and volunteerism in developing and maintaining local recreation projects.

Strategy:

A. Give priority to projects that show local partnerships and commitment to not only developing but also maintaining land and water-based recreational facilities. (LWCF)

B. Promote volunteerism with school-aged youth in communities (e.g. Boys and Girls Clubs, Americorps, Scouts, university interns, Vista volunteer programs, etc.).

VI. Objective: Work on implementing dedicated user fees for other recreational uses such as non-motorized trail funds.

Strategy:

A. Educate the public and recreational users about possible benefits of user fee programs and about how money generated from fee programs would be used (e.g. proper fund management would mean that money would go towards supporting the specific recreational use).

B. Review successful programs from other states.

Selected Contacts and Information Resources

- NH Department of Resources and Economic Development – Division of Parks and Recreation (www.nhparks.state.nh.us/)
- NH Department of Resources and Economic Development - Division of Forests and Lands (www.nhdf.org/)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/)
- The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (www.nhacc.org/nhacc.htm)
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation – TE Program (www.state.nh.us/dot/municipalhighways/tehome.htm)
- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (www.des.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (www.nh.gov/oep)
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (www.nhcf.org/)
- Volunteer NH (www.volunteernh.org)
- Appalachian Mountain Club (www.outdoors.org)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com)
- Bureau of Trails (www.nhtrails.org)

4. EDUCATION OF RECREATIONAL USERS, MUNICIPALITIES AND LANDOWNERS ABOUT RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR, LAWS, AND LIABILITY

Summary

- Private landowners fear liability when opening up lands to recreational use.
- Communities do not fully understand their liability or rights in providing recreational opportunities.
- Users are not fully aware of their impacts on the environment or on other users.
- Users and providers do not always fully understand existing laws.
- Education should be an important part of early efforts to manage conflict and concerns about overuse/crowding.
- Forty-four percent of respondents in the 1997 *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* completed by the University of New Hampshire said that enforcement of environmental laws should be a high funding priority in the state.

Overview

Outdoor recreation management brings with it a range of education and information needs. Some information needs are focused on educating the recreational user while others are aimed at the recreation provider. As participation across a widening set of activities continues to rise, recreation-related education and information will become an increasingly important tool.

Information and education can target many different needs and be either voluntary or legally mandatory. They include but are not limited to:

- Disseminating information about recreational opportunities that are available across different parts of the state;
- Providing information about outdoor ethics and responsible behavior;
- Building existing skills or teaching new skills;
- Informing landowners about current laws and their liability in allowing public access; and
- Informing municipalities about their rights and responsibilities regarding public recreational use.

Pressure on the existing resource base can potentially result in more user conflict as more people compete for the same recreational resources. Education can help stave off potential conflicts and mitigate existing problems as they arise.

Resource managers are faced with the simultaneous tasks of maintaining user safety, protecting natural resources, and providing high-quality experiences. Heightened public use, as well as expansion of types of use, can present many challenges, especially along trails. This can be especially prevalent in areas that appeal to a broad range of motorized and non-motorized uses. Often problems arise when participation in one activity distracts from another's ability to participate in, or enjoy, a different activity.

Examples might include crowding or perceived overuse among hikers on a hiking trail or problems with motorized and non-motorized boats using the same lake and access area. Of course, determining when something becomes a problem can be subjective. Not everyone holds the same standard for determining when an area is ‘too’ crowded or when they feel there are too many ‘incompatible’ uses in an area. There are often no singularly right or wrong perspectives. Recreational providers must balance different perspectives with the more essential need to maintain safety, maintain quality recreational experiences, and protect the resources upon which these activities depend. Using an opportunity spectrum-type analysis can assist federal, state and local authorities in assessing the appropriate location of facilities.

A 1994 report from the Federal Highway Administration, *Conflicts of Multiple Use Trails*,¹³ examined the known research and state of practice on managing multiple use trails. This report provides rules of practice for multiple-use trail opportunities as well as suggestions for minimizing conflicts. When exploring options for managing conflicts, the rule of thumb is to start small. Signage, peer pressure and education are all preferable to automatically placing limits on use or erecting barriers.

New Hampshire Conditions and Trends

Recreation-based education and information programs are sponsored by public agencies and private organizations alike. Many programs are undertaken through partnerships that connect the strengths of different entities (e.g. snowmobile clubs and Fish and Game Department). State law mandates participation in a number of recreation-based education programs. These include boater education, hunting education, and youth OHRV education.

Boater Education. As of January 1, 2002, the State of New Hampshire requires that anyone 16 years or older have a valid safe boating certificate before they operate a power boat on public waters with an engine in excess of 25 horsepower. There is a sliding scale for compliance until 2008 that is based on year of birth. For instance, those born between 1977 and 1987 had to comply by 2003. Those born before 1957 must comply by 2008. The boating safety course is a one-time requirement and, once certified, there is no requirement to take the course again. Courses are available through the NH Department of Safety, U.S. Power Squadrons, and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Courses are also available in all 50 states, on-line (www.boat-ed.com/nh/nh_internet.htm), and as a home study course.

Hunting Education. Mandatory hunter education classes are taught through the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. State law requires that the first time a person plans to buy a basic hunting license, archery hunting license, or trapping license, they must first complete the respective hunter, bow-hunter, or trapper education course. The most widely offered program, Fish and Game's Basic Hunter Education Course, is taught by trained, certified volunteer instructors and the local conservation officer.

¹³ Federal Highway Administration, *Conflicts of Multiple Use Trails (1994)* remains the most comprehensive overview of the subject. Other publications deal with specific conflicts such as bicycles and traffic, etc.

The course contains both classroom instruction and field experiences. Topics include safety, hunter ethics and responsibility, outdoor safety and survival skills, and New Hampshire hunting laws and regulations.

OHRV Registrations. Off-highway motorized vehicle safety classes are required for all persons over the age of 12 who do not have a valid drivers license. An adult with a valid drivers license must accompany children under the age of 14. OHRV Safety Education Classes have proven useful in minimizing accidents on problem trails, even as the sport increases in popularity. Accident rates for youth have remained stable in the last six years even as the number of youth registrations has increased. As a comparison, accident numbers among older users (e.g. 20-29 and 30-39 year olds) increased with registration numbers. Between 2,200 and 2,500 children complete the safety course each year.

Resident snowmobile registrations have remained relatively stable. Non-resident snowmobile registrations had shown a steady increase, from 8,824 in 1995/1996 to 20,880 in 2002/2003, but dropped down to 13,567 in 2005/2006. Wheeled vehicle registration had also shown substantial increase since the mid 1990's. In 1995/1996 there were 10,556 in-state wheeled vehicle registrations; in 2005/2006 there were 21,462 registrations. Out-of-state registrations have shown a marked increase as well. New Hampshire reported 1,362 out-of-state registrations in 1995/1996 and 4,771 in 2005/2006. As the popularity of motorized recreation increases, so will the demand for trails and riding opportunities. This increased use continues to require attention to enforcement and education efforts.

Partnerships. Public/private partnerships between state agencies and trail organizations remain crucial in promoting responsible use and managing impacts of use. One existing partnership is with the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association (NHSA) and its network of 115 clubs. Individual clubs work to develop positive relationships with private landowners by doing trail maintenance, policing trails, implementing "Carry In, Carry Out" trash policies, and posting trails on private lands as landowners request. The NHSA also works with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to conduct youth safety courses and champion "Zero Tolerance for Alcohol" policies.

As pressures on existing trails, recreational areas and lands increase, managers should also increase educational efforts that focus on responsible behavior and user ethics or etiquette. Recreationists and recreational groups are important partners in this effort. The Statewide Trails Advisory Committee encourages independent peer-education efforts as well as promoting public/private partnerships to promote responsible use. Some groups already undertake peer education efforts individually. For instance, the New Hampshire Horse Council publishes a brochure aimed at educating fellow trail riders about safety, trail etiquette, and personal responsibility, and the New Hampshire Musers Association has adopted the NHMA Trail Safety Guidelines & Trail Etiquette.

Promotional efforts to educate the public about different recreational opportunities should be undertaken in conjunction with efforts to develop awareness of possible impacts of these uses. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, for example, publishes a map and guide to public water access sites in New Hampshire. In addition to providing specific information about access sites, including level of accessibility, the map also

provides information about existing environmental laws, safety laws, responsible use, water bodies that have known exotic species present, and tips for preventing further introduction of exotic species.

Public Water Access Signs.

A public education sign (Figure 5) is posted at state-owned and other public water access sites around the state. This water access sign program is a collaborative effort of the New Hampshire Lakes Association, New Hampshire Rivers Council, and five state agencies (Departments of Safety, Environmental Services, Resources and Economic Development, Transportation and Fish and Game). The sign provides a positive message on recreational use and a welcoming message, while supplying important information about responsible water recreation use and appropriate practices.

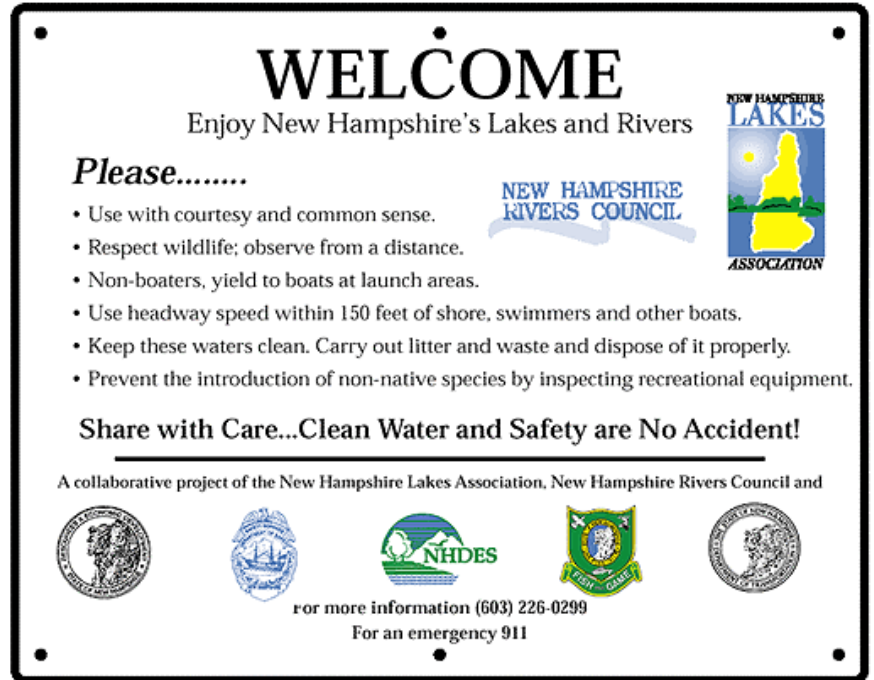


Figure 5. Public Water Access Sign

Benefits. New Hampshire has a strong tradition of giving private landowners incentives to keep their lands open and undeveloped. Public access to private lands is an important tradition in New Hampshire and incremental losses of public access will change the face of recreation in the state. Efforts should be made to educate current and potential landowners about statewide incentives and economic benefits of not only keeping lands undeveloped, but also keeping lands open to certain types of outdoor recreation. The Current Use program and the recreation adjustment, in particular, should be highlighted.

The Current Use Taxation Program, under RSA 79-A, was established in 1972 to:

“...encourage the preservation of open space, thus providing a healthful and attractive outdoor environment for work and recreation, maintaining the character of the state’s landscape, and conserving the land, water, forest, agricultural and wildlife resources.”

Under this program, parcels of land (10 acre minimum) are taxed based on their current use value as open space (e.g. active farm or forest land) rather than on their potential value for development purposes.

Moreover, under New Hampshire’s Current Use Program, landowners can also accept an additional 20 percent “recreation adjustment” to their taxes. This recreation adjustment

lowers a landowner's tax burden by an additional 20 percent if the land is kept open to the public for traditional forms of recreation. As defined by RSA 79-A:4,II, the six traditional forms of recreation consist of skiing, snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking, and nature observation year-round unless these activities are detrimental to crops on agricultural lands or active forestry operations.

Liability. While it is important to educate landowners about the benefits of keeping lands open to the public, it is also important to educate landowners about their liability in allowing public use. Liability is of concern to both private landowners and municipal providers, and landowners are not always aware of their protections under state law. Moreover, information on this topic is not always easy to find.

In New Hampshire, private landowners have liability protection based on a number of state laws (RSA 215A:34, RSA 212:34, RSA 508:14). Specifically, RSA 215A:34 states that landowners are not required to post their property against OHRV use. Therefore, if a parcel of land is not posted it does not mean that OHRVs are allowed as a matter of course. Riders must have landowner permission. This statute also states that riders recognize that motorized recreational use may have higher levels of risk and as such they accept that risk and shall not hold landowners responsible for injuries they may receive on their lands. RSA 212:34 or 'Duty of Care' states that landowners are not responsible for keeping their land safe for use by others who may use it for recreational purposes such as hunting, fishing, hiking or operating OHRVs. Finally, RSA 508:14 limits the liability of landowners. This law states that landowners who do not charge for the recreational use of their property shall not be liable for unintentional personal injury or property damage. Beyond these legislative protections, the Department of Resources and Economic Development - Bureau of Trails, through the use of OHRV fees, supports a landowner liability insurance policy for those landowners who sign OHRV trail agreements.

These protections are important and should be communicated widely in the state, given the substantial acreage privately held but open to the public for low impact uses. In 2005, about 51.3 percent of lands under Current Use claimed the additional 20 percent tax deduction by allowing traditional recreational uses. This is up from 39 percent in 2001. Given the importance of privately held lands to recreation in this state, it is important that education programs continue to build knowledge and awareness of liability among landowners and recreationists.

Communities can regulate the use of OHRVs on town-owned property under RSA 41:11-a. This statute allows the selectmen to manage or regulate the use of town-owned property, including recreational or conservation lands, and can, therefore, decide upon allowed or restricted uses on these lands. Another statute, RSA 215-A:6, prohibits OHRV operation on any portion of the right-of-way on public roads, including traveled sections of maintained roads unless specifically permitted. RSA 215-A:15 allows municipalities to regulate OHRV use via local ordinances as long as they are in line with all provisions of RSA 215-A. This information is provided only as a general reference point. Refer to the statutes themselves for specific guidance.

GOAL: Improve and increase educational opportunities and outreach targeted to all recreation providers and all recreational users.

- I. Objective:** Educate landowners about the benefits of leaving lands open to the public and the liability protections provided by existing laws.

Strategy:

- A. Produce and promote a standard statewide brochure about landowner rights and liability protection that would be made available through multiple agencies and organizations (e.g. involve Attorney General's office, state agencies, non-profit organizations).
- B. Target messages to a diverse audience (e.g. realtors, outdoor recreation clubs, condo associations, etc.).
- C. Hold a statewide symposium to promote benefits of keeping private lands open to the public and build awareness of existing liability protection.

- II. Objective:** Educate municipalities on their liability issues and their municipal rights and obligations related to recreational use.

Strategy:

- A. Work with the municipal insurance providers to develop a municipal workshop explaining legal rights related to recreational use and municipal liability (e.g. municipal law lecture series, NHACC annual meeting, New Hampshire Local Government Center).
- B. OEP should update the local guide to recreation financing and include legislative information about liability and recreational use.

- III. Objective:** Expand education programs aimed at recreationists targeting responsible behavior, environmental ethics, and knowledge of existing laws and penalties.

Strategy:

- A. Establish a statewide clearinghouse of recreation-based education information and utilize a variety of media and methods to disseminate information (e.g. TV, radio, point of sale, brochures, water access sites, trail-head information, Institute for NH Studies, Center for the Environment, UNH Cooperative Extension, Northern Forest Center, Statewide Trails Advisory Committee, etc.).
- B. Encourage local recreation and conservation groups to play a leadership role in presenting education programs (e.g. lakes associations, trail groups, land trusts).

- C. Increase use of existing campaigns/programs such as *Tread Lightly*, *Leave No Trace*, *Carry In/Carry Out* (e.g. target retailers as well as recreation and conservation groups).
- D. Incorporate responsible use messages into school and youth programs (e.g. involve service organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs to help deliver messages to Boy/Girl Scouts and other youth groups).
- E. Build capacity of outdoor recreational organizations to provide peer education.

IV. Objective: Minimize the need for enforcement and use restrictions by promoting education-based strategies.

Strategy:

- A. Address user conflicts and safety issues through education and outreach efforts focused on responsible use (e.g. New Hampshire Snowmobile Association, AMC, White Mountain National Forest, etc.).
- B. Involve stakeholders in discussions about use concerns and potential conflicts early on in the process.
- C. Encourage outdoor recreation and conservation organizations to conduct monitoring, volunteer patrols, trail watches (e.g. lakes associations, OHRV clubs, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, etc.).

Selected Contacts and Information Resources

- Appalachian Mountain Club (www.outdoors.org)
- NH Department of Resources and Economic Development – Trails Bureau (www.nhtrails.org) - also provides links to many trail clubs
- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (www.des.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (www.wildlife.state.nh.us/)
- New Hampshire Department of Safety (www.nh.gov/safety/)
- New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (www.nh.gov/oep/)
- Volunteer NH (www.volunteernh.org/)
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (www.nhcf.org/)
- New Hampshire Lakes Association (www.nhlakes.org/)
- New Hampshire Local Government Center (www.nhlgc.org)
- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (<http://extension.unh.edu/>)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com)
- UNH Cooperative Extension (www.extension.unh.edu)

5. IMPACTS OF EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS ON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Summary

- Sprawl promotes automobile use and decreases the amount of available open space in communities.
- Our existing car-based society negatively impacts efforts to promote close-to-home or neighborhood recreation opportunities.
- Current land use development patterns negatively impact local and regional opportunities for trails and recreation corridors.
- Respondents in the *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment* (UNH, 1997) said that about 50 percent of their outdoor recreational activity takes place within 10 miles of home.
- Seventy-one (71) percent of respondents in this same 1997 statewide survey agreed or strongly agreed that continued commercial development represents a serious threat to New Hampshire's natural and cultural resources.
- In 2003, eight New Hampshire communities were considered urban. It is estimated that by 2025, 12 communities will be considered urban and rural New Hampshire will be restricted to the North Country with isolated pockets in the west (SPNHF, *New Hampshire's Changing Landscape*, 2005).
- Recreation corridors can also serve as alternative transportation corridors.
- Nationwide Smart Growth initiatives and an OEP report called *Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire* provide principles and tools aimed at improving how our communities develop and grow "smarter."
- An important part of growing smarter includes preserving open space and parks, creating networks of trails and greenways that link community resources, and promoting bicycle/pedestrian-friendly communities. All of these goals have a positive effect on local recreational opportunities and have solid links to transportation, health and land use planning goals.

Overview

State governments and communities across the country recognize potential pitfalls of unmanaged growth and are searching for strategies to grow "smarter." Sprawl and unmanaged growth conjure up images of sprawling suburban development, loss of open space, and the deterioration of community character. While there is no concise, single definition of sprawl, OEP's *Report to Governor Shaheen on Sprawl* (1999) discusses sprawl as representing patterns of development when more and more land is consumed for various human activities, when the places where we conduct activities are farther apart and homogeneous rather than mixed-use groupings, and when we rely on automobiles to connect us to those places ("Sprawl Report," pg. 4).

In relation to recreation, increased dependence on the automobile and loss of open space negatively impact both the quantity and quality of local outdoor recreation opportunities.

Under this type of scenario, walking or biking to a local park or store is replaced by driving to a park, school, or office on the outskirts of town. Where once stood a large tract of un-fragmented forestland available for hiking and cross-country skiing, now stands a new subdivision or shopping plaza. Parks, open space, trails and greenways are important community resources and an important part of making a community livable. Greenways connect people, communities and countrysides; provide for hiking, strolling, biking, picnicking and other recreational activities; provide important open space resources; link important cultural and historic sites; provide alternative transportation routes; soften urban and suburban landscapes; improve water quality by buffering streams and trapping pollutants; reduce flood damage and costs related to damage; and provide close-to-home access to a greater proportion of the population than traditional parks, improving the overall quality of life (*The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox*, 2000).

A wide range of federal and state agencies and organizations, including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), support concepts of “smart growth”. While not every organization shares a single definition, there are many common threads. Some overriding themes include encouraging a mix of land uses, protecting the environment and open space, community involvement in development decisions, providing a variety of transportation options, and fostering distinctive communities.

Ultimately, smart growth efforts offer choices that can help communities grow and develop wisely. Not every tool will fit every community and there is no single solution for growing smarter. Likewise, there is no single set of standards or sole prescription that will improve outdoor recreation in local communities. Communities must consider local needs and community character when making land use, transportation and recreation-related decisions.

New Hampshire Conditions and Trends

There are several smart growth efforts underway, specifically in New Hampshire, which add increased meaning to these concepts. OEP conducted a study in 2000 entitled *Managing Growth in New Hampshire: Changes and Challenges*. This study found that the population of the state increased by an estimated 60 percent from 1970 to 1998, and, during this same time period, the number of housing units increased by nearly 95 percent. The study not only explored the amount of growth in the state but, through case studies, also explored the physical pattern of this growth. In each of the 10 communities examined, the increase in developed land exceeded the population increase. So while these 10 municipalities on average saw a 71 percent increase in population, they saw a 137 percent increase in developed land. This pattern means that recent increases in population are expressed on the ground by even larger increases in developed land. Development is becoming more spread out (less infill development) and more open space is being consumed in the process.

New Hampshire is clearly a desirable place to live and people from all walks of life can enjoy a high quality of life within its borders. This “quality of life” has strong roots in New Hampshire’s abundance of natural, historic and cultural resources, and to some degree, in the ability to access and appreciate these resources. Working forests and agricultural lands, clean rivers and lakes, traditional town greens and historic buildings all

help define the state's character. Conserving these resources is vital to our economy, health, and well-being.

Beyond defining the state and community character, these resources provide opportunities for a range of outdoor recreational pursuits. Loss of un-fragmented open space and sprawl diminish both the quality and quantity of outdoor recreational opportunities. This, paired with a growing population base, growing tourism market, and increase in outdoor recreation participation make discussions about outdoor recreation and its connection with land use planning and smart growth initiatives that much more important.

Current Initiatives. On a policy level, state decision makers passed legislation in 2002 that focuses state, regional and local efforts on promoting sound development patterns. RSA 9-A:1 IV aims to coordinate land use planning efforts by improving consistency among master plans developed on a state, regional and community level. OEP and the Regional Planning Commissions are charged with developing goals consistent with principles of smart growth and providing guidance and assistance to communities as they develop and revise local master plans.

As part of its charge, OEP is instructed to assist the Governor in the creation of a comprehensive State Development Plan. In the past, the State Development Plan was limited to serving as an economic policy statement but these statutory changes considerably broaden its scope, making its content similar to that of a local master plan. The State Development Plan endeavors to reflect the "desires of the public relative to the future," and its overarching goal is to guide plans and programs of state agencies and to coordinate state agencies' action and projects.

Recreation is specifically identified as one of the main topic areas for the State Development Plan and will be considered alongside other broad topics such as transportation, land use, economic development, and natural resources. Together, these topics combine to establish a comprehensive vision, goals and strategies directing future development in the state.

OEP also developed a toolkit entitled *Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire* that provides a host of local examples and success stories. This toolkit's foundation is based on eight principles, "Principles of Smart Growth for New Hampshire," that reflect the state's definition of smart growth as enacted by the legislature in RSA 9-B. These principles have a strong basis in nationwide smart growth principles but target New Hampshire's individual character. The principles and examples are available on-line, (www.nh.gov/oep/programs/SmartGrowth). They are to:

- **Maintain traditional compact settlement patterns** to efficiently use land, resources and infrastructure investments.
- **Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods** by encouraging a human scale of development that is comfortable for pedestrians and conducive to community life.

- **Incorporate a mix of uses** to provide variety of housing, employment, shopping, services and social opportunities for all members of the community.
- **Preserve New Hampshire’s working landscape** by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and to minimize land use conflicts.
- **Provide choices and safety in transportation** to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or in motor vehicles.
- **Protect environmental quality** by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in New Hampshire.
- **Involve the community** in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community.
- **Manage growth locally in the New Hampshire tradition, but work with neighboring towns** to achieve common goals and more effectively address common problems.

These principles reflect the strong links between recreation and other planning efforts related to land use, transportation, and health. Take for example the fifth principle, aimed at providing choices and safety in transportation to create livable, walkable communities. This one principle simultaneously works towards fulfilling recreational goals, land use goals, transportation goals, and health goals.

If a community strives to improve its transportation options and expand alternative transportation, it will improve the ability of people to move about the community using multiple modes of transportation. Improving sidewalks, trails, and bike paths and creating trail linkages between important community focal points (i.e. schools, the local library, businesses, residences, and community green spaces) helps refocus the community towards the village or downtown area. This planning effort simultaneously improves recreational opportunities close to home for human-powered activities such as walking, bicycling, running, etc. As more people bike or walk around town instead of driving, they spend less time in their car and more time exercising out in their community. This increase in activity, in turn, fulfills a health and wellness goal of increasing exercise and promoting a healthier lifestyle.

The interconnectedness of these broad principles underscores the need for collaboration of recreation planners/providers with local land use, transportation, and health officials at a state, regional and local level. While much of this may seem simple and almost self-evident in concept, the challenge lies in establishing policies and programs that can have on-the-ground impacts.

One opportunity for collaboration is with the Department of Transportation's Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan, produced in 2000, provides a list of objectives aimed at meeting the goal of supporting and encouraging bicycling and walking as alternatives to motorized forms of transportation and as an element of the state's inter-modal transportation system. Several objectives stated in DOT's plan could also meet statewide recreation-related goals.

Below are some examples:

- DOT will promote bicycling and walking as viable modes of transportation.
- DOT will cooperate with other state agencies in initiating, developing, and implementing programs that encourage bicycling and walking.
- DOT, in cooperation with the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), will propose a statewide plan for the integration of recreational trails with other bicycle/pedestrian facilities, set standards for their development, and encourage and support their improvement to all season conditions.

These "alternative transportation" goals and proposed initiatives also serve to improve recreation corridors in the state, including bicycle and pedestrian opportunities for recreational use as well as for transportation. Recognizing and building on the linkages between transportation planning efforts and recreation planning efforts will strengthen both. In addition, in 2006, DOT established A Safe Routes to School Program supported by SAFTEA-LU funds. This program encourages children, kindergarten through the eighth grade, who live within approximately two miles to school, to walk or ride bicycles to school.

Historic and Cultural Resources. New Hampshire's identity is defined as much by its cultural landscape as by its natural beauty. The integrity of New Hampshire's future character will largely derive from the identification and protection of the legacy left to us by centuries of human enterprise.

New Hampshire is a museum of its own history. Covered bridges, stonewalls, historic buildings, ancient farmsteads, and quintessential New England villages are a part of New Hampshire's fabric. New Hampshire is also a place of mills and factories, of powerful streams harnessed in the service of industry. Together, these landscapes of social and civic life, business, manufacturing, agriculture and forestry define the real New Hampshire. The cherished nature of our cultural landscape is reflected in New Hampshire's popular Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) and the Conservation License Plate Program, two grant programs that support the protection of historic and cultural resources.

A new form of tourism is making itself felt in New Hampshire. Our visitors have always appreciated the state's natural beauty. Now, people also come to see our history, the things we have built, and the ways we have used our natural resources and changed our landscape. We call this new form of tourism "heritage tourism."

Responding to this interest, New Hampshire's Scenic and Cultural Byways program celebrates our natural and cultural landscapes, offering scenic routes and destinations, whether one drives by car or bus, or travels by bicycle. Many communities have published walking tours, offering understanding and enjoyment of the local landscape. The New Hampshire Heritage Trail is a network of locally designated routes that will extend from the Massachusetts border to the Canadian border along our principal rivers, telling the unique story of diverse communities while defining the state's broader heritage. New Hampshire's two Shaker communities, in Canterbury and Enfield, have joined with others and with the National Park Service to create a regional Shaker Historic Trail. And centers of manufacturing history along the Merrimack, Connecticut, Winnepesaukee, and Androscoggin Rivers have begun to study the possibility of defining themselves as industrial heritage corridors.

The Division of Historical Resources updated *New Hampshire's Preservation Plan* in 2006. This plan emphasizes the need for enhanced survey and study of New Hampshire's cultural landscape, for public education and outreach to promote greater awareness and appreciation of the state's cultural resources, and for fuller integration of preservation planning into decision-making at state, regional and local levels.

Other Initiatives. The eight principles discussed above are often advocated by organizations and businesses in New Hampshire, alongside government. An initiative representing another opportunity for collaboration is the New Hampshire Smart Growth and Development Roundtable, funded in part through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, which aims to "build cross sector linkages and identify an agreed-upon agenda for action on smart growth issues in New Hampshire."

The Roundtable consists of representatives from a range of organizations and interests including planning, tourism, energy, business and industry, public health, housing, cultural/historical, transportation, conservation, and financial resources. The emphasis of this initiative is the importance of building partnerships, collaboration, and linkages with a focus on a common agenda to help New Hampshire grow smarter in the future. This broad-based, public-private collaboration met in a yearlong forum to help define issues, identify leverage points and build agreement. It identified the need for workforce housing and land preservation in our communities and sought political support for an initiative to support these two goals. The Housing and Conservation Planning Program, as it was known, was endorsed by Governor Lynch and enacted by the legislature in 2007. Funding is \$200,000/year for the first two years.

Local Examples. Communities in New Hampshire are already undertaking a number of initiatives to help protect open space, enhance traditional community character, and improve transportation options. Many have direct links to recreation. OEP has smart growth resources available at <http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/SmartGrowth/index.htm>.

Some communities have implemented open space or cluster development as a way of both accommodating growth and protecting open space. In this zoning provision, plans for new housing development start with protecting important open space and incorporating housing into smaller lot sizes. Crockett Farm in Stratham is one example. This open space or cluster project allows for smaller lot sizing with open space

surrounding the housing to provide habitat for wildlife and maintain natural areas for low impact recreational activities. In addition, areas of working forestland and open farm fields have been maintained through conservation easements.

Many communities are encouraging use and appreciation of their waterfront and downtown area by establishing trails and parks and linkages within central areas of town. This larger community improvement effort also improves recreational opportunities. In one example, the town of Littleton is working to enhance and link a series of riverfront pocket parks including one in front of the Littleton Area Senior Center and facing downtown. These sites provide open access to the river, including swimming in the summer months. Using DOT Transportation Enhancement funds, efforts are underway to develop a river walk and pedestrian bridge across the Ammonoosuc River to enhance connections to downtown.

In downtown Plymouth, the NH Fish and Game Department has developed a boat access facility to provide river access for boating as well as riverfront access for pedestrians. This site is situated in the heart of the town near the Plymouth Area Senior Citizens Center and the Plymouth District Court. Boaters can also rent kayaks from a nearby shop and walk to the access site. Additionally, in 2007, Fish and Game expanded on this recreational opportunity, completing a car-top put-in on the Baker River. This put-in provides a nice paddle into downtown Plymouth where they can take out, visit the downtown and paddle back or hitch a ride to their original location.

Laconia Downtown

The Winnepesaukee River winds its way through downtown Laconia. It is the focus of planning for an integrated riverwalk that has been years in the making. The City of Laconia has recently completed Phase I of their multi-phase Downtown Riverwalk. In Phase I, a public-private partnership on a private Riverfront Mill redevelopment parcel provided the City with the right-of-way along the river. The private partners also helped the City with some construction services. Together, with City-allocated funds for materials and additional construction services, landscaping, benches and lighting provide a new recreational amenity for young and old to enjoy.

An additional benefit is that Phase I links the Main Street area of downtown to a mixed residential/commercial neighborhood along a street where a NH Fish and Game program plans to put in a public boat launch on Lake Winnisquam.

The addition of a car-top put-in this autumn (2007) on an existing portion of the riverwalk will make the urban downtown accessible by car-top, boat, car, bicycle and foot. The City is currently exploring additional private partnerships and funding mechanisms for phases II and III of the riverwalk project that will link the area of the car-top boat launch with Paugus Bay.

Planning for Outdoor Recreation. Local decisions that impact community outdoor recreation opportunities are made by a variety of different entities. While many communities have a recreation director or recreation commission in charge of community recreation, this entity (entities) is not solely responsible for providing or looking after all community-based recreational opportunities.

Community outdoor recreation can involve a range of local leaders and staff. Often a conservation commission is responsible for managing a town forest or town natural areas, both of which can provide outdoor recreation opportunities and a variety of trail uses. Together with the board of selectmen, a planning board may make decisions about Class VI roads, sidewalks, and recreation features of new developments. It is important to support efforts to improve communication between these decision-makers in both the town master planning process and in the management and discussions about municipal recreational resources.

In addition, changes could be made on a statewide policy level to improve how recreation is defined or discussed under state law. One specific suggestion is to clarify and improve upon the reference to recreation in RSA 674:2, the state statute on local master planning. At this time, communities are encouraged to develop a chapter on recreation that "... shows existing recreation areas and addresses future recreation needs." There is a concern that this definition provides communities with little guidance for developing a high-quality recreation chapter within their local master plan, one that would truly consider the broad range of recreational features in a community. Given this concern, OEP will take a lead role exploring and suggesting legislative changes to this statute.

GOAL: Promote growth and development patterns that encourage local recreational opportunities and preserve undeveloped lands for future recreational use.

I. Objective: Integrate outdoor recreation within larger discussions of "smart growth."

Strategy:

- A. Develop statewide, regional, and local partnerships between recreation planning efforts and those related to land use, transportation, and health (e.g. DOT, OEP, DRED, DHR, DHHS).
- B. Emphasize to communities the benefits of conducting natural resource inventories and developing conservation/open space plans as part of larger community planning efforts.
- C. Broaden enabling legislation for impact fees that would expand allowable uses to include open space and recreation infrastructure.
- D. Improve cross-links between the land use, open space, cultural and historic resources, transportation, and recreation chapters of local master plans (e.g.

encourage communities to include a key at the end of each chapter explaining links with other chapters).

- E. Promote interagency coordination to address regional recreation, trail and open space needs (e.g. explore expanding the role of the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee in addressing regional trail needs).
- F. Encourage Regional Planning Commissions to coordinate and develop multi-community recreation and open space plans (e.g. Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission open space and trail planning assistance).
- G. Improve upon existing references to recreation in state statutes (e.g. OEP will work to revise reference to recreation in RSA 674:2).

II. Objective: Encourage local development that is sensitive to protecting and enhancing local land and water-based recreation and natural and cultural resource protection opportunities.

Strategy:

- A. Give priority to projects that provide community linkages/improve connectivity (e.g. trails, bicycle/pedestrian linkages between residences, boat access, recreational fields, schools, library, etc.). (LWCF)
- B. Give priority to land acquisition projects that protect resources most threatened by land use changes. (LWCF)
- C. Support efforts to create local, regional and statewide networks of trails and greenways (e.g. New England National Scenic Trail, Winnepesaukee River Trail, Sunapee Ragged Kearsarge Greenway, etc).
- D. Support efforts that link community resources via trails and improve the overall connectivity of trails (Derry Pathways, etc.).
- E. Better incorporate open space and trails planning efforts into local and regional planning and land use decisions.
- F. Develop a joint education program targeted towards recreation departments, conservation commissions, and other appropriate boards focused on building awareness of the linkages between recreation and conservation.
- G. Support DOT's Safe Routes to School Program and other "Walk to" or "Ride to" programs.

III.Objective: Educate communities about the importance and economic/non-economic benefits of local, close-to-home recreational opportunities.

Strategy:

- A. Educate the public about the economic value of recreational opportunities in local communities (e.g. education and outreach efforts focused on promoting the values of trails, clean surface water, open space, and non-motorized travel within a community, etc.).
- B. Identify and promote existing strategies that successfully integrate recreation resource protection and community economic development.
- C. Support projects that address community character; social, cultural and quality of life issues; and promote the value of trails close to home.

Selected Contacts and Information Resources

- New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (www.nh.gov/oep)
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation – Bicycle/Pedestrian Program (www.NHBikePed.com/)
- Regional Planning Commissions (www.nh.gov/oep/resourcelibrary/regions.home.htm)
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (www.nhcf.org/)
- New Hampshire Main Street Program (www.nhcdfa.org/mainstreet.html)
- Appalachian Mountain Club (www.outdoors.org)
- New Hampshire Local Government Center (www.nhlgc.org)
- New Hampshire Minimum Impact Development Partnership (www.nhmid.org/)
- Smart Growth Network (www.smartgrowth.org/default.asp)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com)

6. IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND OPEN SPACE PROTECTION IN PROMOTING INCREASED HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Summary

- Obesity in children and adults has been labeled as an epidemic in the U.S. Trends are similar in New Hampshire.
- Physical activity levels among adults and children in New Hampshire are below national recommendations.
- Providing open space, parks, trails, and greenways for “recreation” can be an important part of larger community efforts to develop more livable/walkable communities.

- Partnerships and links between health and recreation are being developed on the national level. The Center for Disease Control sponsors an initiative (Active Community Environments) to promote walking, bicycling and the development of accessible recreation facilities. One of the major initiatives consists of a partnership among 11 federal programs in 4 different federal agencies (including the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service) to promote healthier lifestyles through recreation and physical activity.
- Providing outdoor recreation opportunities within neighborhoods and communities and providing better access to information about recreational opportunities have been identified as important tools to address obesity and lack of physical activity.
- Nationwide initiatives and partnerships are also in place to promote use of trails as ‘pathways to health’ and to promote community partnerships aimed at encouraging physical fitness. Promoting trails and trail use is seen as a way of reaching the largest segments of the community. Walking/trail activities are the most popular recreational pursuits in the U.S., even among those 60 + years of age.
- The Department of Health and Human Services’ *Healthy New Hampshire 2010*, is a statewide agenda to improve health in New Hampshire. Increasing physical activity and lowering overweight and obesity are part of this effort.

Overview

Recreation plays an important role in promoting individual wellness and supporting healthy communities. Lack of exercise and poor diet are two main factors contributing to obesity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that 61 percent of adults were overweight or obese as measured in the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Of particular concern is the fact that 13 percent of NH students in grades 9-12 were overweight and 16 percent were at risk for being overweight according to the 2005 Yearly Risk Factor Surveillance System (YRFSS). Nationally, childhood overweight and obesity rates have tripled since 1980. According to the 2001 U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, adult obesity rates have doubled since 1980. In 2005, fifty percent of U.S. adults engaged in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, five or more times a week (federal recommendations) while 24 percent participate in no leisure-related physical activities (BRFSS).

A recent Surgeon General report highlights a number of community-based strategies aimed at encouraging healthier lifestyles and promoting physical activity. Some are aimed specifically at promoting physical activity locally and make a strong case for partnering with recreation providers and planners. One identified strategy is to make community facilities available for physical activity for all people, including on the weekends. Another is to create more opportunities for physical activity at work sites. These broad recommendations are important from a health and wellness perspective and from a recreation perspective.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation published a report entitled *Healthy Places, Healthy People: Promoting Public Health & Physical Activity through Community Design* (2001). This report stresses the importance of community design and the way our built environments are constructed to either promote or impede physical activity. Existing environments too often focus exclusively on the automobile, and communities are losing open space and good access for walking or bicycling. They fund numerous programs that follow-up on their research findings. One effective program is the Local Initiative Funding Partners that is supporting projects such as the Neighborhood M.A.P. (More Active People) in West Virginia to combat the health hazards of pervasive obesity and lack of physical activity; the EXTREME Health Challenge in Florida to promote healthy nutrition and exercise in children grades K-5; and the Students Run Philly Style in Pennsylvania where at-risk teens improve health, self-esteem and school performance in a running program.

Nationwide Conditions

Healthy People 2010, a publication of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides information about a range of leading health indicators (LHI). Physical activity and obesity are both specifically identified in the report as LHIs. The report highlights that only 15 percent of adults performed the recommended amount of physical activity in 1997, and 40 percent of adults participated in no leisure-time physical activity. Outdoor recreation provides an important outlet for promoting physical activity.

The benefits of physical activity have long been known. Regular physical activity can control weight, improve psychological well-being, and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. A range of socio-demographic characteristics can influence activity levels. Research has shown that adults in northeastern and southern states tend to be less active than adults in western and north central states. Women tend to be less active than men, across all adult age groups, and adults with lower education and income tend to be less active than average. Reasons people cite for not increasing activity levels include both personal and environmental factors such as lack of time, lack of access to convenient facilities, and lack of a safe environment where they can engage in physical activity.

Programs and Partnerships. In response, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is developing programs and partnerships to combat these trends. One such program is the CDC- sponsored Active Community Environments (ACEs). This initiative promotes walking and bicycling, as well as widely accessible recreational facilities. Two of ACE's main goals include encouraging bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly environments and promoting self-powered forms of transportation (walking, bicycling). Community characteristics, such as housing density, road/street design, availability of public transportation, and availability of bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, among others, are important factors behind promoting or hindering physical activity locally.

An important ACE initiative consists of a new partnership among 11 federal programs in 4 different federal agencies (including the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service) to promote healthier lifestyles through recreation and physical activity. Providing outdoor recreation opportunities within neighborhoods and communities and providing better access to information about recreational opportunities were identified as

important tools to address obesity and lack of physical activity. Two interesting programs are the GreenStyles Survey, (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/aces.htm) that assesses the effects of environmental, social and personal variables on walking and cycling, and the “National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity among Adults Aged 50 and Older” (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/press/archive/blueprint.htm).

Other nationwide initiatives and partnerships are also in place to promote use of trails as exercise and to support community partnerships aimed at encouraging physical fitness. The Department of the Interior, of which the National Park Service is a part, is promoting the use of trails as “Pathways to Health.” Promoting trails and trail use is seen as a way of reaching the largest segments of the community. Walking/trail activities are some of the most popular recreational pursuits in the U.S., even among older segments of the population.

Public-private partnerships are critical at a national level and serve as a model for developing similar initiatives at a state or local level. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop a strategic partnership that promotes physical activity. The purpose is to reach goals proposed in *Healthy People 2010* as they relate to physical activity, obesity and overweight. Goals include increasing the level of physical activity among youth and adults, reducing levels of obesity among youth and adults, and reducing environmental barriers to physical activity at the community level with special emphasis on removing barriers for the disabled. Selected strategies set forth include the following:

- Population and community-based health education and health promotion activities;
- Activities that utilize technology to increase awareness of the local access and opportunities for physical activity;
- Coordination of public awareness and media activities that include the Leading Health Indicators (LHIs) and that address the imperative of increasing physical activity, promoting healthy behaviors, and increasing quality and years of healthy living;
- Joint efforts to promote professional education and training, dissemination of best practices, and joint efforts to mobilize communities around the *Healthy People 2010* objectives and the Leading Health Indicators;
- Activities designed to reach the community level, including but not limited to encouraging partnerships locally;
- Activities that augment data collection efforts;
- Increased collegiality, recognition, support, and resource sharing; and
- Strategic leveraging of resources among organizations.

Safety. Safety at recreational areas is also part of promoting health and wellness. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) revised its *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*, 1997. The purpose is to help communities, schools, day care centers, corporations, and other groups build safe playgrounds. The publication provides information detailing technical safety guidelines for designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining public playgrounds. This guide is available on-line at (www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/325.pdf).

New Hampshire Conditions and Trends

In 2005, 60 percent of New Hampshire adults were overweight or obese, up from 50 percent in 1999 (BRFSS). The Healthy NH 2010 goal is to reduce New Hampshire's adult overweight and obesity rate to 40 percent by 2010. In 2005, 24 percent of New Hampshire students in grades 9-12 were either overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. The 2010 goal is to reduce the overweight rate and risk for overweight in 9-12 grade students to 5 percent. New Hampshire has already met the 2010 goal to increase physical activity rates for adults and students in grades 9-12 to 50 percent. In 2005, 56 percent of adults and 57 percent of 9-12 grade students met the physical activity recommendations.

A steering committee facilitated by New Hampshire Fish and Game hosted a "Leave No Child Inside" Summit in May 2007 to kick off a New Hampshire initiative to combat the "nature-deficit disorder" trend. Dr. Susan Lynch, New Hampshire's First Lady, served as honorary chair, and participants represented the fields of education, health, recreation, environment, media and culture, and the built environment. Working groups have formed to address the top priorities identified at the Summit, including messaging, networking, and providing an Internet clearinghouse of existing programs, activities, and locations for engaging children and their families with the outdoors.

State Parks has begun to implement the "Leave No Child Inside" initiative with a six-week initiative, "The Great Park Pursuit". Teams of two or more participated in three self-guided challenges and three activity-driven events at a different state park each week to earn points and win prizes. During this six-week adventure, eighty-five teams competed in three-legged and wheel barrow races, created origami birds and built bird houses, inspected specimens netted from ponds, went on hikes, learned how to tie knots and fish, built castles and creatures in the sand, kayaked, and explored the Flume.

GOAL: Promote health/wellness benefits gained from improving recreational opportunities and bicycle and pedestrian linkages in communities.

I. Objective: Broaden and strengthen partnerships.

Strategy:

A. Build connections with the NH Department of Transportation, local public works departments, and local boards to promote bicycling and pedestrian connectivity and non-motorized transportation networks.

- B. Focus health/wellness education and outreach efforts on local recreation providers (e.g. target recreation directors, recreation commissions, and involve the Governor’s Council on Physical Education, Department of Education, Healthy Communities Foundation, etc.).
- C. Promote local participation in statewide health promotion and education activities (e.g. Great American Smoke Out, Great American Work Out).
- D. Partner with hospitals, local wellness teams, and schools to coordinate education efforts and develop cross-promotion efforts.

II. Objective: Increase public awareness of access and opportunities for recreation and physical activity locally.

Strategy:

- A. Cross-promote health programs as aspects of other initiatives and incorporate physical activity within other organizations’ activities (e.g. establish historic walking tours in conjunction with the local historical society or historic commission).
- B. Work with business and industry to promote understanding of the importance of recreational opportunities for employee health (e.g. Business and Industry Association, etc.).

III. Objective: Consider special needs of youth, elderly and disabled populations in promoting health and wellness through outdoor recreation.

Strategy:

- A. Improve existing and new recreation areas by enhancing non-motorized (bicycle/pedestrian) accessibility and connectivity. Non-motorized access is particularly important to youth, elderly and disabled populations.
- B. Encourage lifetime recreation and physical activity curriculum in school programs (e.g. Safe Routes to School, bicycling, walking, etc.).
- C. Encourage the Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Fish and Game Department to develop long-term handicap accessible plans for public lands and implement universal designs.

IV. Objective: Promote health and wellness messages in existing recreation areas.

Strategy:

- A. Encourage the state and communities to adopt no-smoking policies in high-density recreation areas (e.g. state and community parks, and emphasize awareness of cigarette butts as litter).

- B. Encourage health food concession alternatives at parks and sporting events (e.g. beaches, swimming pools, football games, etc.).
- C. Encourage communities to post the health benefits of physical activity in existing recreation areas (e.g. post health messages and mileage markers along a town pathway or trail).
- D. Encourage use of appropriate equipment in parks (e.g. RSA 265:144 requires use of helmets by youths under 16 bicycling on any public way, etc.).
- E. Encourage parks to promote safe playground standards.

Selected Contacts and Information Resources

- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/default.htm)
- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (www.ceinfo.unh.edu)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (www.hhs.gov/)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/)
- Appalachian Mountain Club (www.outdoors.org/)
- New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (www.nhrpa.com)

CHAPTER 4. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

While emphasis must be placed on addressing these six individual issue areas, there is an overarching need to improve upon the way outdoor recreation planning is incorporated into larger, broader decision-making in the state. Improving upon this process will help improve overall plan implementation and is critical to making these suggested recommendations more viable and feasible. With this in mind, improving overall coordination will be the first step in moving towards SCORP implementation.

The SCORP Steering Committee emphasized, and the SCORP Public Advisory Committee concurred, that SCORP planning should be an ongoing effort with emphasis on implementation and progress. The goal is to keep the SCORP alive and up to date. Discussion focused on revamping collaboration and joint outdoor recreation planning efforts to produce a more consistent, yearly process.

To foster plan implementation, the SCORP Steering Committee recommended that the first plan of action should be to establish a more permanent outdoor recreation review committee or oversight committee. Such a committee is deemed critical to facilitating plan implementation and addressing critical recreation issues. Because a wide variety of agencies and organizations are involved in outdoor recreation provision in New Hampshire, it stands that a wide range of perspectives should be included in ongoing, coordinated discussions about priorities and strategies.

The SCORP Steering Committee felt that a statewide recreation committee could respond, as an established entity, to statewide recreation-related challenges, research needs, and issues that arise in the ensuing five years before another SCORP plan is developed. Establishing a permanent committee that meets at least on an annual basis will make a better planning process than one that starts when a new plan is needed and stops when the plan is finalized.

In addition, efforts should be made to increase the awareness of the SCORP and its recommendations among state agencies, possibly through the Council on Resources and Development (CORD), as well as via other legislatively mandated and organized committees. OEP will work to improve these linkages, identify possible partnerships and promote understanding of how other initiatives, missions, and goals relate to the wide-reaching subject of outdoor recreation.

Next Steps

Oversight Committee. To aid implementation of individual strategies set forth in this plan, OEP, in conjunction with DRED, will work to establish an outdoor recreation oversight committee as specifically recommended by the current SCORP Steering Committee. In the interim, the existing SCORP Steering Committee will continue to meet until this more permanent committee can be established. The current committee will work with OEP and DRED to develop specific strategies for establishing the role and membership of an oversight committee and establish initial goals and priorities.

While specifics are yet to be determined, the SCORP Steering Committee felt that it is important that the state leadership be involved in identifying this new committee. In addition, this group also suggested several starting points for discussion. Two potential alternatives mentioned would make use of existing committees. One suggestion is to utilize the existing Open Project Selection Process Advisory Panel. Another suggestion is to reappoint, in a more permanent fashion, the existing SCORP Steering Committee. While the exact makeup is still unknown, the new committee is envisioned to meet at least on an annual basis and focus on plan progress, partnership development, and implementation strategies.

The current SCORP Steering Committee felt it important to allow this new entity to establish SCORP priorities and a more formal action plan. Therefore, an action plan will not be included in this phase of the SCORP planning process, but will be included in the next phase. This will be an important early task for the formalized oversight committee.

OEP's Role. Beyond early efforts to work with state leadership in the development of an outdoor recreation oversight committee, OEP will also continue to oversee the SCORP and promote plan implementation. In general:

- OEP, through an ongoing agreement with DRED, will be responsible for measuring progress and coordinating planning efforts for SCORP maintenance in the interim before the next SCORP is developed.
- OEP will utilize an oversight committee to identify yearly goals and priorities based on the list of established SCORP recommendations and will review annual progress and success. A SCORP action plan will be produced to provide guidance and direction about the priorities and potential partners.
- Under the review of the committee, OEP will evaluate the possibility of developing a coordinated *outdoor recreation research plan* to identify statewide recreation-related research needs, as well as identify priorities, partnerships, and potential funding sources for completing such research.