

New Hampshire Outdoors

2003-2007

Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan

Summary Report



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Prepared by the New
Hampshire Office of
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N*ew Hampshire Outdoors, 2003-2007 - Summary Report* highlights the major findings and recommendations discussed more fully in the entire Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for New Hampshire; *New Hampshire Outdoors, 2003-2007* (available at www.state.nh.us/osp/recreation/NHSCORP.htm)

The SCORP satisfies a requirement of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program that each state have an approved SCORP on file with the National Park Service (NPS) in order to participate in the LWCF program. The LWCF has been a key source of funding behind the creation of our federal, state and local park systems. New Hampshire has received more than \$33 million in LWCF funding since 1965.

This summary report presents the 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.

The first section of this report summarizes a sampling of statistics that help frame outdoor recreation trends in New Hampshire. The second section contains a summary of six major recreation-related issues identified through the SCORP planning process. These six subsections provide a summary of each issue area, followed by a series of goals, objectives, and strategies developed as a framework for how New Hampshire can address these issues.

Some strategies relate directly to how Land and Water Conservation (LWCF) funds could be expended, while other strategies consist of broader policy or practical recommendations. Though some recommendations are targeted to specific agencies and organizations, many can be applied on either a statewide, regional, or local level.

New Hampshire Outdoors

With just a little 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, and 1,200 miles of rivers. They 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 760,000 acre White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) offering scenic beauty as well as vast opportunities for hiking, camping, picnicking, and wilderness experiences. In addition, over one million acres of private forest and agricultural land is

available for public uses such as hunting, fishing, nature appreciation, hiking, and ski touring. The state harbors hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including popular game species, and several endangered and threatened species 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.

These natural and cultural resources are important draws; inspiring millions of residents and out-of-state visitors to enjoy the state's mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, and coastal region. With this wealth of resources, tourism has become one of the most important industries in the state.

Promoting and encouraging the enjoyment of the state's outdoors can help enhance the tourism industry and increase its contributions to the state's economy. With these economic benefits, there is also recognition that resource management issues can arise with increased recreational use and visitation. It is important to consider how to provide for a range of outdoor recreation opportunities and to consider our state's ability to manage and steward our resource base. Clearly New Hampshire's outdoors is crucial to residents' quality of life as well as to the continued success of our tourism industry. It is important for New Hampshire to protect what it also seeks to promote.

National Trends & 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 sheer increases in population, increases in popularity, or both. More people are participating in a wider variety of activities today than was the case 10 or 20 years ago.

Below are several specific national management considerations, identified in *Outdoor Recreation in American Life* (Cordell, et al.1999). While these considerations are nationwide, they can still provide useful guidance in framing recreation trends in New Hampshire.

- The most popular sites will experience greater and 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 ever more important management issue.
- Changes in race, age, income, culture, etc. will continue to change the type of demand for recreation opportunities, however, overall demand will continue to increase.
- 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.



State Trends

While nationwide statistics are a helpful foundation, there are more specific data sources available that can inform and frame outdoor recreational trends taking place in New Hampshire. 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 of full SCORP document, or to the original data source, for more detailed information.

Recreation Demand and Registration Trends

- 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 (OSP, 1997) US Forest Service Data shows a 23 percent increase in trail use in the WMNF 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 seven years. Out-of-state registrations have more than tripled.
- Out-of-state snowmobile registrations are steadily increasing. Out-of-state registrations have more than doubled in the last

seven years, while in-state registrations have remained steady.

- Boating registrations doubled between 1980 and 1990 alone, and have increased over 19 percent between 1990 and 2000.

Recreation Supply

- 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 52 percent of New Hampshire land acres were enrolled in Current Use as of 2001. Statewide, about 39 percent of Current Use Lands received the recreational adjustment that same year.



2001 CURRENT USE LANDS WITH RECREATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

County	Acres in Current Use	Acres with 20% Recreation Adjustment	Percentage of Current Use Acres Receiving Recreation Adjustment
Belknap	135,710.52	48,449.56	36%
Carroll	215,697.56	62,566.94	29%
Cheshire	287,350.77	73,276.60	26%
Coos	755,625.29	513,556.13	68%
Grafton	479,390.38	169,624.63	35%
Hillsborough	274,365.76	67,070.54	24%
Merrimack	338,020.05	141,889.92	42%
Rockingham	167,088.3	32,348.72	19%
Strafford	119,997.75	21,391.22	18%
Sullivan	237,515.43	76,867.99	23%
NH TOTAL	3,010,741.80	1,207,042.25	39%

Source: Department of Revenue Administration, Current Use Reports 2001

NEW HAMPSHIRE PARTICIPATION RATES AND FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION

	Overall Household Participation	Percent who participate 1-6 times a year	Percent who participate 7+ times a year
Wildlife Observation	85%	35%	50%
Driving for Pleasure	84%	32%	52%
Sight-seeing	84%	45%	39%
Jogging/Running/Walking	79%	17%	62%
Day Hiking	73%	48%	25%
Stream/Lake Swimming	71%	37%	34%
Picnicking	68%	49%	19%
Photography	64%	37%	27%
Ocean Swimming	58%	40%	18%
Bicycling	55%	29%	26%
Outdoor Pool Swimming	54%	26%	28%
Freshwater Fishing	50%	23%	27%
Nature Study	47%	33%	14%
Canoeing/kayaking/rowing	45%	33%	12%
Motor-boating	43%	23%	20%
Playing on playgrounds	40%	20%	20%
Tennis/Volleyball/Golf	37%	16%	21%
Baseball/basketball/soccer	36%	14%	22%
Downhill Skiing	35%	17%	18%
Camping in National Forest	33%	30%	3%
Camping at State Parks	31%	26%	5%
Cross-country skiing	31%	20%	11%
Backpacking	29%	24%	5%
Camping at Private Campground	28%	21%	7%
Mountain biking	27%	15%	12%
Large Game Hunting	25%	10%	15%
Off-road Vehicle Driving	21%	13%	8%
Snowshoeing	20%	13%	7%
Snowmobiling	19%	9%	10%
ATV	17%	6%	11%
Bird Hunting	17%	9%	8%
Water-skiing	17%	11%	6%
Horseback Riding	15%	10%	5%
Sailing	14%	10%	4%
Sea Kayaking	4%	3%	1%

Source: 1997 NH Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment (UNH)

Participation Levels - Outdoor Recreation

- 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 seems 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. such as 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.



ACTUAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION BY COUNTY: 1970-2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020
BELKNAP	32,367	42,884	49,216	56,325	60,296	63,746	69,956
CARROLL	18,548	27,931	35,410	43,666	47,188	51,274	57,790
CHESHIRE	52,364	62,116	70,121	73,825	77,336	80,376	88,206
COOS	34,291	35,147	34,828	33,111	32,770	31,873	34,978
GRAFTON	54,914	65,806	74,929	81,743	86,512	91,462	98,851
HILLSBOROUGH	225,941	276,608	336,073	380,841	406,344	429,594	469,923
MERRIMACK	80,925	98,502	120,005	136,225	145,497	155,208	173,370
ROCKINGHAM	138,951	190,345	245,845	277,359	294,927	313,188	342,177
STRAFFORD	70,431	85,408	104,233	112,233	117,971	124,721	136,871
SULLIVAN	30,949	36,063	38,592	40,458	41,945	44,345	48,665
NEW HAMPSHIRE	737,681	920,610	1,109,252	1,235,786	1,310,786	1,385,787	1,520,787

Sources: 2000 US Census – New Hampshire, US Bureau of the Census
 New Hampshire Population Projections 2000-2020, Office of State Planning, 1997.
 New Hampshire Population Projections 2005-2025, Office of State Planning, 2002.

- Between 1990 and 2000, the state's population has increased by over 11 percent, meaning that demand for outdoor recreation opportunities (as measured by number of people participating) is also likely to increase.

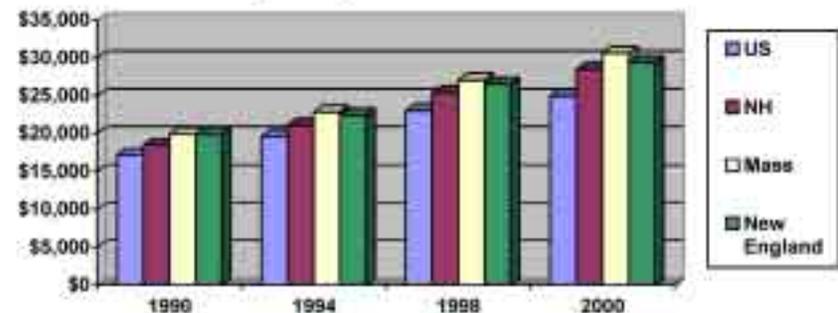
Other Statistics

- Available LWCF grants in 2001 and 2002 have fallen far below the demand for funding. In 2001 and 2002, there were 65 local proposals totaling almost \$4.5 million in requests. A total of 15 grants equaling \$1.35 million were awarded.
- Seventy six (76) percent of recreational leaders (recreation directors) surveyed in a 2001 UNH survey feel that local recreational demand currently exceeds supply.

Demographics

- According to the 2000 Census, the average age in New Hampshire is increasing. The average age, as of 2000, in New Hampshire is 37.1 years. This compares to an average age of 30.1 in 1980 and 32.8 in 1990. An aging population will impact participation trends over time.
- According to US statistics, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New England as a region, all have higher income levels than the United States average. People with middle incomes tend to show higher participation rates in outdoor recreation than those with low incomes.

Per Capita Disposable Personal Income



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

RECREATIONAL ISSUES OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

Overview

Changing conditions and trends have far reaching implications for recreation and open space planning. *According to Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* (1996) developed for the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, changing conditions and trends in outdoor recreation planning 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.

SCORP Planning

One of the major components of every statewide SCORP effort is to regularly identify and update outdoor recreation issues of statewide importance. Identifying and understanding changing conditions and trends on a statewide level will help ensure that relevant and responsive recommendations can be identified. Solid recommendations, in turn, will help inform efforts to effectively address new and emerging issues.

During the planning process, which took place in the summer and fall of 2002, efforts were made to gather input and data from a variety of perspectives related to outdoor recreation. In particular, direct input was sought from two committees specifically established to aid in the planning process; the SCORP Steering Committee and a larger SCORP Public Advisory Committee, as well as through a web-based stakeholder survey coordinated by the University of New Hampshire. For detailed information about the committees, survey, and the planning process refer to the complete report: *New Hampshire Outdoors, 2003-2007*.

SCORP Issue Areas

Six issues of statewide importance emerged based on the range of input and perspectives gathered during 2002. These six issues are as follows:

- Stewardship of the Resource Base for Outdoor Recreation
- Providing Different, Sometimes Competing, Recreational Opportunities.
- Apply Limited Financial And Human Resources To Address A Range Of Recreation Needs
- Education Of Recreational Users, Municipalities And Landowners About Responsible Behavior, Laws and Liability
- Impacts Of Existing Land Use Patterns On Recreational Opportunities
- Importance of Local Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Open Space Protection in Promoting Increased Health and Wellness

The following chapter provides a summary of each issue followed by recommendations (i.e. goals, objectives and strategies) developed to help address these issues in New Hampshire. Some recommended strategies are specifically targeted towards the allocation of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies. (Strategies denoted by (LWCF) represent recommendations targeted towards New Hampshire's apportionment of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies). Others represent broader policy or practical recommendations. A more complete discussion of each issue area, along with related references and appendices, is available in the full SCORP document.

Stewardship of the Natural Resource Base for Outdoor Recreation

SUMMARY

New Hampshire is facing increased pressure on its existing resource base. Tourism continues to play a key role in the state's economy. Visitation rates are increasing (e.g. State Parks) and development pressures and population growth continue, especially in the southern part of the state.

- ◆ Recreational use can have negative impacts on natural resources (e.g. trail erosion, introduction of exotic species, impacts to wildlife).
- ◆ 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 publicly held land.
- ◆ 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 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 is 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, 1997*).
- ◆ Private lands (current use, easements) 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* (1999), the southern half of the state has 90 percent of the population but only



30 percent of the state's undeveloped land. Some towns in the southern part of the state have less than one acre of undeveloped land per person. The current network of conservation lands does not adequately protect many of the known rare plant and animal species.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal:

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

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

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to land acquisition efforts focused on natural areas/lands identified in existing local, regional, or state plans (e.g. lands might include forests, wetlands, rare natural communities, coastal areas, agricultural lands, etc.).
- B. Support efforts to secure permanent state funding for LCHIP (e.g. encourage groups to endorse and support Citizens for Land and Community Heritage).
- C. Support efforts to secure continued funding for federal programs (e.g. stateside LWCF funding, Forest Legacy, TEA-21, EPA Brownfields, Farm Bill etc.).
- D. Support comprehensive statewide and regional planning for open space, recreation corridors, and greenways (e.g. State, regional, and local open space plans, trail plans etc.).
- E. Educate the public on plans that currently exist (NH Living Legacy Project, Hanover Open Space Plan, etc.).
- F. Expand efforts to fund conservation for outdoor recreation at the

local level (e.g. encourage communities to consider open space bonds and/or earmarking all or a portion of the local land use change tax for conservation purposes).

G. Encourage state, regional, and municipal partnerships with non-profits and land trusts to acquire and protect locally significant open space lands (e.g. New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, Center for Land Conservation Assistance).

H. Target specific purchases in areas of the state where the fastest growth and usage is taking place (e.g. protect lands near areas experiencing increased development pressure to protect open space lands and recreational opportunities close to home).

I. Target purchases that protect hydrological units or create or link large contiguous blocks of lands for wildlife and people.

J. Support efforts to protect scenic views (e.g. encourage and give incentives to landowners to keep fields mowed. Examples might include the NH Fish and Game small grants programs for wildlife or establishing incentives through existing programs like Current Use).



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

Strategies

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

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

Strategies

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



Providing Different, Sometimes Competing, Recreational Opportunities

SUMMARY

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.

- ◆ 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 or limits on use as pressure increases or conflicts develop.
- ◆ The resource and recreation management concerns may vary depending on location in the state. 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.

- ◆ Under state and federal law, Universal Design must be considered as 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.
- ◆ US data shows that participation in most outdoor recreational activities is on the rise, either due to population increases, increases in popularity or both (Cordell et. al, 1999). 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 in New Hampshire have more than doubled in the last 7 years (NHFG, 2002).
- ◆ 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 the Office of State Planning found that existing trails are inadequate to meet the current range of recreational activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal:

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

I. OBJECTIVE: Protect existing outdoor recreation opportunities.

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Focus efforts on major renovations of eroded or deteriorated facilities (e.g. boat ramps, playgrounds, etc.) and recreational areas (e.g. beaches, parks, trails, etc.).
- B. (LWCF) Protect existing access (e.g. water access, trails, trail-heads, etc.) and preserve and maintain existing recreational areas (e.g. parks, playfields, etc.).
- C. Work with recreational clubs and organizations to produce and promote best management practices (BMPs) for different recreational uses.
- D. Encourage local stewardship of recreation areas/facilities.

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

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that provide for identified public recreational needs and/or unavailable recreational opportunities.
- B. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that identify and address existing problems with over use or mitigate conflicts of use.
- C. Encourage the State and local communities to determine recreational needs by focusing on desired levels of service.
- 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).



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

Strategies

- 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 sign 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 (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).



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

Strategies

- 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 OSP's Inventory of Outdoor Recreation Facilities or Public Water Access sites on the web).
- D. Develop a resource directory that provides information about who's responsible on a statewide level for different recreation programs and enforcement.

V. OBJECTIVE: Ensure that recreational opportunities are available to those with disabilities.

Strategies

- 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. 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.
- D. Identify funding sources that can be used to improve accessibility and universal design (e.g. TEA-21, LWCF, etc.).
- E. Work with partners to support and encourage universal design.



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), not only financial capital, are fundamental to successful local recreational efforts.
- ◆ In a 2002 DRED survey, State Park Managers list major rehabilitation/facility construction 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, 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.
- ◆ In a 1997 OSP survey, community recreation leaders rated ball fields most often as the number one facility needed in their community, followed by outdoor ice-skating rinks and bicycle trails. Ball fields also ranked #1 in the 1993 and 1987 versions of the survey.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 funding of State Park facilities over new land acquisition.

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that have been identified in a State Park master plan or through other planning efforts.
- B. (LWCF) 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.).
- 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 NH State Parks website).

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

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that have an operations and maintenance plan and whose sponsors have shown sound stewardship on existing facilities.
- B. (LWCF) 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.).



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

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that have been specifically identified in local or regional plans.
- B. (LWCF) Continue to give priority to communities that have had less benefit from LWCF funding in the past.
- C. (LWCF) 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.).
- D. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that consider stewardship costs in new projects and initiatives.
- E. (LWCF) Consider methods of giving priority to projects with a higher level of use, even in low population areas (e.g. OSP will consider possible methods and provide suggestions to DRED and the Open Project Selection Process Advisory Panel for review).

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

Strategies

- 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 public/private financing of these efforts.

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

Strategies

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that show local partnerships and commitment to not only developing but also maintaining land and water-based recreational facilities.
- B. Promote volunteerism with school-aged youth in communities (e.g. boys and girls clubs, Americorps, scouts, etc.).

VI. OBJECTIVE: Explore the possibility of implementing voluntary, dedicated user fees for other recreational uses.

Strategies

- 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.).

4 Education of Recreational Users, Municipalities and Landowners about Responsible Behavior, Laws, and Liability

SUMMARY

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.

- ◆ 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.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal:

Improve and increase educational opportunities and outreach targeted to both recreation providers and recreational users.

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

Strategies

- 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 protections.
- D. Evaluate the feasibility of developing a statewide GIS map and database of lands under Current Use, including those that receive the 20 percent recreation adjustment.

II. OBJECTIVE: Educate municipalities on liability issues and municipal rights related to recreational use.

Strategies

- 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).
- B. OSP 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.

Strategies

- 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, 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: Promote education-based strategies to minimize enforcement and use restrictions.

Strategies

- 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.).

Impacts of Existing Land Use Patterns on Recreational Opportunities

SUMMARY

State governments and communities across the country recognize potential pitfalls of unmanaged growth and are searching for strategies to grow "smarter". Unmanaged growth congers up images of sprawling suburban development, loss of open space, and the deterioration of community character. Increased dependence on the automobile and loss of open space negatively impact both the quantity and quality of local outdoor recreation opportunities. Parks, open space, trails and greenways are important community resources, and promoting these recreational resources will be an important part of making communities more livable.

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Many 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 assessment agreed or strongly agreed that continued com-

mercial development represents a serious threat to New Hampshire's natural and cultural resources.

- ◆ Development is consuming more and more undeveloped land as population increases, as defined by both number of total acres and by number of acres per person. (OSP, 2000).
- ◆ Recreation corridors can also serve as alternative transportation corridors.
- ◆ Nationwide Smart Growth initiatives and the New Hampshire Vibrant Communities initiative provide principles 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.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal:

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

I. OBJECTIVE: Incorporate outdoor recreation more fully as an issue within larger discussions of “smart growth”.

Strategies:

A. Develop statewide, regional, and local partnerships between recreation planning efforts and those related to land use, transportation, and health (e.g. NH Celebrates Wellness, DOT, OSP, DRED, DHR).



B. Support reauthorization of a federal transportation bill that continues or expands upon TEA-21 in its support of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

C. Emphasize to communities the benefits of conducting natural resource inventories and developing conservation/open space plans as part of larger community planning efforts.

D. Broaden enabling legislation for impact fees that would expand allowable uses to include open space and recreation infrastructure.

E. 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).

F. 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).

G. 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).

H. Improve upon existing definitions of recreation in state statutes (e.g. OSP will work to revise definition of recreation in RSA 674:2).

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

Strategies:

- A. (LWCF) Give priority to projects that provide community linkages/improve connectivity.
- B. (LWCF) Give priority to land acquisition projects that protect resources most threatened by land use changes.
- C. Support efforts to create local and regional networks of trails and greenways.
- D. Support efforts that link community resources via trails and improve the overall connectivity of trails.
- 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. Promote "Walk to School" and other "Walk to" or "Bike to" programs.



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

Strategies:

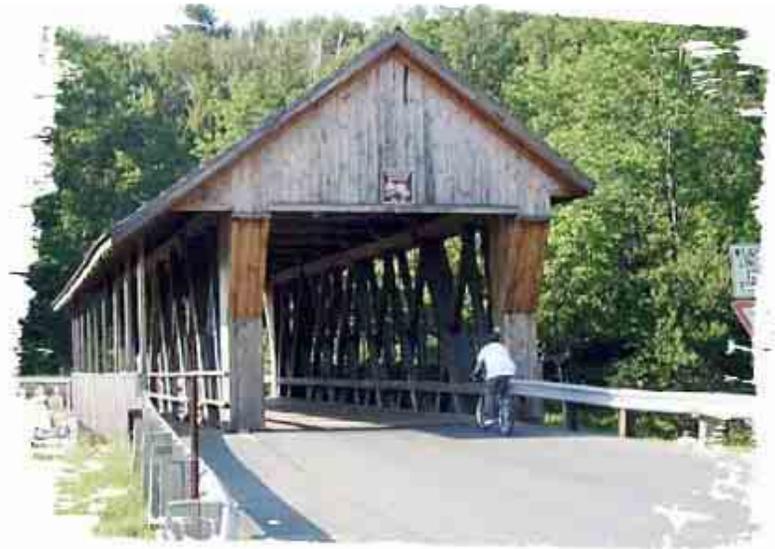
- A. Educate the public about the economic value of recreational opportunities in local communities.
- B. Identify and promote existing strategies that successfully integrate recreation resource protection and community economic development.

Importance of Local Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Open Space Protection in Promoting Increased Health and Wellness

SUMMARY

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 Department of Health and Human Services reports that, as of 1999, 61 percent of adults were overweight nationwide. Of particular concern is the fact that 14 percent of children and adolescents were overweight and this percentage has tripled since 1980. According to the Surgeon General, adult obesity rates have doubled since 1980. Less than 33 percent of adults engage in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five or more times a week (federal recommendations) and 40 percent participate in no leisure-related physical activities.

- ◆ Obesity in kids/adults has been labeled as an epidemic in the US. 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 new partnership among 11 federal programs in 4 different federal agencies (including the National Park Service and US 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 US, even among those 60+ years of age.
- ◆ *Healthy New Hampshire 2010* provides a statewide agenda to improve health in New Hampshire. Increasing physical activity and lowering obesity/overweight is part of this effort.

- Livable, Walkable Communities (LWC) coordinated by New Hampshire Celebrates Wellness, is currently working to expand knowledge about and promote the important role community design and the built environment play in either promoting or impeding physical activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal:

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

I. OBJECTIVE: Broaden and strengthen partnerships.

Strategies:

- 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 Governors Council on Physical Education, Department of Education, Healthy Communities Foundation, etc.)
- C. Investigate and encourage local participation in statewide health promotion and education activities (e.g. breast cancer walks, March into May, 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.

Strategies:

- 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 industries to promote understanding of the importance of recreational opportunities for employee health (e.g. Business and Industry Association, etc.).
- C. Develop statewide database (web site) that lists ideas and programs that have been successful.



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

Strategies:

- A. Improve existing and new recreation opportunities 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. bicycling, walking, etc.).
- C. Encourage the Department of Resources and Economic Development and Fish and Game Department to develop long-term disability plans for public lands and implement universal designs.



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

Strategies:

- 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 healthy food concessions 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. use of helmets in skate parks, etc.).
- E. Encourage parks to promote safe playground standards.

CONCLUSION

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 on-going effort with emphasis on implementation and progress. The goal is to keep the SCORP alive and up to date. With this in mind, the Office of State Planning and the Department of Resources and Economic Development will foster efforts to improve upon state coordination and produce a more consistent, yearly SCORP planning process.

SELECTED CONTACTS & INFORMATION SOURCES

- ◆ [Appalachian Mountain Club](#)
- ◆ [Audubon Society of New Hampshire](#)
- ◆ [DRED - Division of Parks and Recreation](#)
 - ◆ [DRED - Trails Bureau - also provides links to many trail clubs](#)
- ◆ [DRED - Division of Forests and Lands](#)
 - ◆ [New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau](#)
- ◆ [Governor's Commission on Disability](#)
- ◆ [Granite State Independent Living](#)
- ◆ [Land and Community Heritage Investment Program](#)
- ◆ [National Center for Recreation & Conservation](#)
- ◆ [National Park Service, Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Celebrates Wellness](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Chapter of the Nature Conservancy](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Charitable Foundation](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Department of Safety](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Department of Transportation - Bicycle/Pedestrian Program](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Department of Transportation - TE Program](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Fish and Game Department](#)
 - ◆ [Non Game and Endangered Wildlife Program](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Lakes Association](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Main Street Program](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Minimum Impact Development Partnership](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Municipal Association](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Office of State Planning](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association](#)
- ◆ [Regional Planning Commissions](#)
- ◆ [Smart Growth Network](#)
- ◆ [Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests](#)
- ◆ [University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension](#)
- ◆ [US Centers for Disease Control](#)
- ◆ [US Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- ◆ [US Department of Justice - ADA information](#)
- ◆ [Volunteer NH](#)
- ◆ [White Mountain National Forest](#)

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