



Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest

The Property and It's Managers:

In 2001 the Trust for Public Lands purchased 171,500 acres of commercial forest land, the single largest contiguous private ownership in New Hampshire from International Paper Company. *This area comprises the northern-most tip of the state, about one fortieth of its total area.* Working with other conservation organizations and the State, the Trust for Public Lands developed a long-term conservation strategy for maintaining timber production, natural values, and public use of the property.

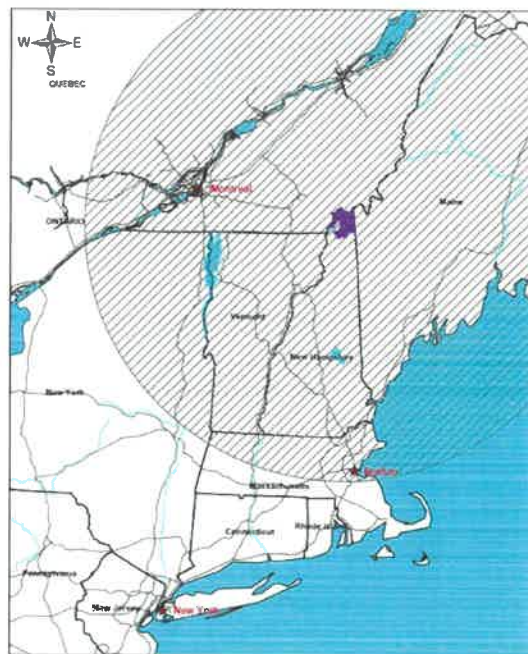
To realize the collective vision for the property, the Trust:

- Sold 146,400 acres (about 229 sq miles) to a private landowner, the Connecticut Lakes Realty Trust, to be managed as a Working Forest with land use restrictions.
- Designated and conveyed to the State of New Hampshire, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 269 miles of the 424-mileplus network on the Working Forest to be managed for public access and recreation and forest management activities.
- Conveyed 25,000 acres to the State of New Hampshire, Fish and Game Department to protect highly sensitive Natural Areas.
- Conveyed 100 acres to the State of New Hampshire, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, through fee simple sale to accommodate future expansion of the Deer Mountain Campground which abuts the Working Forest; and
- Obtained a conservation easement on the Working Forest and fee ownership of the other properties through \$13,500,000 in grants from the Forest Legacy Program and Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) and \$10,000,000 from General Fund appropriations.

The three current management organizations are.

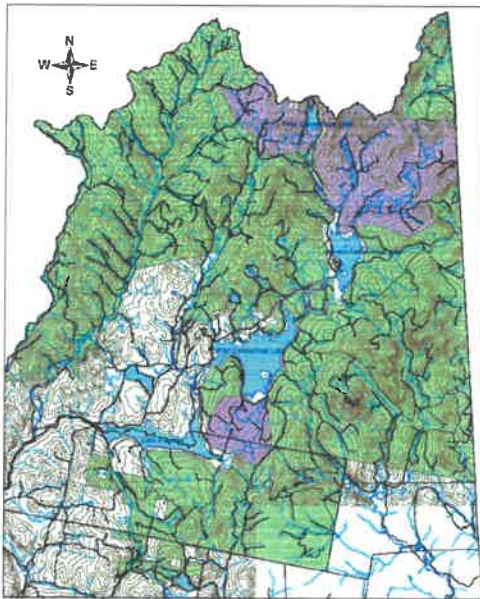
- Department of Natural and Cultural Resources through its Forests and Lands and Parks and Recreation divisions
- Fish and Game Department
- Private landowner, ANEW Climate, LLC.

The management of the property is also guided by the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizen Committee per RSA 12-A:9-b.





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The *Grant of Conservation Easement* is the primary management document for the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters property consisting of the terms, covenants, restrictions and affirmative rights granted to the Easement Holder and the Fee Owner.

Section 5D.i of the Easement requires the Division to develop in consultation with the Landowner a *Road Management Plan* which is consistent with the Purposes, Stewardship Goals, Road Management Agreement, Stewardship Plan and Public Access and Recreation Use Management Plan and must state how and in what time frame DNCR plans to achieve or progress toward attaining Easement Stewardship goal 2.C.i-xiii.

Budgets, Endowments and Landowner Contribution:

Three endowments were established when the State acquired the easement for the headwater's property; Stewardship, Monitoring and Roads to assist in funding the management responsibilities outlined in the Easement and management plans.

Each endowment has a specific purpose. The Endowments are apportioned between DNCR and NHFG by a Memorandum of Agreement. The Division of Parks and Recreation subsidizes the cost of staff that supports the property including, trails and parks bureau staff in addition to administrative support by the division and commissioner's offices.

The Stewardship Endowment purpose is for habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the State, and for the purposes of recreation use, and the conservation easement management of 146,400 acres within the Connecticut Lake Headwaters Tract. In the 2017 plan update, the stewardship endowment was also used to support road maintenance and management as long as the work directly benefitted public access and was not used to support forest management and timber harvesting. This fund is the primary funding source for the property today.

The Road Endowment was established to support road maintenance managed by the state agencies. The roads while providing easy access to recreational sites remains the largest operational responsibility and expense for the Division of Parks and Recreation. This fund is inadequate to fund the dual needs of stewardship, maintenance of existing and the forest management needs.



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The Monitoring Endowment was established to ensure that the tract will be managed according to the legal agreements embodied within the conservation easement, which is recorded in its entirety in the Coos county registry of deeds. The NHFGD and DNCR use this funding to manage the Connecticut Lakes Natural Areas, monitor timber harvests and other forest management activities and the special management areas.

Landowner Contribution

Section 5.E of the Conservation Easement requires the Fee Owner and the Easement Holder to enter into a Road Management Agreement with respect to the maintenance and management of certain roads on the Property subject to the Conservation Easement. This agreement was last updated in 2014. The Road Agreement is the document that outlines maintenance standards and the landowner's annual contribution to the State's expenses of maintaining the roads by paying a "Base Amount" and a "Usage Fee", a negotiated per cord fee for timber removed from the Property. These fees are deposited into "Dedicated Maintenance" and "Dedicated Capital" accounts as described in the Road Management Agreement between DNCR and the landowner.

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Capital Budget Request

DNCR requests funding for Biennium 2024-2025 to address deferred maintenance of the DNCR managed road system and to complete the Road Management Plan (Section 5E) and the specifications Road Management Agreement (Section 5F) as prescribed by the property Easement. One project that requires significant road reconstruction and relocation is Perry Stream and Hall Stream Roads. These roads were built adjacent to the streams and recent storms have eroded the embankments causing unstable roads. This funding will also be used to reestablish the roadside ditches, replace culverts, add gravel and grade the roads.

The Stewardship Endowment funds in the next biennium, rather than being directed to road management, will be used for operational expenses such as to replace trucks and other equipment used to maintain the road network and to hire staff to support the public recreational use, including plowing, litter pickup, sign and gate management, and pit toilet maintenance.

In Conclusion

After 20 years of management with inadequate funding, the road system on the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters is in need of capital investment to address deferred maintenance. Property management and road maintenance has been heavily subsidized by the Division of Parks and Recreation, a self-funded agency that collects no fees to manage the property. The updating of the Road Management Plan and Road Agreement will assist in directing capital funds to the most needed projects to put the road system on a scheduled maintenance program.



Coös County Commissioners' Office

P.O. Box 310
West Stewartstown, N.H. 03597

April 26, 2023

Senate Capital Budget Committee

Attn: The Honorable Dan Innis

RE: House Bill 25

Dear Senator Innis:

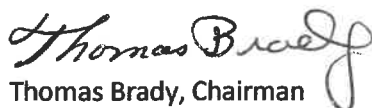
In 2003, the State of New Hampshire was part of a conservation effort to protect the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters property which included purchasing a conservation easement on 146,400 acres of commercial forestry land and acquisition of 200+ miles of forestry roads to provide public access to the property. As part of this conservation effort, private endowment funds were raised to support the state's management of the property, including maintenance of the roads.

The investment strategy and distribution rate of the endowments are being discussed by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the Fish and Game Department with the goal of providing realistic annual funding. However, the road endowment funds for the roads maintained by DPCR have not been adequate to fund the upkeep, and the inadequate investment in these roads over the last 20 years has created a backlog of deferred maintenance. The road system is an important recreational resource supporting the economy of the North Country.

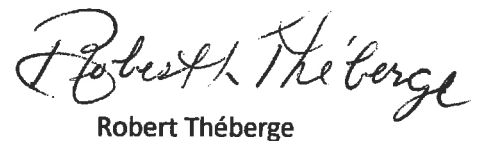
At the 10/28/22 meeting of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee ([RSA 12-A:9-b](#)) a unanimous vote was taken to support the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources capital budget request of \$1,500,000 for the maintenance and repair of the approximately 269 miles of state-owned roads within the conservation easement area.

The Coös County Board of Commissioners is asking for your support on this item. This bill is important, not only to maintain the property, but for the economic viability of Coös County. Recreation and tourism are the only two things that are keeping the North Country alive currently.

Sincerely,


Thomas Brady, Chairman


Raymond Gorman


Robert Théberge

COMMISSIONERS