

Senate Budget Briefing

Tuesday – April 18th 2023 @ 2:10

Good Afternoon, My name is Stephen Walker and I am the director of the Conservation Land Stewardship Program, CLS for short. On July 1, 2021 the Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) was rearranged to create a new Department of Energy. Consequently, this also resulted in CLS becoming a small agency administratively attached to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). This is the first time CLS is going through the biennial budget process. CLS continues to fulfill its duties much the same as it has for its nearly three decades of existence.

In short, the CLS mission is to protect the State's interests in the important conservation investments it has made. The majority of land conservation projects CLS is responsible for came to be through the Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) that ran between 1987 and 1993. After this acquisition phase ended, the first iteration of CLS was set up and staffed in 1994 to continue with the stewardship phase. The LCIP was considered such a successful endeavor that in 2000 the more familiar Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) was created. Unlike LCIP, LCHIP was designed to be an expanded and ongoing endeavor. Each year CLS prepares an annual status report for the Council on Resources and Development (CORD) regarding the 450+ properties we are associated with. This document, found on the CLS website <https://www.clsp.nh.gov/>, succinctly explains the CLS program. RSA 162-C governs CORD, and their responsibilities include the LCIP properties. The main source of funding for CLS comes from the Land Conservation Endowment (LCE) that was set up in 1993 to provide for the perpetual stewardship of the LCIP conservation interests. The LCE is administered by CORD through a custodial agreement with State Treasury.

In front of you are two charts that illustrate the composition of CLS. The first chart articulates the two parts of LCIP, state and municipal, which constituted the original program. The second chart illustrates

the entire CLS program that includes the responsibilities that CLS has taken on through Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with NH Fish & Game, and the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (DNCR) through their Division of Forests and Lands. These MOAs provide the other sources of funding that support CLS. CLS does not receive General Funds. You will note that the MOA with DNCR will only be renewed for the first year of the biennium. For the second year, DNCR has budgeted for a new position within DNCR that will be responsible for the stewardship of the entirety of their conservation easement interests. This new model combines the monitoring role of the very large acreages in the northern portion of the state, currently performed by DNCR, with those in the southern portion, currently monitored by CLS.

The majority of the state-held conservation properties CLS works primarily with are conservation easements. These properties are privately owned, with the state holding a legal interest, and having the primary stewardship responsibility. CLS also works with 78 municipalities that participated in LCIP as well. The municipalities hold the primary stewardship responsibility for these 250+ conservation properties, comprised of both conservation easement and fee-owned properties. For municipalities, CLS conducts more of a general oversight and technical support role.

We refer to the overarching function that CLS performs as ‘stewardship’. The responsibility is to keep an eye on each and every property to ensure that the conservation values the state invested in remain intact. Working with sister agencies and municipalities we accomplish our mission chiefly through regular communications with our constituent landowners and municipalities, in conjunction with site-visits.

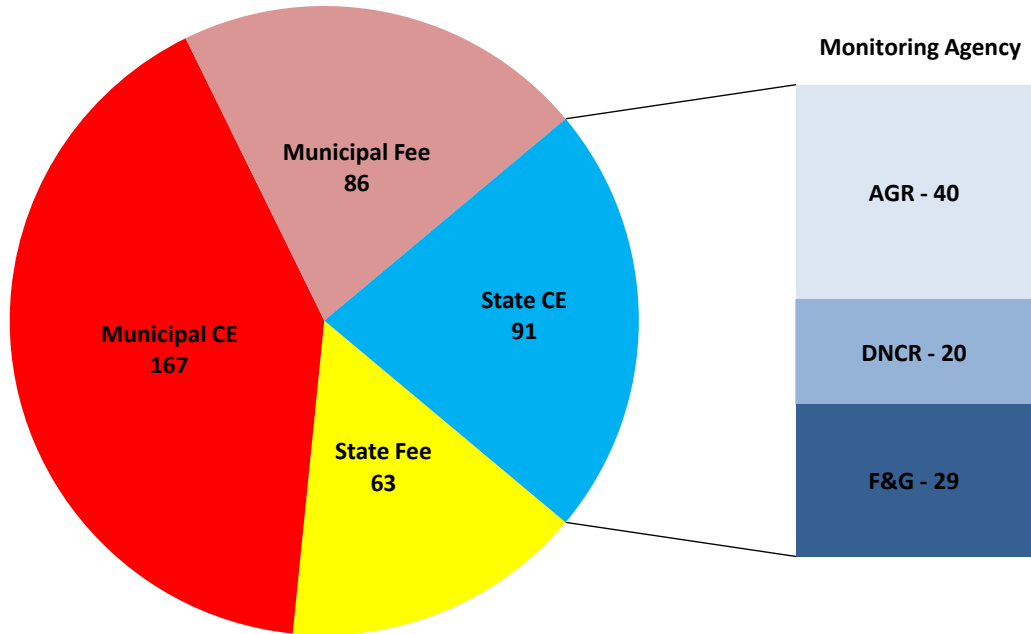
Thank you. Please feel free to contact me at any time you have questions about CLS.

Stephen G. Walker CLS Director

Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP)

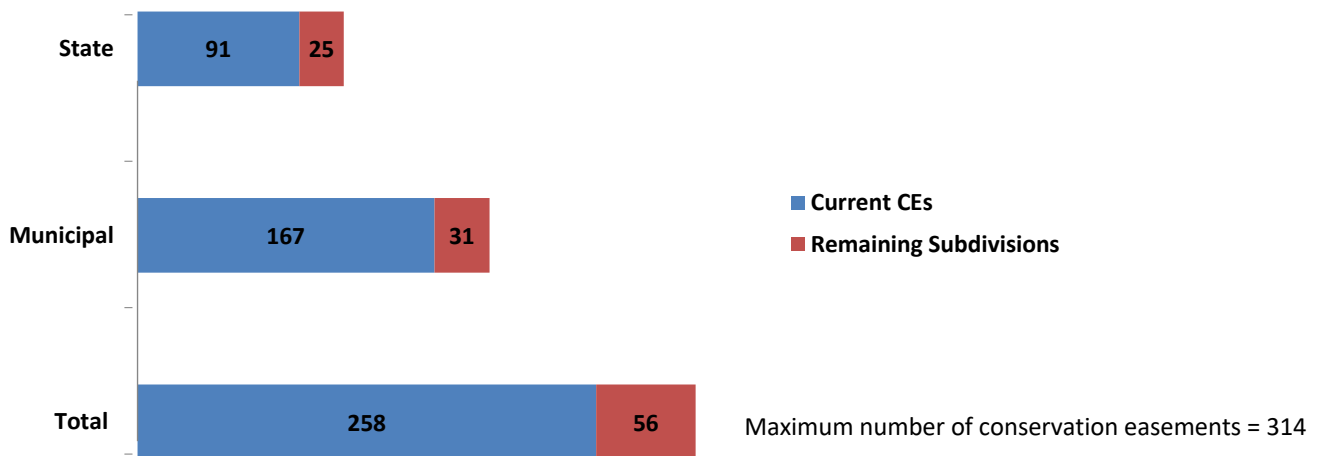
LCIP is administered by CORD and is part of the Conservation Land Stewardship Program

of LCIP Properties by Type of Property Interest



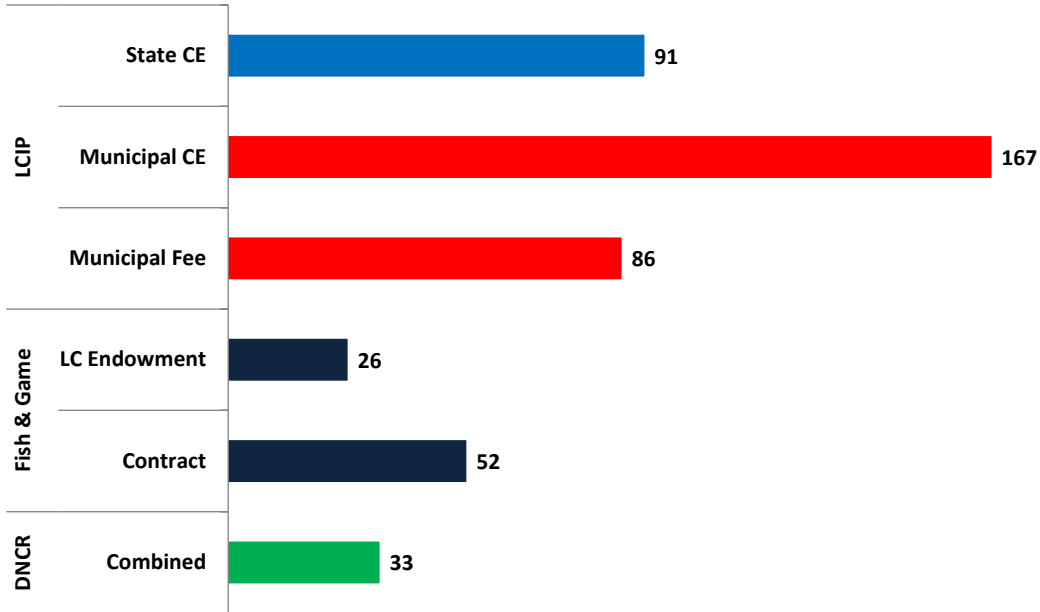
State CE - DNCR includes 2 DHR Preservation Easement properties (13 and 18 acres)

Remaining Number of Subdivisions Allowed by Individual Conservation Easement Deeds

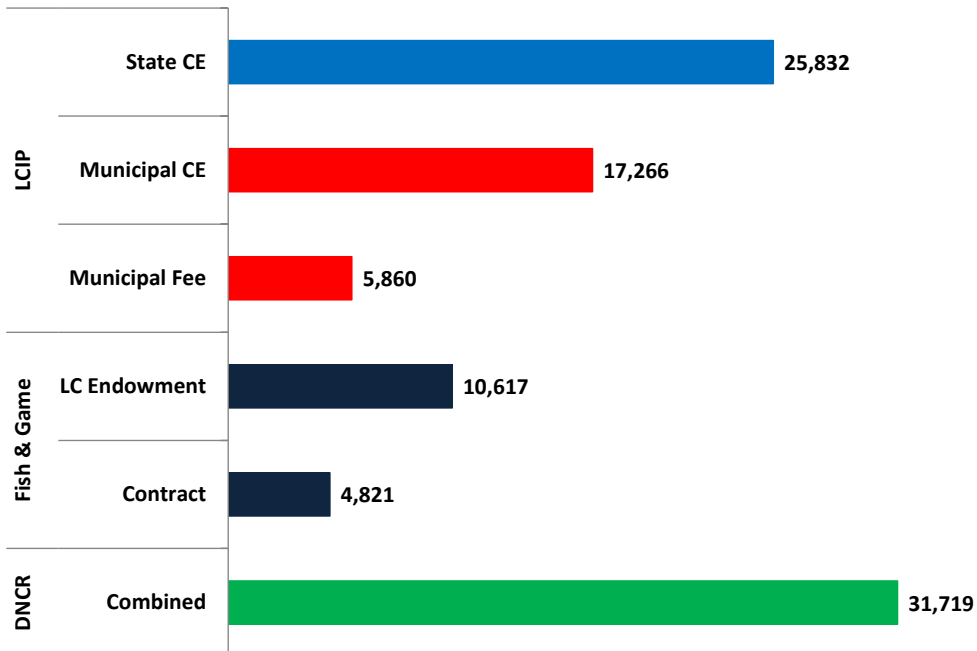


Conservation Land Stewardship Program (CLS)

Number of Properties by Aquisition Program



Acreage by Aquisition Program



Total Properties: 455

Total Acreage: 96,114

Avg Acreage: 211

Avg Property Acreage by Program:

State CE - 284

Municipal - 91

F&G - 198

DNCR - 961