



Summary Report *New Hampshire* **OUTDOORS**

2008 - 2013



STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)



**NEW HAMPSHIRE OUTDOORS
2008-2013**

**STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN**

SUMMARY REPORT

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Overview

New Hampshire Outdoors, Revised 2008-2013 – 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, 2008-2013* is available at

<http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/recreation/index.htm>

The SCORP 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 the New Hampshire statutory requirement (RSA 12-A:18) that there be an outdoor recreation planning program.

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 actions, particularly for state agencies.

The first section of this report summarizes a sampling of national and state statistics that help frame outdoor recreation trends. The second section discusses 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 Funds (LWCF) 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.

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. In addition, over one million acres of private forest and agricultural land is available for public use such as hunting, fishing, nature appreciation, hiking, snowmobiling, skiing, touring, and passive activities such as bird watching and photographing wildlife. 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 inspire millions of residents and out-of-state visitors to explore 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. It is important for the state to protect what it also seeks to promote.

CHAPTER 2 – SUPPLY, DEMAND, AND NEED

National Trends and Management Considerations

Outdoor recreation is a fundamental aspect of life for most Americans. Almost everyone participates in some form 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 growth in population, increases in popularity, desire for better health, or all three. More people are participating in a wider variety of activities today than was the case 10 or 20 years ago.

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 gathering is long-term and far-reaching. One of the primary outcomes of the conference was the adoption of a National Agenda that contains a call to action to government agencies, elected officials, and citizens, 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 that are 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.
- In less than five years the majority of the U.S. population will be age 45 or older.¹
- The Caucasian population is expected to decrease from 76 percent to 50 percent by the year 2020.²
- The environmental, social, psychological and spiritual implications of "nature-deficit disorder"³ must be addressed.

State Trends

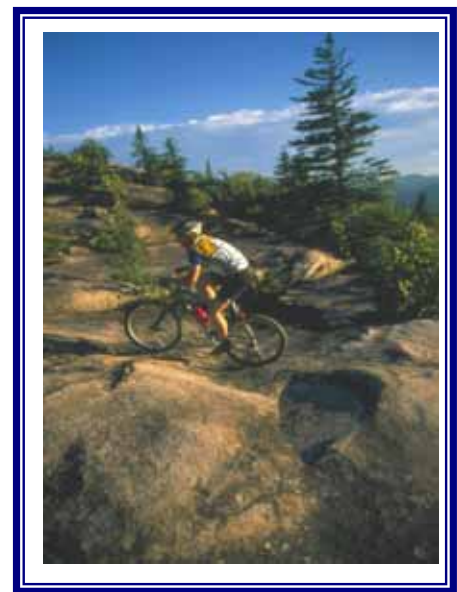
Other sources provide data that help to frame outdoor recreational trends in the state. The findings and trends listed below provide an overview of recreation in New Hampshire.

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 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.⁴
- A majority of recreation leaders (recreation directors), surveyed by UNH in 2007, 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.⁵
- Half of the recreation directors surveyed in the same study indicated that existing opportunities for motorized recreation on public lands were inadequate to meet demand.

Participation

- State parks have seen an increase in attendance. Current estimates indicate New Hampshire State Parks saw around 6.69 million visitors in 2001.
- According to the *Comprehensive Statewide Trails Study*,⁶ U.S. Forest Service Data shows a 23 percent increase in trail use in the White Mountain National Forest between 1974 and 1995.
- 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.
- 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.
- New Hampshire residents born in the state have higher participation rates than those born elsewhere 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.).



Registration

- 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 during the winter season from 1996/1997 to 2000/2001. 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 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.

Demographics

- 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 group is 140 percent and for ages 75-79, 72 percent. These ages represent a population that continues to be healthy and active.

Between 1990 and 2000, the state's population increased by over 11 percent. The rate of increase from 2000 to 2005 slowed to

6 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.

- According to US 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.

Other

- 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.
- The impact of global warming on outdoor recreation is a critical consideration that has not been fully understood. One study, "Winter Recreation and Climate Variability in New Hampshire" ⁷ indicates that global warming is already having 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.



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 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 other comments received during the course of the planning process for the 2003-2007 SCORP. Open-ended responses from the SCORP Stakeholder Group Survey were helpful in framing objectives and strategies aimed at addressing issues.

While working with the Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee on the 2008-2013 SCORP, it was confirmed that these issues continue to be as 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 summary of the issue, highlighting major points and general trends expressed during the early stages of the SCORP public involvement process. The summary is 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. Others represent broader policy or practical recommendations.

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 are highly dependent on open space and tracts of undeveloped land as identified in the *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*, conducted by UNH in 1997.
- 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.⁹
- 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*¹⁰, 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*¹¹ 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.

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 and Watershed Management Plans, *NH Wildlife Action Plan*, etc.).
- E. Educate the public on plans that currently exist (*NH Wildlife Action Plan*, Designated River Corridor and 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 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).
- K. Encourage communities to include recommendations from the *Wildlife Action Plan* in their planning efforts (NH Fish and Game).
- L. Encourage communities to include Designated River Corridor and 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 and Rescue Archaeology Program, etc.).
- F. Expand partnerships and initiatives aimed at promoting the use of recreational equipment that utilizes 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

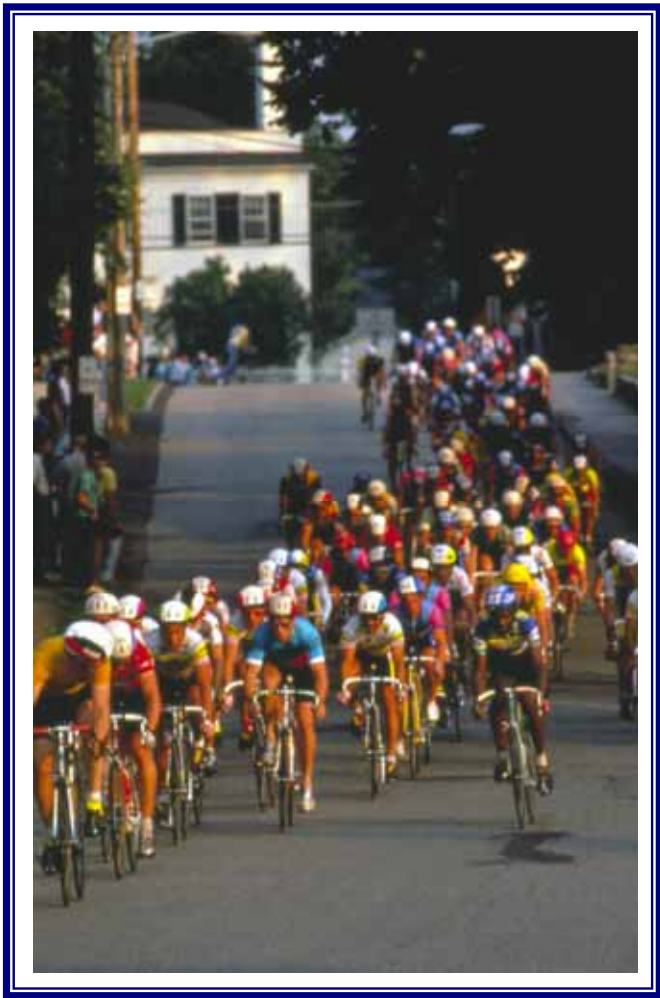
- A. Give priority to projects that have a prepared stewardship plan in place. (LWCF)
- B. Continue to address enforcement and enforceability of existing environmental laws (e.g. support increased enforcement by state agencies and examine existing limitations given current staff and funding levels).
- 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.



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 as opposed 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 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*¹² some of the most 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 growth, increases in popularity, or both.¹³ This suggests that both recreational facilities and acquisition of land for a range of activities are needed.
- New equipment and technology are expanding the type and range of activities people enjoy.¹⁴
- Wheeled OHRV registrations of New Hampshire residents have more than doubled in the last 10 years and tripled for non-residents in the same time period according to the NH Fish and Game Department records.
- Nearly 50 percent of respondents to the *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*¹⁵ 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*¹⁶ found that existing trails are inadequate to meet the current range of recreational activities.



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 method ¹⁷ 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).

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 use 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 the Office of Energy and Planning'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.

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,¹⁸ state park managers listed 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 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*,¹⁹ 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 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire* is out of date. A new survey of recreation consumers should be undertaken to reflect current trends.

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 Open Project Selection Process 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 not only to developing, but also to 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.

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 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*²⁰ said that enforcement of environmental laws should be a high funding priority in the state.

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 protections.

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 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 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 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.).



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 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in New Hampshire*²¹ 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; rural New Hampshire will be restricted to the North Country with isolated pockets in the west.²²
- Recreation corridors can also serve as alternative transportation corridors.
- Nationwide Smart Growth initiatives and an OEP report called *Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire*²³ 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.

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.



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 Environments²⁴) 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*²⁵ is a statewide agenda to improve health in New Hampshire by encouraging increased physical activity.

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 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

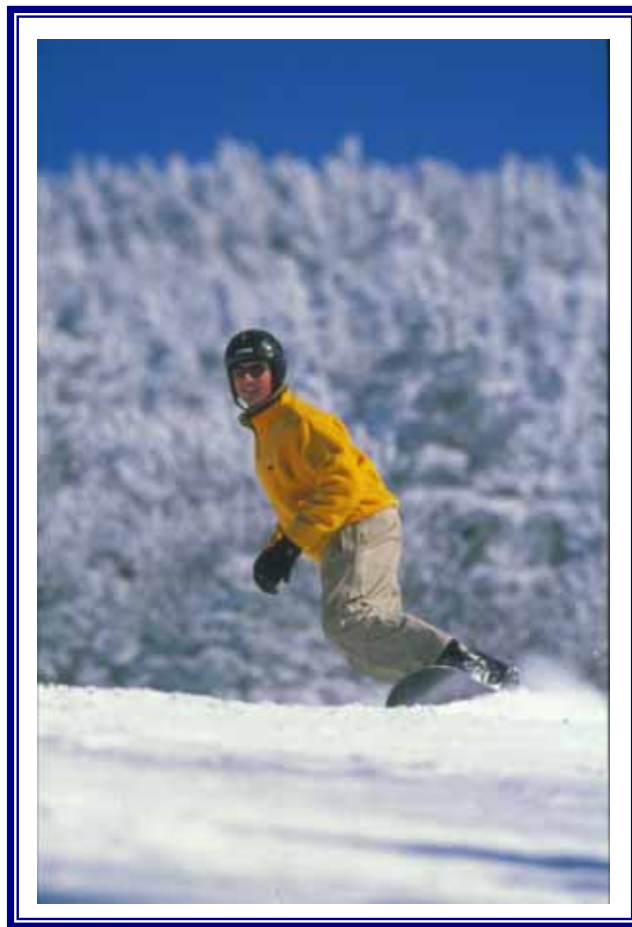
- A. Improve existing and new recreation areas by enhancing non-motorized (bicycle/pedestrian) accessibility and connectivity. Non-motorized access is particularly important to youth, elderly, and disabled populations.
- B. Encourage lifetime recreation and physical activity curriculum in school programs (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 non-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.



CHAPTER 4 - 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. Enhancing 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.

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

- ◆ [Appalachian Mountain Club](#)
- ◆ [Audubon Society of New Hampshire](#)
- ◆ [DRED - Division of Parks and Recreation](#)
- ◆ [DRED - Trails Bureau](#)
- ◆ [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 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](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Lakes Association](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Rivers Council](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Main Street Program](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Minimum Impact Development Partnership](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Local Government Center](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning](#)
- ◆ [New Hampshire Recreation and Park Assoc.](#)
- ◆ [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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ENDNOTES

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- ¹ National Recreation and Park Association. *Parks and Recreation, October 2005*, “Reducing Obesity Through Recreation”, pg.16 and “Providing More for Older Adults”. Pg. 76.
- ² National Recreation and Park Association. *Parks and Recreation, October 2006*.
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- ⁴ Department of Revenue Administration, Current Use Report 2005.
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- ¹⁸ New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (2002). *Survey of State Park Managers*. Unpublished Study.
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- ²³ New Hampshire Office of State Planning (2003). *Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire*. CD-ROM.
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