Preparing the Plan

Introduction

Every five years the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR), as the State Historic Preservation Office, facilitates the preparation of the statewide historic preservation plan.

Preparing the preservation plan provides New Hampshire residents with the opportunity to influence the direction of the preservation movement in the state. Its development also provides the NHDHR with the opportunity to regularly engage with stakeholders and the public in assessing New Hampshire's preservation successes, challenges, and opportunities.

You are New Hampshire's preservation movement, and this plan is yours! The plan is driven by the input of all Granite Staters who share their thoughts on the topic of historic preservation in New Hampshire. Everyone who is:

- interested in the cultural and economic value of preserving and leveraging the state's historic and cultural assets,
- actively involved in historic preservation activities, or
- simply enjoys the landscapes, buildings, and neighborhoods that make New Hampshire's communities unique.

Everyone is urged to find inspiration from success stories and guidance from the strategies published in the plan to meet the state's collective preservation goals over the course of the next five years. Learn something new, build excitement, and find direction for preserving historic places special to you.

Planning Cycle

Previous preservation plans in New Hampshire have tended to default to a five-year cycle. With the 2016-2020 plan, internal discussion and consultation with a sister agency preparing New Hampshire's next Wildlife Action Plan (which currently runs on a 10-year cycle) revealed a variety of pros and cons to shorter- and longer-term plans, which ultimately led to a deliberate decision to continue with the five-year cycle.

Public Outreach

The first public event at which the NHDHR introduced the launch of planning for New Hampshire's Five-Year Preservation Plan 2016-2020 was New Hampshire's Farm and Forest Expo in February 2015. Discussions with expo participants at this annual event — hosted by the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food; the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension; and the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands — set the stage for an extensive public outreach campaign. Goals for the campaign were to reach a far-and-wide audience and to gather input for a statewide preservation plan that would truly belong to all Granite Staters.

The public outreach campaign took many forms. The NHDHR and other partners distributed information and announcements about the plan and its development process via a one-page FAQ-type flyer, a half-page listening sessions invitation flyer, numerous press releases, e-NewsFlashes to the NHDHR's 1000+ contact list, articles in the NHDHR's *Old Stone Wall* e-newsletter, and updates to the NHDHR's plan webpage (Appendix A). These were supplemented with direct e-mails, "plan-specific" informational e-mail signatures on all office e-mail communications, social media, and a limited number of targeted interviews.

An online questionnaire open for approximately nine weeks in Spring 2015 was announced broadly through the above-mentioned methods. More than 60 federal, state/statewide, regional, and local core

stakeholder organizations and agencies were contacted directly requesting they share the questionnaire link with their members. These ranged from those related to planning and development, to homeland security and emergency management, to fish and game and forest conservation, to housing and community services, to chambers of commerce and local professional networks, in addition to more traditionally associated preservation partners. More than 350 people completed the 14-question questionnaire, providing thousands of short responses and insightful comments that contributed to the development of the evaluative and forward-thinking portions of this plan.

Answers to demographic questions revealed that the questionnaire was successful in reaching a broad range of Granite Staters. People in every region of the state participated in the study, from those aged 29 and under, through 66 and over. In addition, people self-identified with interests broadly reflecting the plan's definition of New Hampshire's preservation movement (i.e. librarian, developer, outdoor enthusiast, forester, nurse, and artist) as well as those traditionally related to historic preservation (i.e. professional or volunteer working in history/historic preservation heritage, historic property resident, and heritage traveler).

Following the Farm and Forest Expo, additional public input was solicited during facilitated listening sessions or via an exhibit table at a variety of other previously scheduled events. These included a luncheon of a local State Employee's Association retiree chapter, a Plymouth State University historic preservation graduate class (non-class members were invited and encouraged to attend), the Saving Special Places conference (exhibit table at New Hampshire's annual land conservation conference), the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance's biennial Preservation Conference, and the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning's annual Planning and Zoning Conference. In addition, three facilitated listening sessions organized by the NHDHR specifically for the preservation plan were held in Portsmouth, Peterborough, and Randolph. Approximately 100 Granite Staters with a wide range of interests and backgrounds participated in these sessions.

Listening Session, Randolph
North Country residents share some of their favorite preservation success stories as facilitator Stephen Gianotti of The Woodland Group listens and Donna Thompson of the NHDHR takes notes.

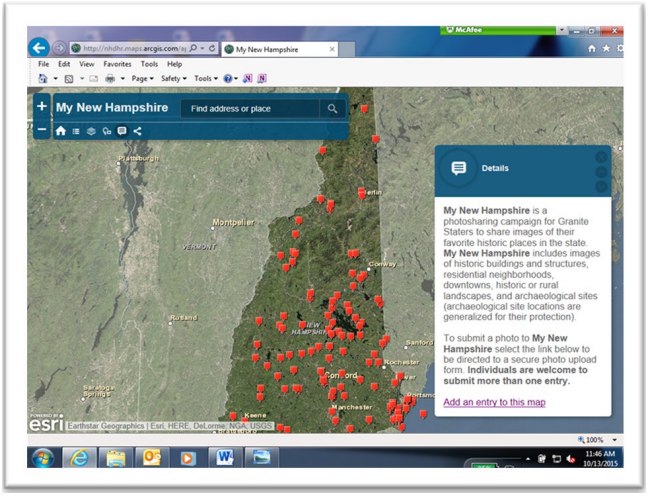
While the questions guiding discussion at many of the listening sessions varied slightly depending on the anticipated audience, the following five are representative of the topics discussed:

- If you were to give New Hampshire's preservation movement a grade, what would it be? Briefly, why did you give it the grade you did?
- What preservation success stories make you most proud?
- What threats and challenges worry you the most?
- What do we need to work on over the next five years to give preservation in New Hampshire an A+?
- What information, actions, or support systems are needed to make those things happen? Who needs to take the lead on each of these? (Appendix B)

While shared thoughts and opinions through the plan's public outreach activities were critical in guiding plan content, Granite Staters also had opportunities to participate directly in writing the plan as authors and photo illustration contributors. The plan showcases a series of case studies chosen from the public's collective list of success stories. These stories showcase a variety of preservation themes of importance over the past five years and examine priorities for the next five years. More than 20 organizations and individuals enthusiastically agreed to write their stories, ranging from established historic site museums creatively tackling challenging trends in visitorship and funding, to small communities building preservation interest and action, one event and one person at a time.

As a final way to gather public input for the plan, the NHDHR kicked off the **My New Hampshire** photosharing campaign in May 2015 in conjunction with its Preservation Month celebration. The campaign, which is ongoing, invites everyone to share images of their favorite New Hampshire historical places online using a simple mobile-friendly website link. Photographers are asked to provide the photo's location and a short description of why the place is special to them. The response has been exciting, with more than 150 historic places entered by late summer. Most of the illustrations in the plan were submitted to **My New Hampshire**. The campaign is anticipated to continue into 2016 and beyond.

Another outcome of **My New Hampshire** will be a story map for Preservation Month 2016. Story maps combine maps, photographs, text, and other media in a single interactive GIS-based application to tell "the story" of any topic imaginable. As the National Trust for Historic Preservation noted in a 2014 blog post, "Preservationists intuitively understand that to save a place, people must care about it. Presenting well-crafted stories with compelling visuals and interactive content can provide people with the information that they need to understand the importance of a place. Story maps are a powerful new outreach tool to support these efforts."[1]



My New Hampshire, Statewide
*Hundreds of photographs of people's favorite historic and special places were submitted to **My New Hampshire**. This screen shot shows the wide geographic distribution.*