

## **New Hampshire Ecological Reserve System Project News**

### **Advancing the Conservation of New Hampshire's Ecologically Significant Lands, Waters, and Wetlands**

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#### **Project Update**

The NH Ecological Reserve System Project (ERSP) completed a pilot phase in December. The purpose was to test and evaluate the process for identifying and assessing potential ecological reserves and to modify and enhance the scientific criteria and reserve design concepts. We solicited public and private landowners interested in participating in this pilot phase. We sought a range of ownerships across the nine ecological regions. Each site was evaluated using known site information, GIS landscape analysis, aerial photo interpretation, and some fieldwork by ecologists. A Scientific Advisory Group was convened to review the pilot phase and to evaluate hypothetical reserve designs. A report on the pilot phase and the scientific criteria will be available during the first half of 2002.

Scott Melvin, a zoologist with the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, presented a summary of their BioMap project at a recent Core Team meeting. BioMap was a one-year effort to map core habitat and supporting landscape for known biodiversity in Massachusetts. They received over \$1 million from the state to conduct the research and create the BioMap. It is being used to guide land conservation. BioMap and a companion technical report are available free of charge by calling 508-792-7270 x200. For more information on BioMap see <http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/nhbiomap.htm>

#### **Thinking Big – Landscape Scale Conservation Conference**

From rugged high peaks, to open farmlands, to rolling hills, to sandy beaches to remote, pristine ponds, New Hampshire's high quality of life depends on the conservation of our rich natural resources. To protect our natural heritage, a new field of science-based land conservation is emerging called "landscape-scale conservation." This new approach to land conservation will be

featured in an all-day conference entitled "Landscape-Scale Conservation in New Hampshire: Scientific Underpinnings, Planning and Practice." The conference will be held on January 9, 2002 at the New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord.

To register, call Trish at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests at 603-224-9945 or log on to [www.spnhf.org](http://www.spnhf.org) for the registration brochure. The registration deadline is December 31.

New Hampshire Ecological Reserve System Project, The Nature Conservancy, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are sponsoring the conference. This event is especially designed for land trusts, public agencies, conservation commission members, scientists, and planners.

### **Moose Plate Grants Available**

The NH State Conservation Committee (SCC) receives a portion of the sales from the conservation license plates or "moose plates" (for more information about the conservation license plate see [www.mooseplate.com](http://www.mooseplate.com)). The SCC created a Conservation Grant Program to "support and promote programs and partnerships throughout the state that protect, restore and enhance the state's valuable natural resources." The intent of the enabling legislation is for these grants to be used for "physical and tangible environmental projects that foster stewardship and the sustainability of NH's natural environment."

Eligible applicants are communities and NH non-profit organizations including County Conservation Districts, County Cooperative Extension programs, Conservation Commissions, schools, scout groups and other conservation groups. Approximately \$80,000 is available for this funding cycle. Application forms are available by contacting Tracy Degnan at 679-2790 or via email at [rccded@ttlc.net](mailto:rccded@ttlc.net) Applications are due by January 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Minimum Impact Development**

Minimum Impact Development (MID) is a new approach to development. Its purpose is to ensure high quality choices in the character of New Hampshire's communities, municipalities and unincorporated places. The approach is designed to integrate principles of:

"smart growth" land use planning  
conservation of land, natural resources, and wildlife  
excellent indoor environments and energy efficiency

The primary goals of MID are to:

Maintain a diversity of density in New Hampshire  
Protect open spaces between developed places  
Promote mobility and connectivity for people and wildlife  
Ensure indoor environmental quality and energy efficiency  
Minimize pollution

Support a healthy social infrastructure in NH communities

To learn more about MID practices, maintaining choices in community character, and three infrastructures see <http://www.nhmid.org/index.htm>