

TAKING ACTION FOR WILDLIFE

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE How to Protect Wildlife Habitats Through Voluntary Land Conservation

STEP 1: Use your conservation plan as your guide for action

- Refer to your Wildlife Conservation Plan, and review the priority areas identified along with your town's tax map. Identify key parcels that may build on existing conservation lands or provide opportunities for connections/travel routes between conserved parcels and critical wildlife habitats.
- See [Conservation Planning for Wildlife](#) for planning guidance

STEP 2: Reach out to landowners of key properties that include areas you identified as critical habitats

- If there are landowners who have previously expressed interest in land conservation options, now is a good time to contact them.
- Consider holding a Land Conservation Options and Estate Planning workshop to inform landowners in your community. Most land trusts, land conservation organizations, and others (such as [UNH Cooperative Extension](#)) offer these workshops.
- Send a letter and information packet to landowners in prioritized areas. The information packet could include information on [cost-share programs](#) and [Habitat Stewardship brochures](#) for the habitats occurring on each landowner's parcel. Use the cover letter to invite landowners to an educational event. [Download a fact sheet on cost-share programs.](#)

STEP 3: When approached by interested landowners, learn as much as possible about the actual habitats and their condition on the properties

- Maps are a guide, but only observation of the land can tell us its actual condition. Ask knowledgeable community members or conservation professionals to walk the land with the landowner to learn more.

STEP 4: Establish conservation measures that will adequately protect the identified habitats and meet the landowner's needs

If habitat protection is a primary reason for conserving land, you may want to consider how the use and management of conservation land can be best done in support of that goal. Considerations might include:

- Stating the habitat protection purpose in a conservation easement or other deed
- Identifying and protecting rare species, natural communities and landscape features from adverse impact from future land uses such as recreation, logging and agriculture. In conservation easements, include restrictions sufficient to protect the features and values at stake
- Including information in the conservation easement deed's purposes section about specific features to be protected in order to conserve wildlife habitat. The baseline documentation for a conservation easement can contain more detail such as documenting the location, abundance, condition and threats to these features
- Looking for opportunities to manage conserved land to maintain or restore habitats such as early successional and old growth forest areas. [See Managing and Restoring Habitat](#)
- Informing landowners about [conservation resources](#) such as publications, organizations, or people who can help them
- Researching local and regional land trusts' conservation plans to find out what habitat conservation priorities are a part of their policies and how this may relate to your priorities. If your priorities align with regional priorities, there may be opportunities for collaboration with land trusts, and potentially technical and financial support. [Click here for a list of NH land trusts.](#)

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

How to Protect Wildlife Habitats Through Voluntary Land Conservation

STEP 5: Inform landowners about land conservation and land management options that sustain habitats and species

- Seek advice from [UNH Cooperative Extension Foresters and other staff](#) and [NH Fish & Game staff](#) about forest and habitat management approaches and financial incentive programs for landowners (see [Contact Us](#)).

STEP 6: Refer landowners to free information sources such as UNH Cooperative Extension.

- The UNH Cooperative Extension Forestry and Wildlife Program helps citizens and landowners learn about and care for New Hampshire's wildlife and habitats. [Click here to learn more about UNH Cooperative Extension assistance for landowners and communities](#)

STEP 7: Monitor conserved lands annually to assure habitat protection goals are met

- Document monitoring of lands in writing and with photos

June, 2011

Visit <http://takingactionforwildlife.org> for details and updates



UNIVERSITY
of NEW HAMPSHIRE
Cooperative Extension