

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts' Position Paper
March, 2022

The NHACD contends that **managed forests** promote environmental and economic health.

New Hampshire's environmental and economic future depends on protecting forest acreage and the diverse native flora and fauna it sustains. As forest fragmentation, invasive species, and disease threaten NH forests, complete ecosystems face disruption. Forest product and recreation based businesses suffer. Nature based tourism subsides. Managed forest land can help produce healthy forests for a sustainable future.

NH Forest Economy

New Hampshire's forests cover 4,833,332 acres of land or 84% of the state. A total of 4,638,230 acres are capable of producing repeated timber crops. Northern beech, ash, oak, and maple hardwood forests make up over 53% of the forest cover, while softwood forests including pines, spruce, fir, aspen, and birch comprise 26%. New Hampshire is the second most forested state in the country behind Maine.

The annual sales of New Hampshire's forest products industry totals \$1.4 billion. The forest - based recreation economy is worth \$1.4 billion. Approximately 7,756 workers are employed in the forest products, maple, and Christmas tree sectors, while another 10,800 jobs are in forest recreation. There are approximately 1200 loggers, 500 foresters and technicians, 800 truckers and 161 sawmills operating in the Granite State. Landowners received approximately \$30 million in stumpage payments for timber harvested in 2012. Of that, approximately \$3 million was paid in timber tax to NH communities.

The economic model IMPLAN estimates that the forest products sector has \$2.4 billion in economic output and 12,818 jobs when taking into account the rippling effect the forest industry has on the other parts of the economy.

NH Forest Concerns

- Land Owner Participation - Individuals and businesses own 76% of NH forest land. These lands remain vulnerable to development and habitat destruction. Conservation of private land is vital to conservation success. Conservationists must reach out to provide education, support, and training to encourage private landowner participation.
- Forest Fragmentation - When large, contiguous forested areas are broken into smaller forest patches separated by roads, utility corridors, or agriculture forest ecosystems fail and animal migrations are disrupted. NH forests are being fragmented into smaller pieces with the average size parcel dropping from 114 acres in 1960 to 37 acres today. Land trusts and private organizations strive to purchase land parcels that are necessary to maintain contiguous forests.

- Invasive Species - Disturbed land and weakened vegetation invite invasive plant and insect species. Autumn olive, buckthorn, Japanese knotweed, bittersweet and garlic mustard crowd out native species and are nutritionally insufficient to sustain native regeneration. Current insect populations that need to be monitored to prevent wide spread devastation of timber species include Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, European Ash borer and the Asian Longhorn Beetle.

Actions

NHACD supports efforts to control plants and insects designated as invasive species by the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food. It encourages land owners to apply conservation measures and open land for recreational use. NHACD works together with the following organizations to conserve and grow healthy forests in NH:

- Forest Advisory Board - advises, advocates, and coordinates forest policy and conservation.
- Community Forestry Advisory Council - helps communities through worksh ops, publications, telephone responses, community meetings and technical assistance on topics including natural resource inventories, land use planning, community tree assistance, and town forest management.
- Community Tree Stewards - volunteer to identify and control exotic plants.
- Forest Legacy, administered by the Division of Forests and Lands - complements LCHIP by protecting working forests threatened with development.
- Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)- works to ensure perpetual preservation of ecologically vital lands in NH.

NHACD works to ensure environmental and economic sustainability by providing NH land occupiers access to current conservation management practices.

References:

IMPLAN, State of New Hampshire

NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food. www.agriculture.nh.gov

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NorthEast State Forester's Association. *The Economic Importance of New Hampshire's Forest based Economy, 2013*. www.nefainfo.org