

#### **Land Conservation Conference**

### **2020 Vision & Beyond:**Climate, Conservation & Collaboration



### Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCP's) and How They Can Catalyze Conservation in Maryland

presented by Bill Labich, Highstead Foundation Wednesday, May 13th, 2020

Lead Sponsor of Forever Maryland





**Presenting Sponsor** 

#### **Helena Foundation**

James and Sylvia Earl











**Merritt Pridgeon** 

## Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCPs) and How They Can Catalyze Conservation in Maryland



Wednesday, May 13th | 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Bill Labich, Senior Conservationist, Highstead Foundation

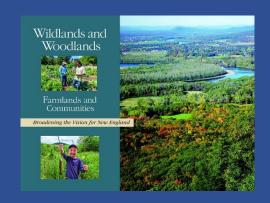
Coordinator, RCP Network

Coordinator, Northeast Forest Network

**Acting Coordinator, Hudson to Housatonic RCP** 

Forever Maryland Foundation

Land Conservation Conference: 2020 Vision and Beyond

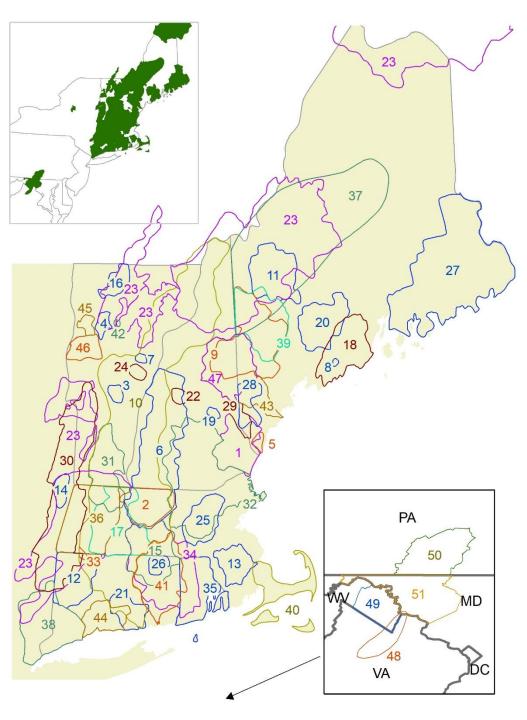




### **Agenda**

- What are RCPs and the RCP Network?
- Why do I promote RCPs?
- Why do people form RCPs? Why do they sustain them?
- Examples of RCPs: their members and achievements
- How do they overcome challenges?
- Role of the RCP Network in their development and collaboration





- 1 Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership
- 2 North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership
- 3 Chateauguay No Town Conservation Project
- 4 Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project
- 5 Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative
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- 47 Saco Headwaters Alliance
- 48 Blue Ridge Conservation Alliance
- 49 Safe Water Conservation Collaborative
- 50 South Mountain Conservation Landscape
- 51 Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance

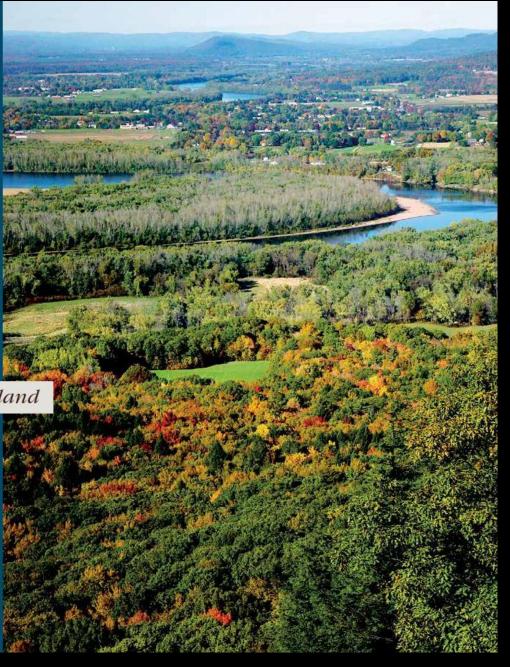
### Wildlands and Woodlands



Farmlands and Communities

Broadening the Vision for New England





www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org



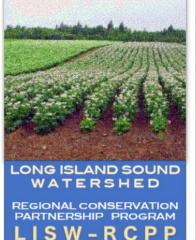


NATIONAL















Department of Conservation and Recreati Commonwealth of Massachusetts



U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Jessie B. Cox Trust

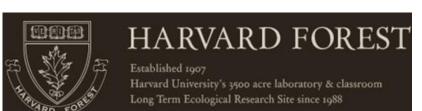


The Sustaining Family Forests Initiative





**Exploring and Conserving Nature** 

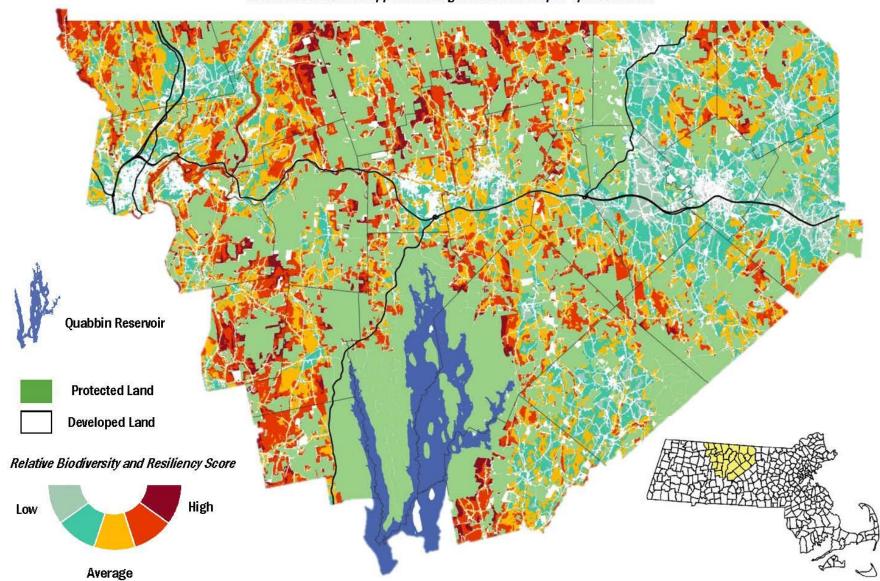


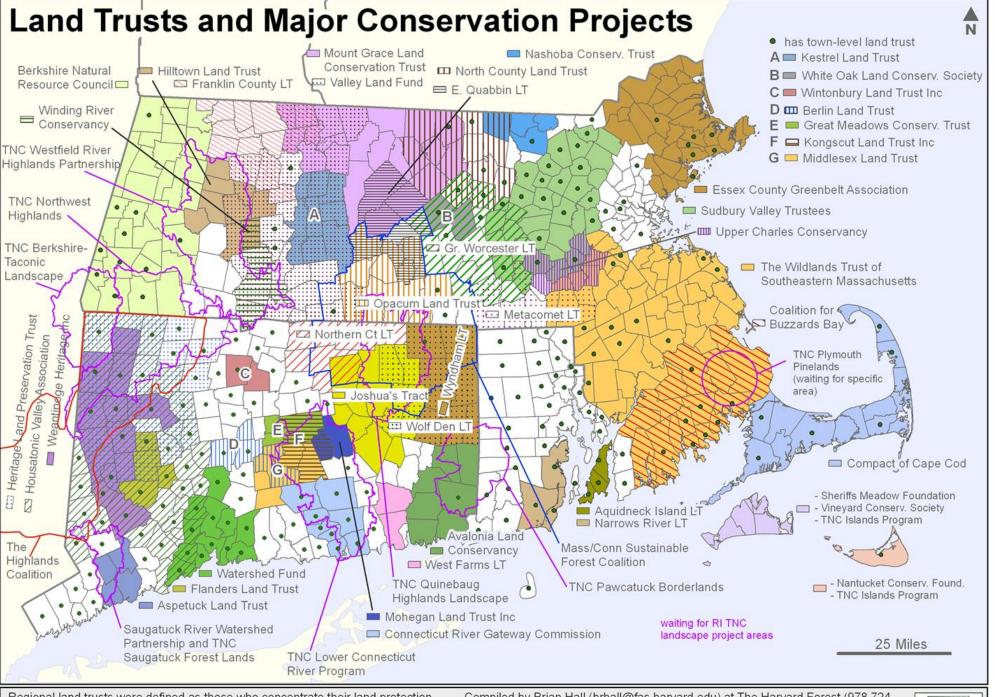


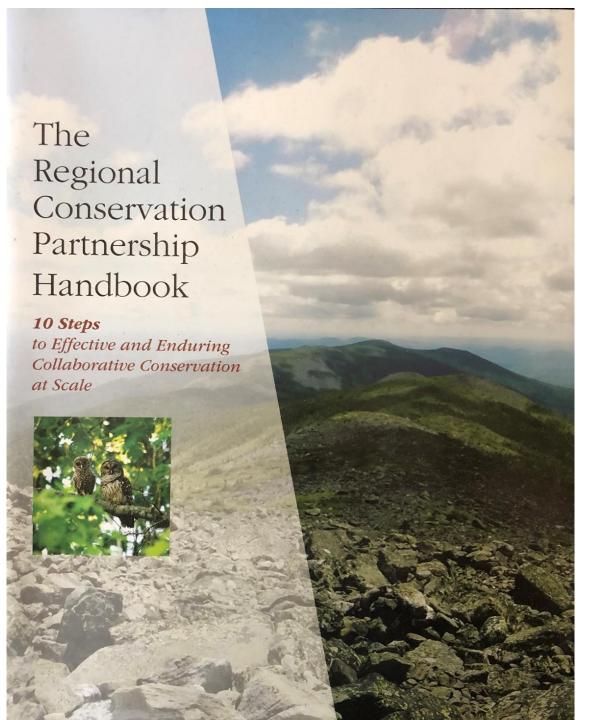
#### **Strategic Biodiversity Conservation Map**

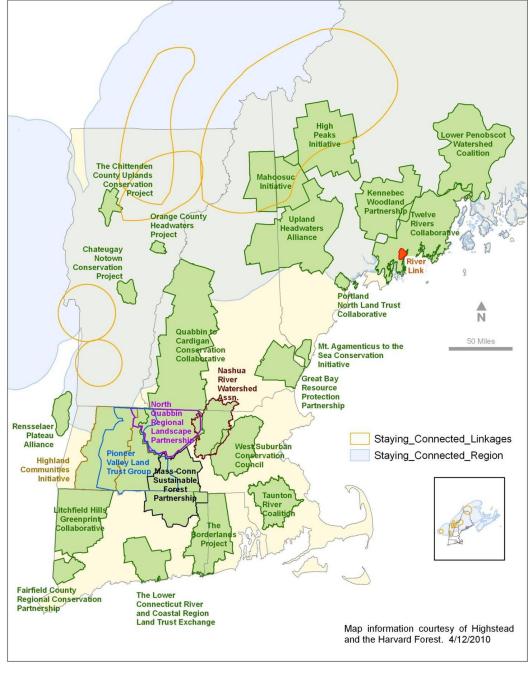
North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership

Created in 2014 with support from Highstead and the Open Space Institute









### Reasons people have established an RCP

- A regional land trust wanting to have more useful relationships with local partner organizations
- · Think and act at the landscape scale and be more strategic with all activities
- State government wanting to advance its priorities
- Partners wanting recognition for their unique landscape
- Enable landowners to donate zero-transaction cost easements
- · Solve systemic problems involving barriers to habitat connectivity at scale
- Fill in landowner engagement gaps due to state cuts in forestry extension services
- Fill in a blank space on the RCP map
- Access \$ tens of millions in earmarks for waterfowl habitat
- Get a grant only available for RCPs
- Aggregate hundreds of wooded parcels for land protection
- Appeal more to community-services focused funders

### Reasons they keep their RCP going

#### Access more resources

- Tell a bigger, better, more exciting story
- Attract and access more funding for their activities
- Benefit from the investments of higher-capacity partner groups and agencies
- Acquire hard-to-get funding or that which requires collaboration of grantees
- Build capacity in the region to serve multiple interests

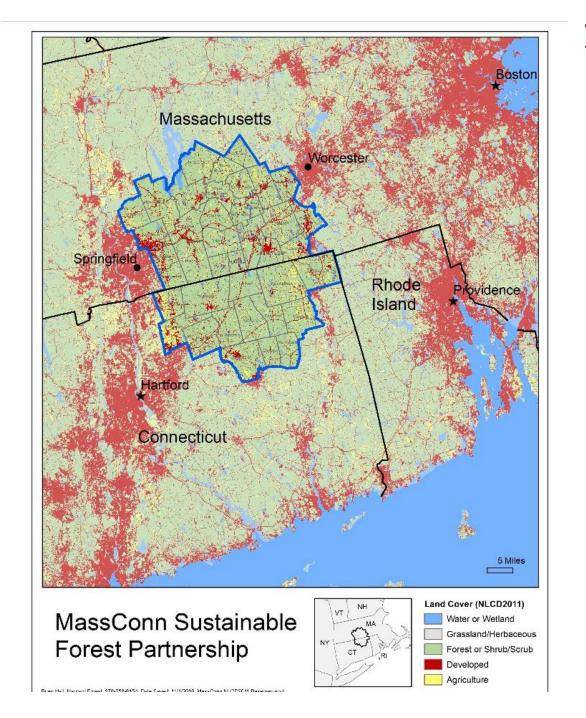
#### Coordinate better the resources you have at a larger scale

- Increase coordination and decrease unnecessary competition
- Take on a bigger landscape mission that leverages local investments over time
- · Layer funding from different sources, at different scales, in sequence, over time
- Manage invasives, deer hunting, and trail networks

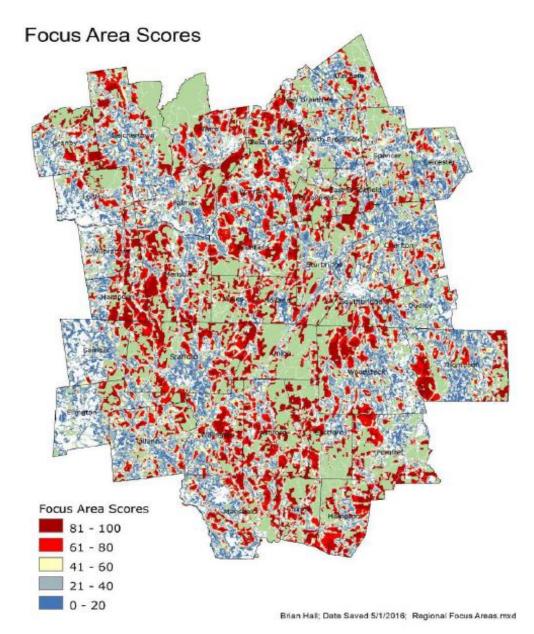
#### Innovate with less risk

- Try harder things that take longer time to pull off
- Build relationships with partners from other sectors





#### The Final Map



### 1. Fill in the gaps in protected land (cores AND corridors)

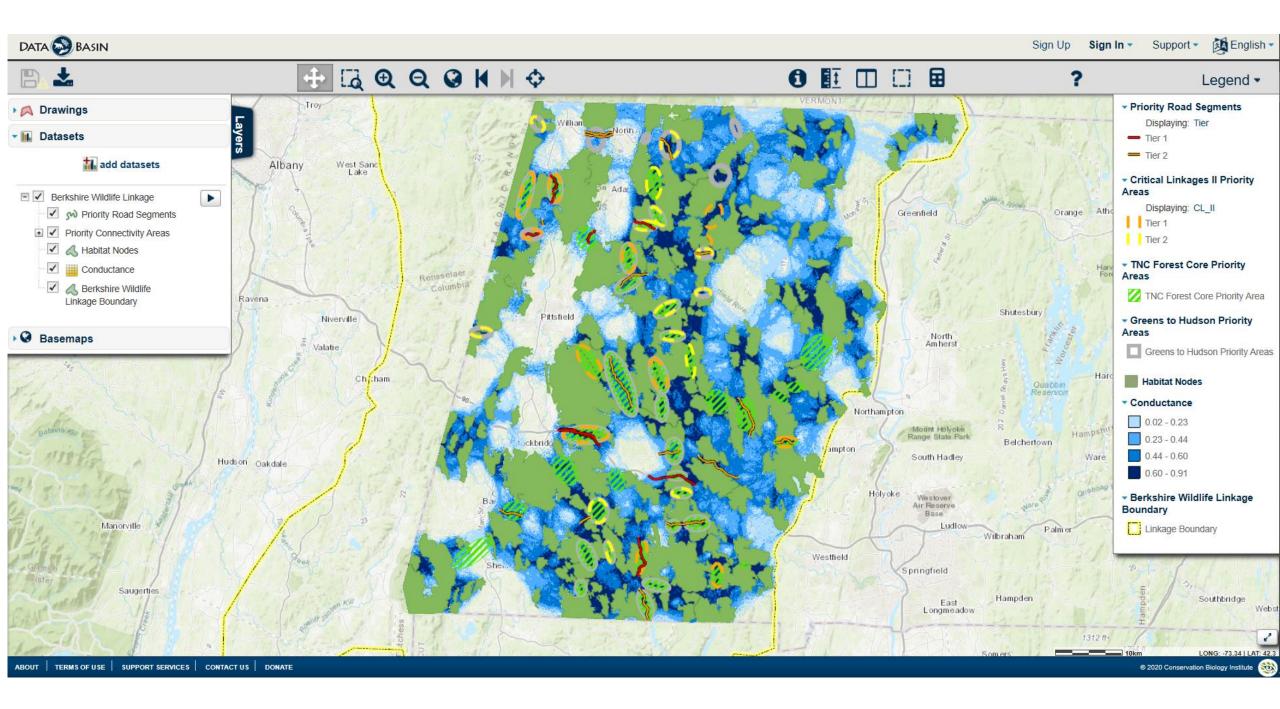
### 2. Improve transportation to get wildlife and water under roads

### 3. Help people find their place (geographically, and in the Partnership)

#### Berkshire Wildlife Linkage partners:

- Berkshire Environmental Action Team
- Berkshire Natural Resources Council
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- DCR
- DFW
- Franklin Land Trust
- Hilltown Land Trust
- Hudson Highlands Land Trust
- Kestrel Land Trust

- Mass Audubon
- MassDOT
- The Nature Conservancy
- New England Forestry Foundation
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Sheffield Land Trust
- UMass-Amherst
- Vermont Land Trust
- Weantinogue Heritage Land Trust
- Westfield State University



Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Parlnership Strategic Conservation Map: Exurban and Suburban Regions Areas of Highest Conservation Value Urban Areas - Not - Interstate State and U.S. Developed Land Highways Protected Land\*

Redding Monroe **Trout Brook Valley** Nature Preserve Easton m Trumbull 33 Wilton Fairfield Norwalk 123 Long Island Sound Focus Area within Connector Corridor Aspetuck Land Trust Owned Property Unprotected Property ---- Municipal Boundary Connector Corridor Protected Open Space

THIS MAP IS INTENDED FOR INTERNAL CONSERVATION PLANNING USE BY H2H PARTNERS, PLEASE DO NOT DISTRIBUTE.

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**Our Partners** 

Now, H2H is a collaboration of dozens of partner organizations. Many of these are land trusts, conservation-focused NGO's, or local governments - but other important members include garden clubs, academic institutions, and more. H2H's diversity in partners is its strength, and though each partner may approach conservation in its locality in slightly different ways, they are all unified in working towards the shared vision we have for our landscape, the greater W&W landscape reaching across New England, and beyond.













































Pound Ridge Land Conservancy













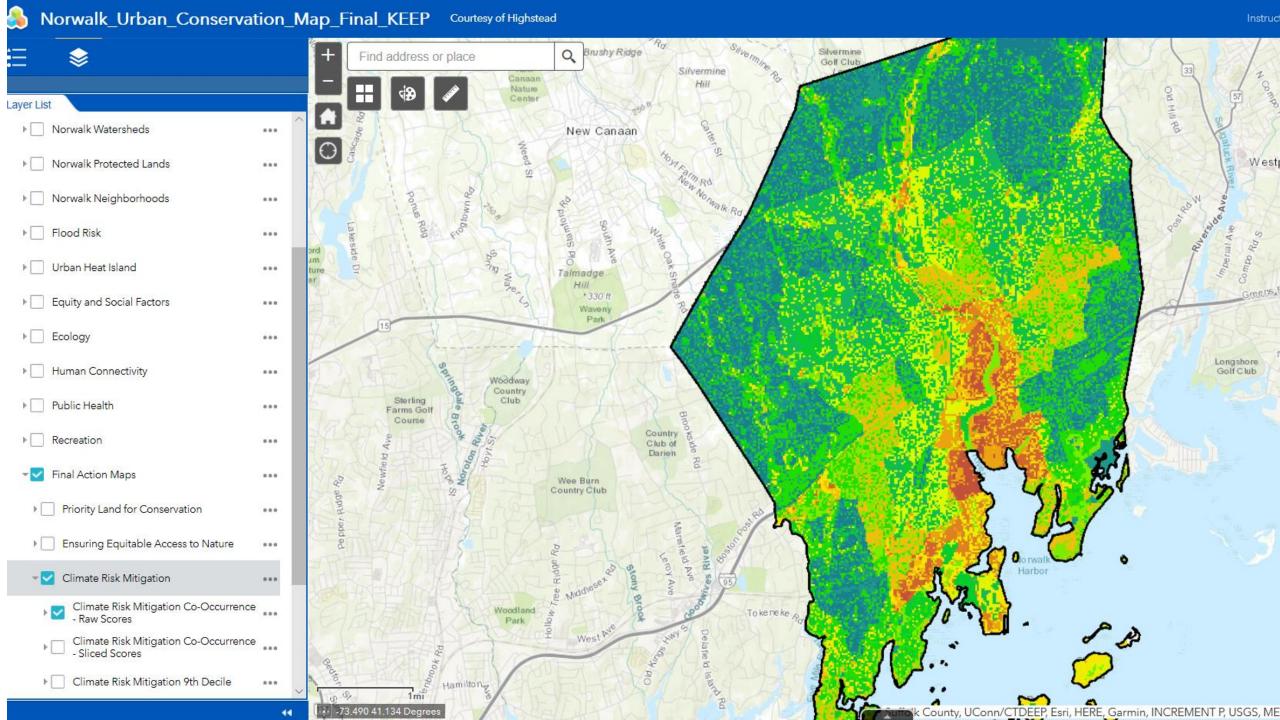


#### H2H URBAN MAPPING INITIATIVE NEXT STEPS - TARGETED FINAL LAYERS















#### Pollinator Pathways

Establishing pollinator-friendly habitats and food sources for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating insects and wildlife

Home

About

Pollinator Pathways

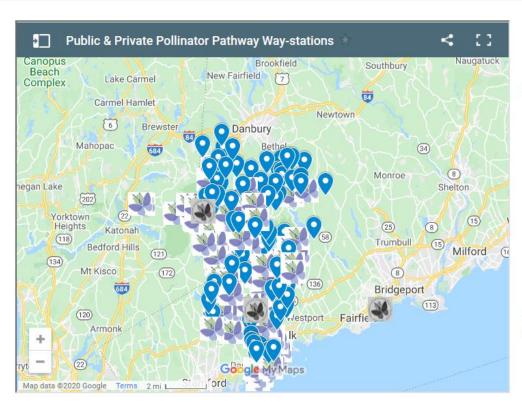
Your Backyard

Invasive Threats

Resources

Get Involved

Contact



Add your property, a town garden, or a pesticide-free open space in your town to this map of private and public way-stations along the Pollinator Pathway.

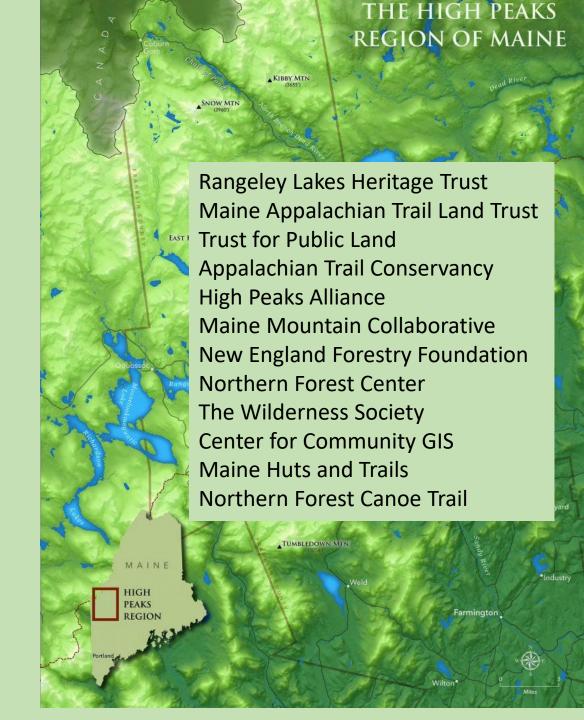
- The black and white butterfly logos mark residences that provide a food and shelter for pollinators.
- The green and purple butterfly logos mark public gardens managed by volunteers
- The blue pins mark protected open space that provides pesticide-free native habitat for wildlife, including pollinators.

Email us at info@pollinator-pathway.org and include the address of the property you would like to add.

#### Towns Along the Pollinator Pathway

#### **High Peaks Initiative**

- Permanently protected 10,000 acres and have over 10,000 additional acres of conservation projects in the immediate pipeline
- Mapped all recreational trails across the region and conducting an inventory of conditions as a baseline for a climate informed regional trails plan.











HOME **ABOUT**  **PARTNERS** 

**TOOLS** 

CONVERGENCE

**CONTACT US** 



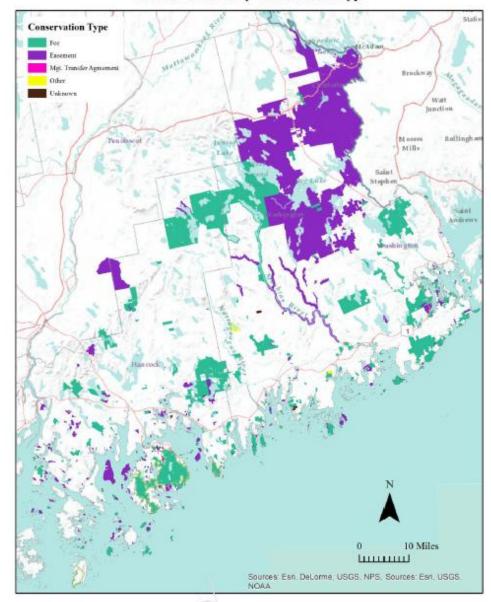
Blue Hill Heritage Trust Frenchman Bay Conservancy **Downeast Salmon Federation** Maine Coast Heritage Trust National Park Service, Acadia National Park Schoodic Institute Sunrise County Economic Council Washington County Manager College of the Atlantic **Cornell University** University of Maine at Machias University of Maine at Orono



Connecting conservation, research, education, and communities in Downeast Maine

Full Economic Report: Valuing the Economic Benefits of Conserved Land in Downeast Maine

#### Conserved Lands by Conservation Type



Sources: Conserved lands data from MEGIS and regional conservation organizations; Land use/land cover from NLCD 2011.

Figure 1. Conserved Lands by Conservation Type for Downeast Maine.

#### Results

Land Area and Designation

- There are a total of 702,654 acres of conservation land in Downeast Maine, which comprise of 19.6% of the total area. Approximately 58% of that land is located in Washington County.
- 72% of Downeast conserved lands are forestland (Figure 1). About 18% of the land is classified as wetlands (18%), followed by shrub (4.7%), developed (1.1%), open water (1.4%), and grassland (1.0%), and blueberry barrens (0.5%).
- About 57% of conservation land in the region is registered as conservation easement, while 42% is fee acquisition.
- Nearly 60% of the conservation land is under private ownership, while the remaining 40% is public.
   Economic Benefits
  - Table 1 lists the estimated economic benefits of Downeast conserved land. Figures are listed in total
    annual values and broken out by benefit category and geographical area.
  - Visitor spending provides the largest amount of our monetized benefits, totaling more than \$304 million per annum. More than 95% of that can be directly attributed to the existence of Acadia National Park.
  - Recreation is estimated to provide almost \$58 million in benefits per year. Most of this value is attributed to the hunting, fishing, and boating opportunities that is provided by conserved land located throughout the study area.
  - The value of carbon sequestered in standing forests on conservation land is estimated to provide about \$42 million per year in benefits to society from mitigating the effects of climate change. Only a small portion of this value is accrued through participation in carbon markets.
  - Employment directly associated with managing conservation land is estimated to be at least \$13.9 million per year.
  - The commercial harvest of timber and blueberries from conserved land is estimated to be \$17.5 and
    4.4 million per year, respectively. This figure illustrates that putting land in conservation does not
    necessarily eliminate the opportunity for a commercial operation.
  - The provision of clean water and drinking water supply are estimated to collectively provide almost \$17 million per year, although we note that this value could be higher if the region faced a higher threat of deteriorating water quality due to land use change.
  - The total ecosystem services benefits of Downeast conserved land equates to about \$206/acre/yr.
     This value falls into the range of similar valuation studies that were conducted for comparable geographical areas, ecosystems, and benefit categories.



A watershed is an area that drains to a common waterway, such as a river. The blue area above comprises the Taunton River Watershed.

#### For more information, see our website at srpedd.org/rtwn or contact your local Regional Planning Agency:

Bill Napolitano, SRPEDD bnap@srpedd.org, (508) 824-1367 x 315

Eric Arbeene, OCPC earbeene@ocpcrpa.org, (508) 583-1833 x213

Anne Herbst, MAPC aherbst@mapc.org, (617) 933-0781

# The Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (RTWN)



Working Together for a Better future Resilient Communities, Healthy Waters

#### What we are offering:

The RTWN has recently received some funding and would be interested in working with towns or groups who are interested to work with us on any of the following:

- Resilience Roundtables facilitated cross community conversations to discuss cost effective solutions to issues you define such as flooding or culvert upgrades
- Municipal Training Program
- Use of various tools (including mapping and green infrastructure tools)
- Peer review of development proposals
- Community Resilience Self Assessment
- Assistance identifying ways to meet regulations such as MS4 and the Water Management Act
- Prioritizing culvert replacements and redesign /modification for safety, fish passage, flood reduction



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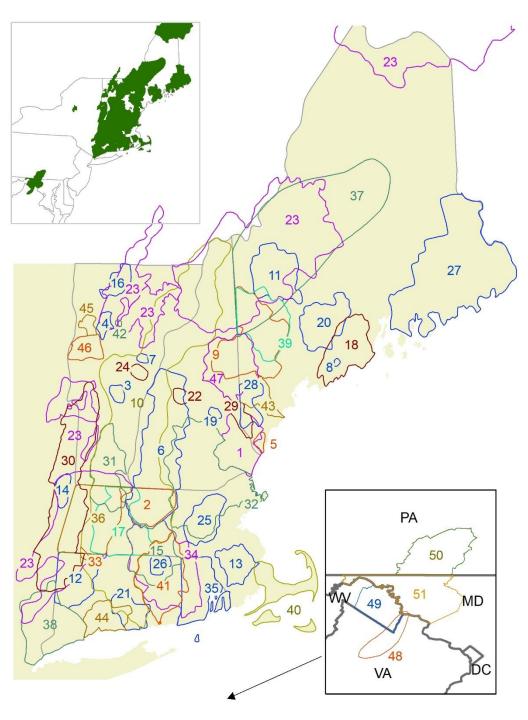
# The Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (RTWN)



Working Together for a Better future Resilient Communities, Healthy Waters

- Bridgewater State University
- Horsley Witten Group
- Manomet Center for Conservation Science
- MA Dept. of Environmental Protection
- MA Division of Ecological Restoration
- MA Exec. Office of Environmental Affairs
- MassAudubon
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
- National Park Service
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Old Colony Planning Council
- Save the Bay
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Econ. Development District
- Taunton River Watershed Alliance
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Wildlands Trust





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RCPs by Stage of Development	New England and Eastern New York	Mid-Atlantic	Total RCPs
Emerging RCPs	6	1	7
Maturing RCPs	13	3	16
Conserving RCPs	27	1	28
Quiet/Transitory RCPs	4	0	4
Total Number of RCPs	50	5	55
Terminated RCPs	5		

### How do RCPs overcome challenges?

- Funding
  - Coordination
  - Activities
  - Land Protection
- Keeping Partners Engaged
  - Collaborative governance
  - Give-get conversations
  - Partner distinctions
  - Success

- Succeeding at Scale
  - Follow the Steps but be ready to improvise
  - Solve the "so what?"
- Managing complexity and growth to innovate and build momentum within capacity
  - Communication
  - Decision-making
  - Patience
  - Cultivate leadership

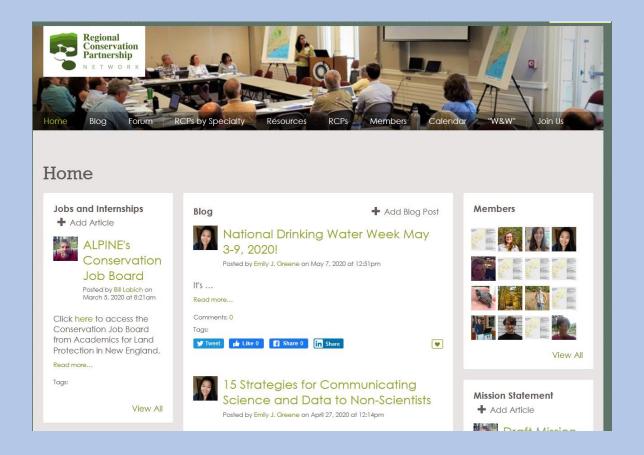
### Roles of the RCP Network in RCPs' Development and Collaboration

- Governance
  - Host Partner
  - Coordinator
  - Steering Committee
  - Fundraising Committee
  - Five-Year Strategies

- Timeline
  - First RCP Gathering (40 attendees) 2010
  - First Multi-RCP Collaborative 2011
  - RCP Network Forms 2012
  - RCPs in New England published 2013
  - RCP Innovation Grant Program 2014
  - RCP Handbook, Steering Committee, LI Sound Watershed RCPP 2015
  - Northern A.T. Landscape Partnership 2016
  - Fundraising Committee 2017
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Annual RCP Network Gathering (375 attendees) 2019

### Convening and Peer Learning Network

- Monthly Coordinator Calls
- RCPNetwork.org
- Small –grants program
- Annual RCP Coordinators Meeting and RCP Network Gathering







#### RCP Network Science Delivery Workshops on CT LCD, NALCC Data Sets, and Guidance Documents Sept. 2014 - April 2015



- 515 Participant-hours
- 22 RCPs \*



### **Conservation Finance Tools and**

### **Approaches**

- Turnkey RCPP
   Administration
   Processes and
   Materials with Healthy
   Forest Reserve
   Program
- Pooled Match Inventory
- Jessie B. Cox
   Charitable Trust

# POOLED MATCH INVENTORY Double Your Conservation Impact Home About Active Inventories Submit Match Contact Us WHY SHOULD YOU PARTICIPATE? Double the Conservation Impact of Land Protection The Pooled Match Inventory is a new conservation finance tool that turns completed conservation easements or restrictions into more federal funding to protect other land. No matter if you are a land trust professional, a landowner considering

whether it's the right time to conserve your land, or you've already protected your land with an easement, you can help make it possible for other owners to conserve their land too.

WHO WE ARE



www.rcpnetwork.org







#### Wildlands & Woodlands

A Vision for the New England Landscape



Get Our Latest E-News!





#### Investing in Regional Conservation: A Model from New England

To accelerate the pace of land conservation in New England, the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust committed \$1.1 million over three years in support of developing Regional Conservation Partnerships. In partnership with Highstead, the Cox Trust created two grant programs:

#### Donated Land and Easement Grant Program

- ▶ 6 awards of \$100,000 each to cover transaction costs like appraisals and surveys
- > Each served as seed funds granted to RCPs to incentivize owners of priority lands to donate easements or provide deep bargain sales

#### RCP Innovation Program

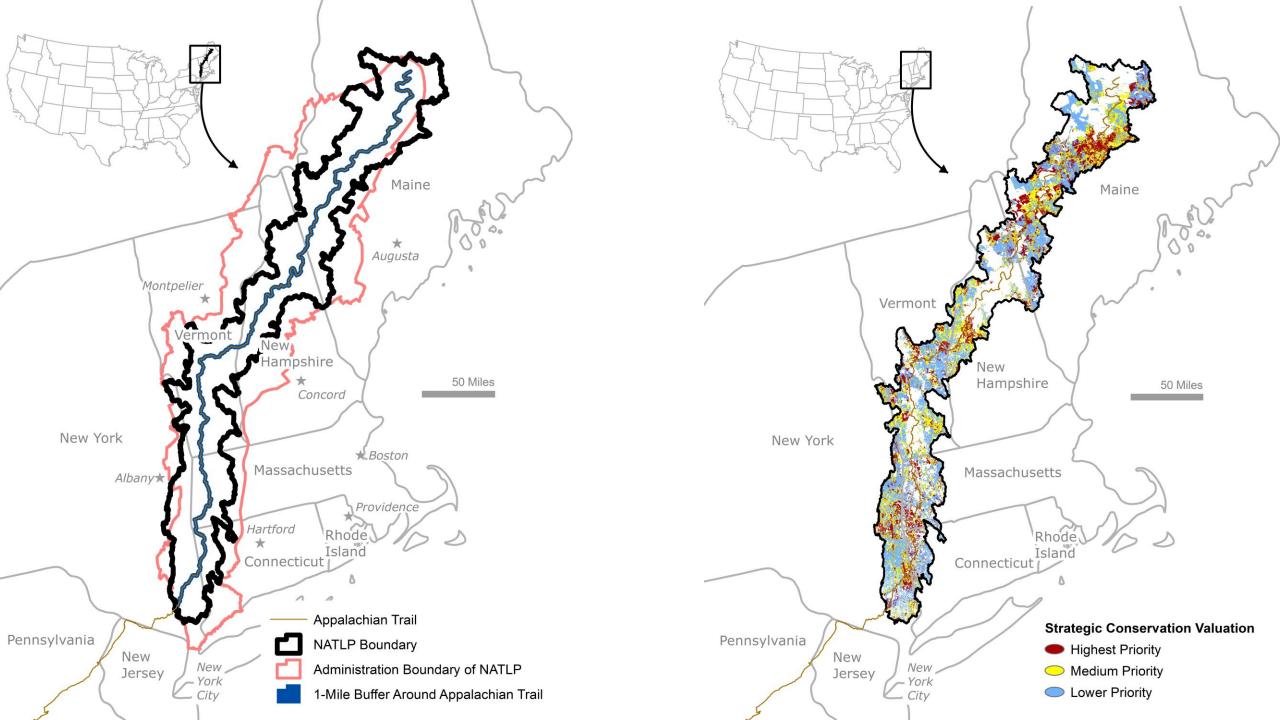
- ▶ 14 awards of \$20,000 each
- ▶ Built capacity of RCPs to conserve more land, pilot new projects and conservation tools, develop new landowner outreach projects, engage in strategic planning and priority setting, plan and initiate capital campaigns

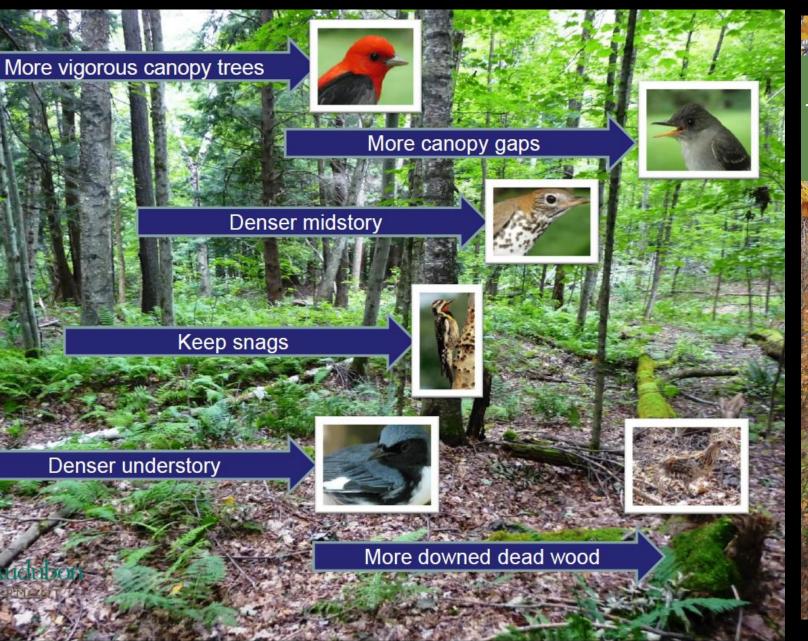


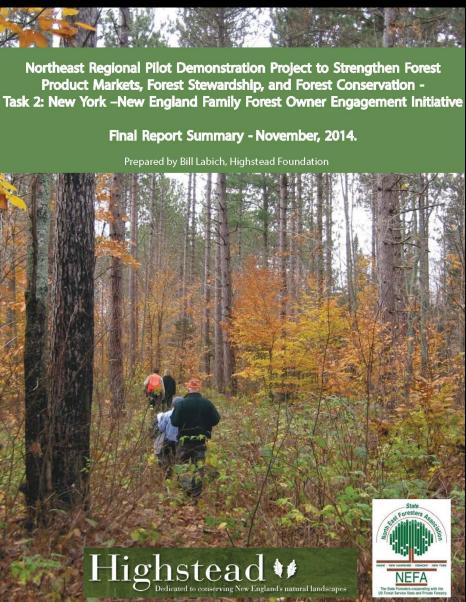
Facilitate Collaboration Among RCPs and with Orgs and Networks

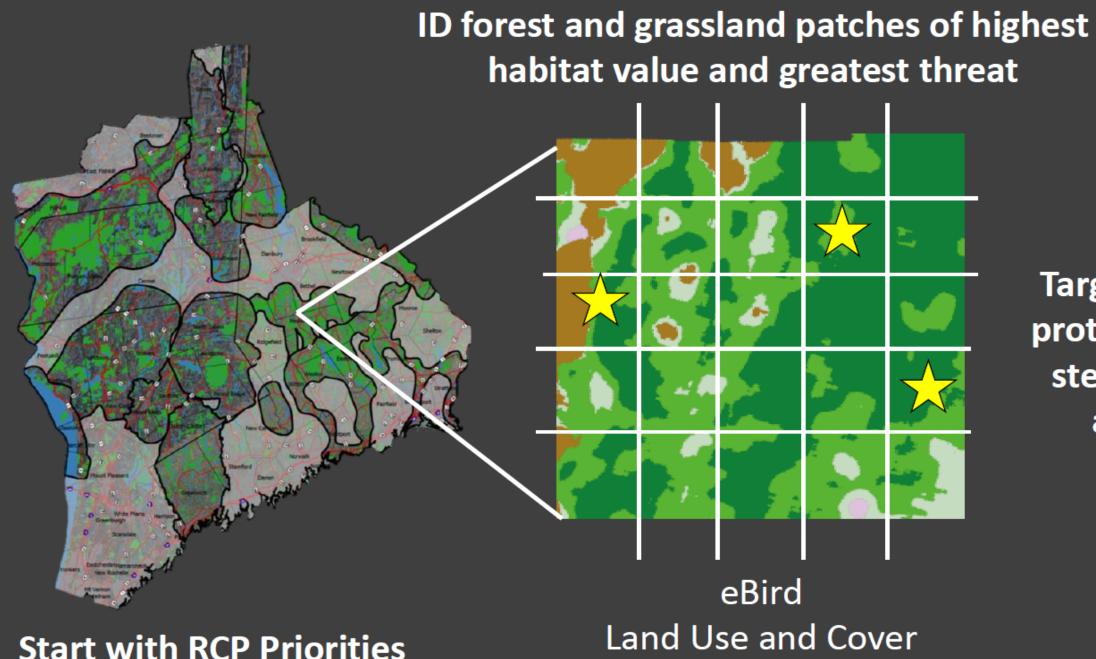
- Northern Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership
- Northeast Bird Habitat
   Conservation Initiative
- Uplands to Lowlands RCPP











Targeted land protection and stewardship actions

**Start with RCP Priorities** 

**Future Scenarios** 







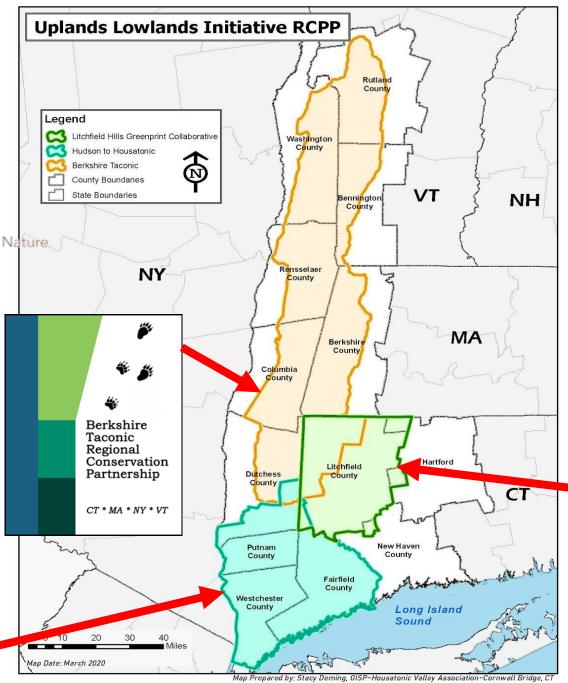
Exploring and Conserving Nature

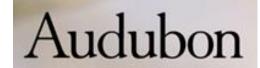


















ACADEMICS FOR LAND PROTECTION IN NEW ENGLAND





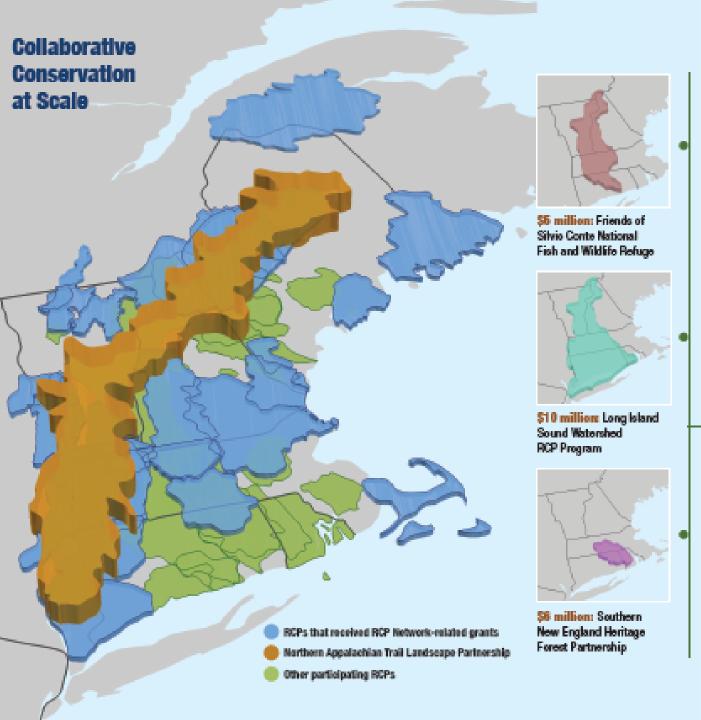
### Academics for Land Protection in New England

• ALPINE: emerging network that seeks to explore & expand the role that academic institutions in New England play in conserving the natural heritage of the region...

"Connect, collaborate, conserve"

Catalyze the pace & scale of conservation...





#### **Network Outcomes**

The RCP Network and its partners have created capacity and scale for many projects throughout the region. Here are some examples.

#### START-UP & TRAINING PROGRAMS

- The RCP Handbook outlines steps to creating and managing a successful RCP. It is used by RCPs throughout the East Coast
- > The annual RCP Network Gathering advances collaborative regional conservation initiatives.
- We provide one-on-one support and monthly RCP Coordinator Calls to RCPs.

#### CROSS-BOUNDARY INITIATIVES

- We organized the 10 million-acre Morthern Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership of 11 RCPs to engage a broad spectrum of social, economic, and environmental sectors with the goal of protecting 1.4 million acres.
- By offering free training and peer learning opportunities to state foresters and land trusts, we have helped RCPs reach and engage more landowners throughout the region.
- In coordination with the Comell Lab of Omithology and the RCPs, we are supporting the state Audubon chapters (P\$-WE) to sustain Wood Thrush and American Kestrel at the population scale.

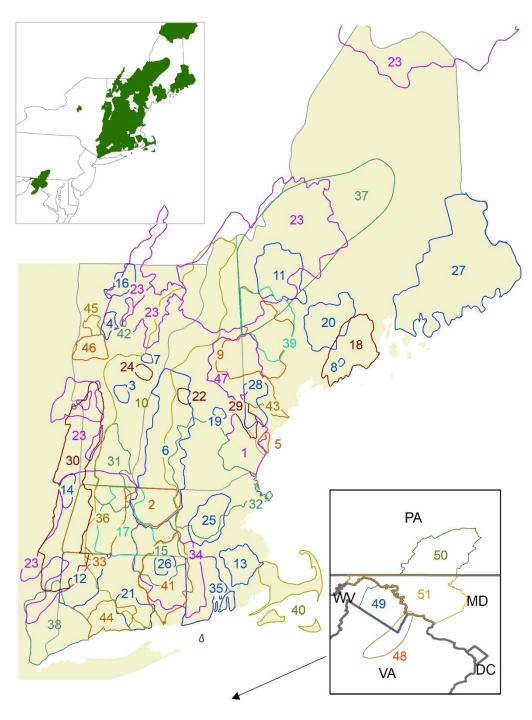
#### FUNDRAISING & CAPACITY-BUILDING

- We led the RCP effort to secure over \$21 million in funding from new federal programs, such as the State and Private Forestry's Landscape Scale Restoration Grants and the Natural Resource Conservation Services RCP Program, advancing easements, stewardship, and landowner education.
- With Jessie B. CoxTrust and other regional partners, we spread the use of transaction cost funds, climate-informed strategic conservation planning, and collaborative capital campaigns from two to multiple RCPs.
- All of these efforts helped 25 RCPs on a faster path to achieving their missions, advancing easements, stewardship, and landowner education.

#### DATA-DRIVEN CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS

- With Open Space Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we helped 16 RCPs use the latest spatial data in climate-focused strategic conservation planning and communications.
- Under the Obama administration's funding for Fish & Wildlife Service activities, we translated scientific data into talking points that the RCPs used in their public communication efforts.





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#### Contact

Bill Labich, Senior Conservationist, Highstead Foundation and Coordinator, RCP Network

- blabich@highstead.net
- www.highstead.net

Other websites mentioned in my slides

- www.rcpnetwork.org
- www.rcpnetworkpooledmatch.net
- www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org
- www.llisw-rcpp.com/forests.html



#### **Land Conservation Conference**

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