

Implementing the State Wildlife Action Plans

Land Trust Alliance Rally
September 2008

Katie Theoharides
Defenders of Wildlife





Defenders of Wildlife

...is dedicated to the protection of all native wild animals and plants in their natural communities.

New approaches that keep species from becoming endangered

Protect entire ecosystems and interconnected habitats





Conservation Challenges

Defenders of Wildlife



Biodiversity Loss

- 1,353 species listed as threatened or endangered
- Estimated 15,000 more at risk species
- Only 40 % of native vegetation remains
- Biodiversity supports life sustaining ecosystem services



Global Environmental Change



Human population growth, demand, consumption, global commerce



Habitat Degradation & Fragmentation

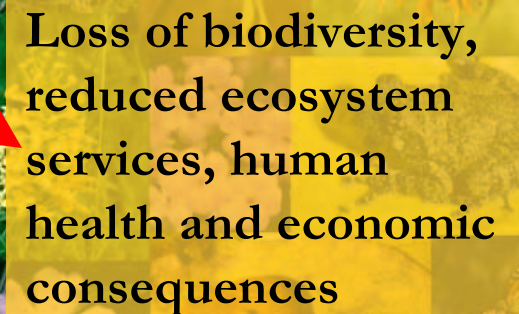
Species Invasions

Increased Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide

SYNERGISMS

Eutrophication

Hydrologic Changes



Loss of biodiversity, reduced ecosystem services, human health and economic consequences

Habitat Loss



Incoming Challenge: Climate Change

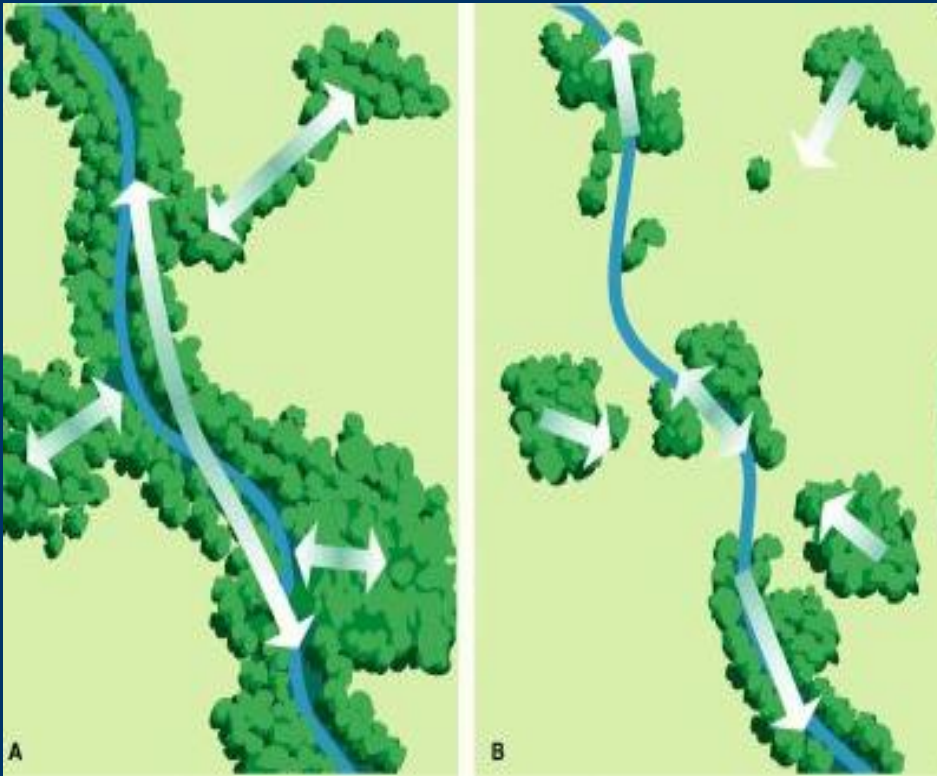
Will alter biodiversity, cause changes in phenology, genetic composition, species ranges, species interactions, community structure, and ecosystem processes.



<http://watersecretsblog.com>



Developing a Network of Conservation Lands



Source: Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group (FISRWG)

- Coordinated, multi-stakeholder effort
- Strategic land acquisition, protection & restoration
- Stewardship on working lands
- Integrate conservation & land use planning
- Need access to species and habitat data and knowledge of ecosystem processes

Importance of Biodiversity and Strategic Planning to Land Trusts

- Focus on biodiversity and strategic planning ensures most important places are protected first
- Funding from foundations and donors based on a clear conservation vision
- Ensure the permanence of easements
- Achieve greater public buy-in



State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program

Defenders of Wildlife



State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program

- Established in 2000 through Interior Appropriations – administered by USFWS
- Focus on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) to avoid future listings
- Non-regulatory proactive solution with planning component
- Defenders played leading role in establishing program



Importance of State Wildlife Grants Program

- **Conservation Planning** – Most states have never done a comprehensive wildlife plan
- **Habitat Conservation** – Habitat loss is the main problem for wildlife. Plans can map out habitat areas to conserve
- **Policy Connections** – To address habitat, plans can be used to inform land use decisions
- **Funding** – Plans can be used to inform other funded planning & conservation investments



State Wildlife Action Plans

Plans created by State Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Proactive, non-regulatory, non-game conservation

Comprehensive Assessments:

- Priority species
- Priority habitats
- Conservation threats
- Conservation actions
- Coordination



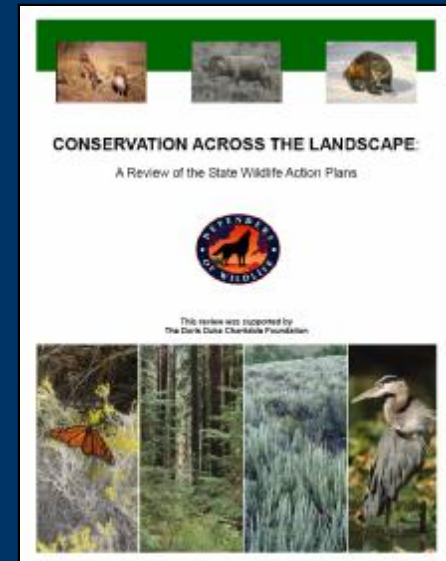
www.wildlifeactionplans.org



Wildlife Plans Review

Essential Questions:

- **Where should we work?**
(Conservation planning is a spatial exercise)
- **What should we do when we get there?**
(Conservation Goals & Actions)
- **What do we do first?**
(Prioritization)
- **Summary of Results in Defenders report:**
“Conservation Across the Landscape: A Review of the State Wildlife Action Plans”



www.defenders.org/statewildlifeplans



Review Criteria

Eight Elements

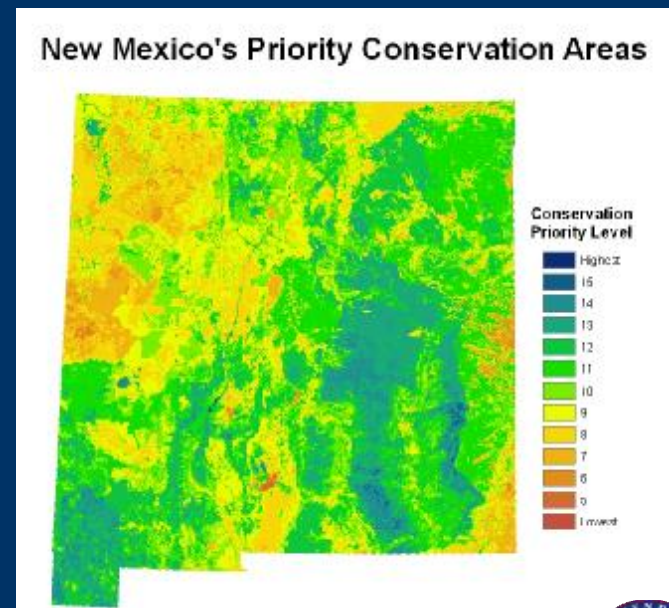
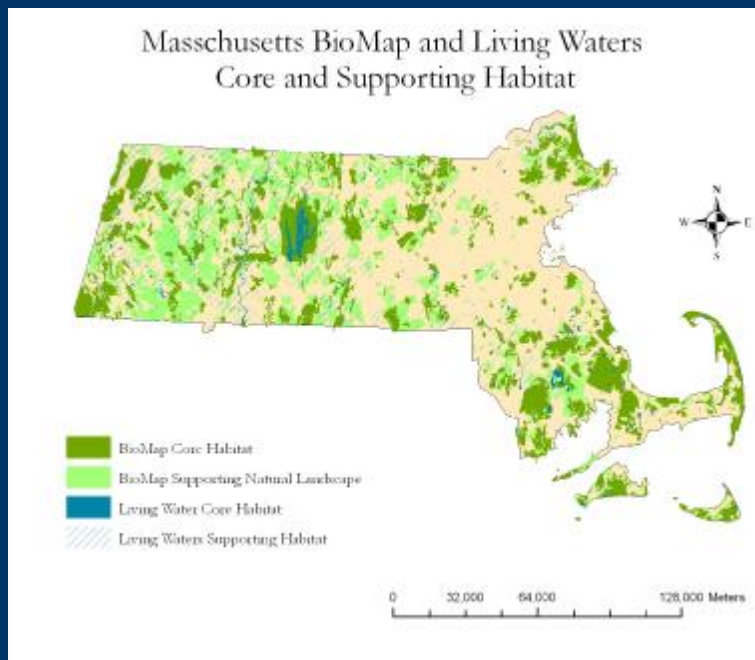
- Species
- Habitat
- Threats
- Actions
- Monitoring
- Coordination
- Periodic Review
- Public Participation

Additional Categories

- Goals
- Maps
- Methods
- Leadership
- Policy Connections
- Funding
- Format



Connectivity and climate change



Conservation Actions

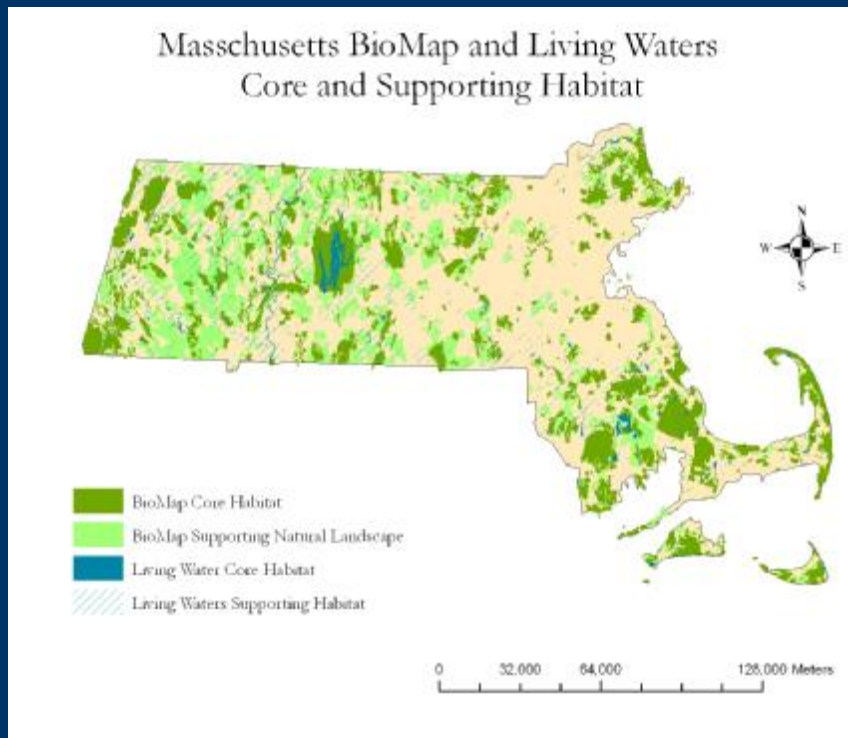
Planning and Standards:

Overall Rank	Action	Feasibility	Benefit	Cost
H	Explore ways to protect natural lands and commercial forests from conversion that are outside an Urban Service Boundary. Develop incentives to take into consideration wildlife, habitat, and available water resources.	L	VH	M
H	Convene a coalition of appropriate stakeholders (for example, conservationists, state natural resource agencies, agricultural interests, and major development and economic interests in Florida) to develop voluntary and incentive-based opportunities and methods for more ecologically friendly development and to develop additional resources to protect, acquire, and manage natural lands identified in the "Cooperative Conservation Blueprint" process.	M	H	M
M	Support retention of the designations of Areas of Critical State Concern (http://ccgov.carr.org/plan-d/manchester/chapter8.pdf) for the City of Apalachicola, City of Key West, Green Swamp, Florida Keys (Monroe County), Big Cypress Swamp (Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Collier counties).	H	M	L
M	Encourage public/private partnerships to cooperatively help guide development design and implementation with the goal of maximizing protection and proper management of natural habitat identified in the "Cooperative Conservation Blueprint."	M	M	M

Source: Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2005



Planning & Policy Connections



Urbanization

Transportation

Working Lands

Water Resources

Public Lands

Conservation plans should inform land use decisions that cause habitat loss

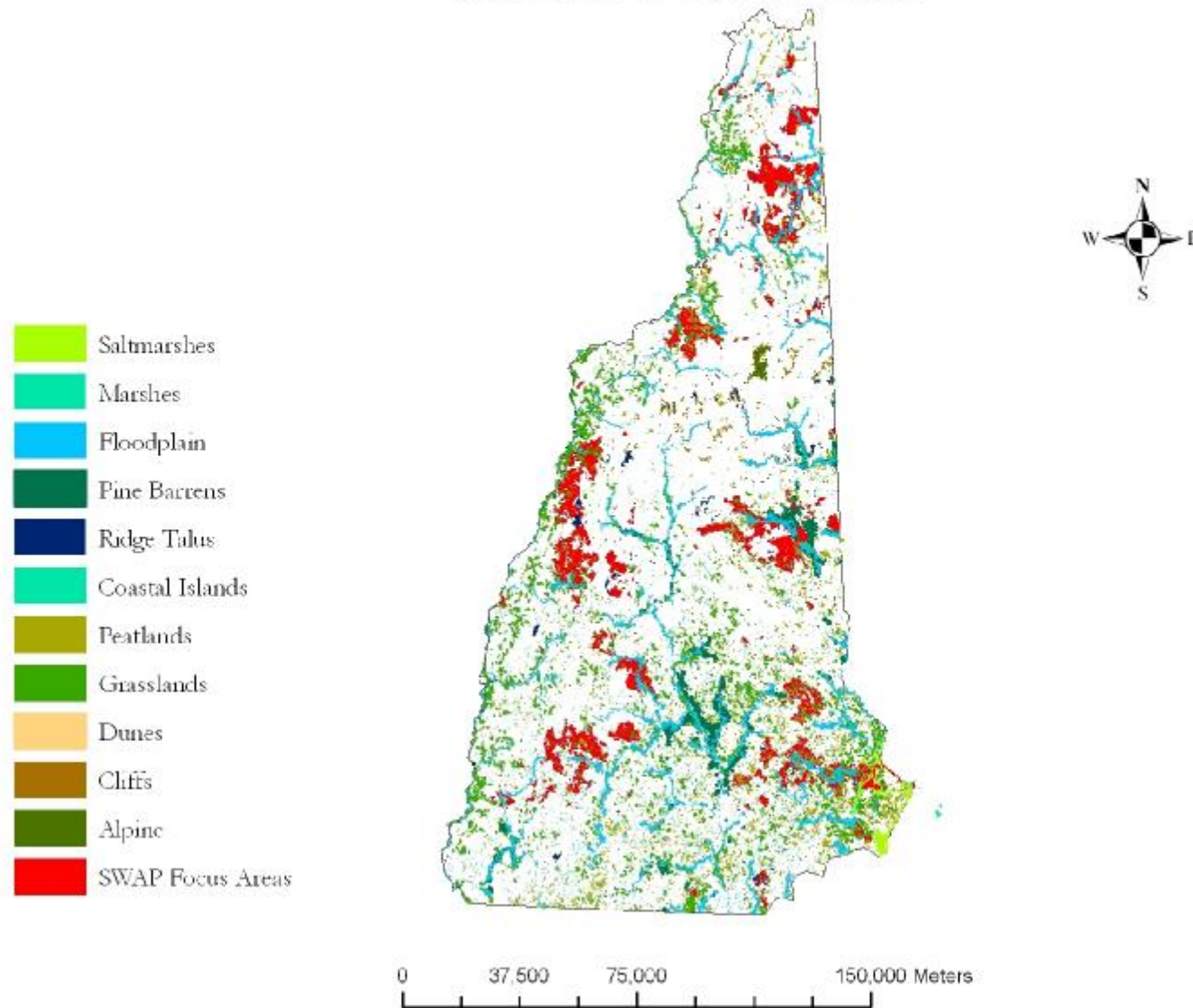


Farm Bill Programs Linked to SWAPs

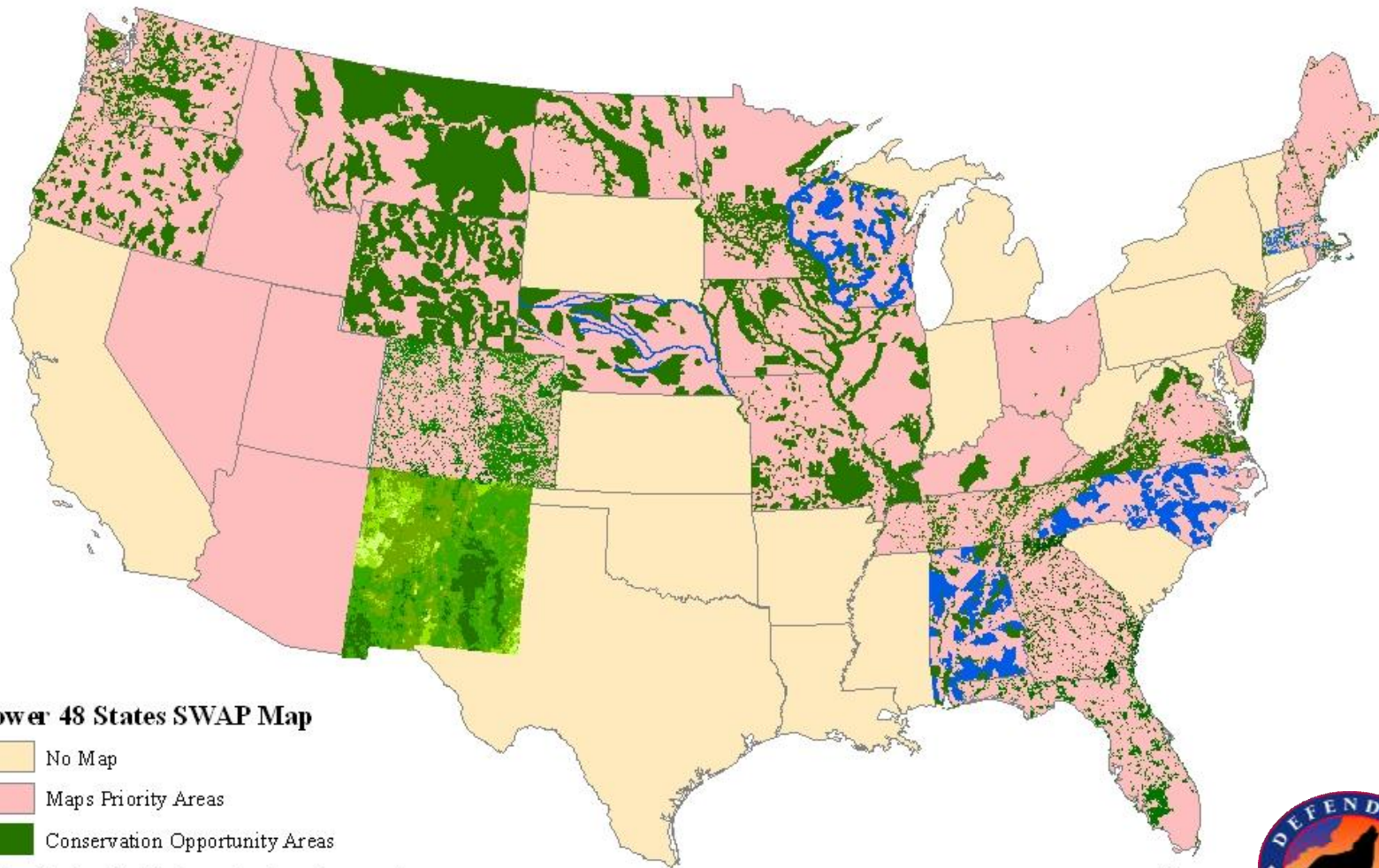
1. **CRP** – Provides secretary authority “To address issues raise by state, regional, and national conservation initiatives.”
2. **CSP** – “The Secretary may develop additional criteria for evaluating applications . . . to ensure that national, State, and local conservation priorities are effectively addressed.
3. **WHIP** – “The Secretary may give priority to projects that would address issues raised by State, regional, and national conservation initiatives.”
4. **GRP** – eligible lands “would address issues raised by State, regional, and national conservation priorities.”






New Hampshire WHIP Priority Habitats and SWAP Focal Areas



Identified Conservation Opportunity Areas for the Lower 48 States -- DRAFT August 2008



Lower 48 States SWAP Map

-  No Map
-  Maps Priority Areas
-  Conservation Opportunity Areas

** New Mexico identified general regions of conservation need rather than discrete conservation opportunity areas. The darker the color, the more immediate the need is.



Land Trust Glue: using the SWAPs to help build a conservation network

- Learn about the plan and ask the state where the most important habitat is for conservation
- Avoid challenges to easements and gain community support
- Increase funding
- Become part of the solution: help the state improve and implement their plan

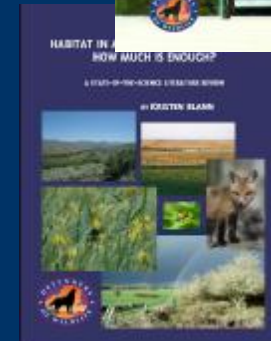


Resources

Conservation Across the Landscape
Linking Conservation and Transportation
www.defenders.org/statewildlifeplans

Second Nature
Getting Up To Speed
www.habitatandhighways.org

Incentives for Biodiversity Conservation
Habitat in Agricultural Landscapes
www.defenders.org – Private Lands



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Defenders of Wildlife



Implementing State Wildlife Action Plans [Session E01]



D O R I S D U K E
C H A R I T A B L E F O U N D A T I O N

Jeff Lerner
Program Officer for the Environment

Land Trust Alliance Rally Sept. 21, 2008

- 
- Ø DDCF Habitat Conservation Approach
 - Ø 2009 – 2013 Strategic Plan
 - Ø Opportunities for Land Trusts



DDCF Environment Program

"...the preservation of wildlife, both flora and fauna..."

- from the will of Doris Duke



How to fulfill her wish?



Accelerate habitat conservation for imperiled flora and fauna by *identifying critical lands* to maintain the nation's wildlife and by *directing existing and new funds* toward the protection of those lands



A Vision



Over the next three decades, the country should commit itself to creating a national wildlife conservation system



National Wildlife Conservation System

A quilt of many different fabrics and colors:



- Ø Federal government (USFWS, NPS, BLM, NFS, etc.)
- Ø State government (state parks, WMAs, etc.)
- Ø Local government
- Ø National, regional & local land trusts
- Ø Conservation easements
- Ø Private lands (working lands, etc)
- Ø Rentals (CRP, WRP)

Why Focus on State Wildlife Plans?

- ∅ Proactive – Address species loss before crisis
- ∅ State-based – official status at right level of government in age of devolvement
- ∅ Incentive-driven – collaborative, not regulatory approach
- ∅ Spatially explicit – process enables maps to direct protection efforts
- ∅ Leverage public and private funds – can bring many partners to table



DDCF Role to Date



- Ø Encourage Development of Excellent Plans
- Ø Support Outreach and Education about Plans
- Ø Encourage Use of Plans by Non-Wildlife Agencies
- Ø Encourage Better Targeting of Existing Programs through Plans
- Ø Stimulate New Conservation Finance Linked to Strategies
- Ø Fund Training, Education and Research
- Ø Use Plans to Steer DDCF Land Investments



Land Protection Initiatives

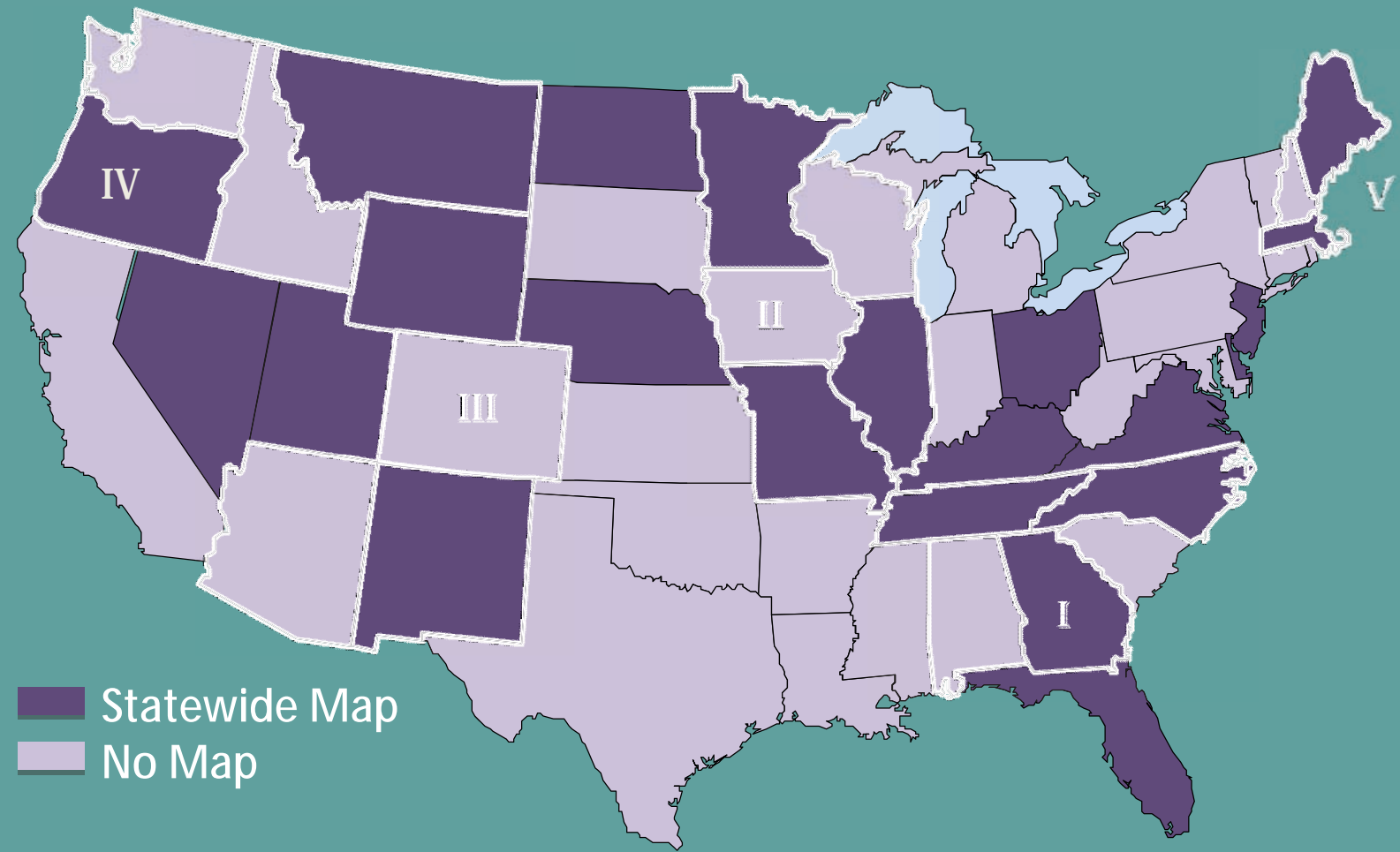
Goals

- Protect key habitats
- Stimulate implementation
- Engage other funders
- Spillover effect

Features

- Multi-state
- Multi-year
- Capital for land
- Implementation Activities

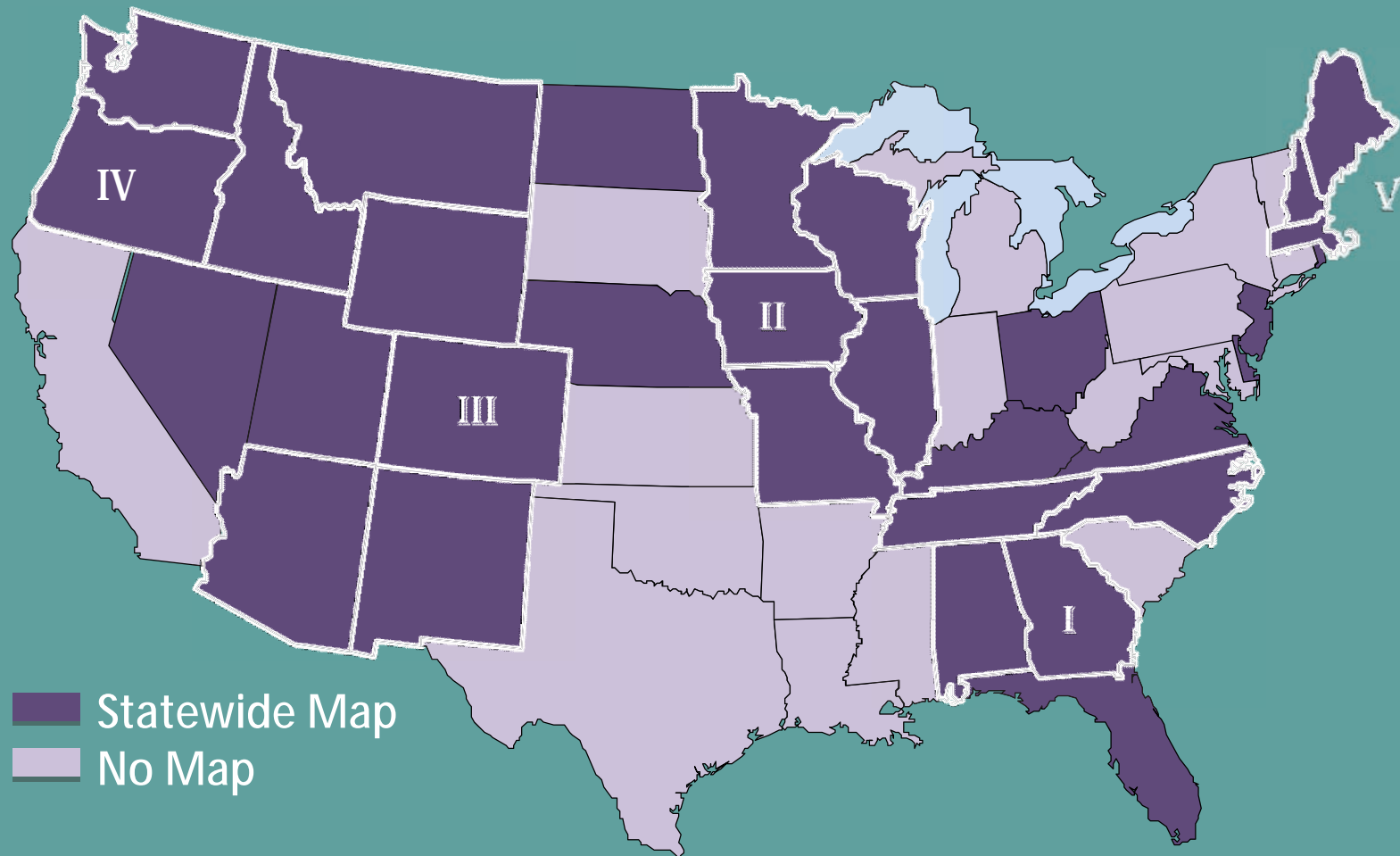
2005 State Wildlife Action Plan Mapping Status (22 States)



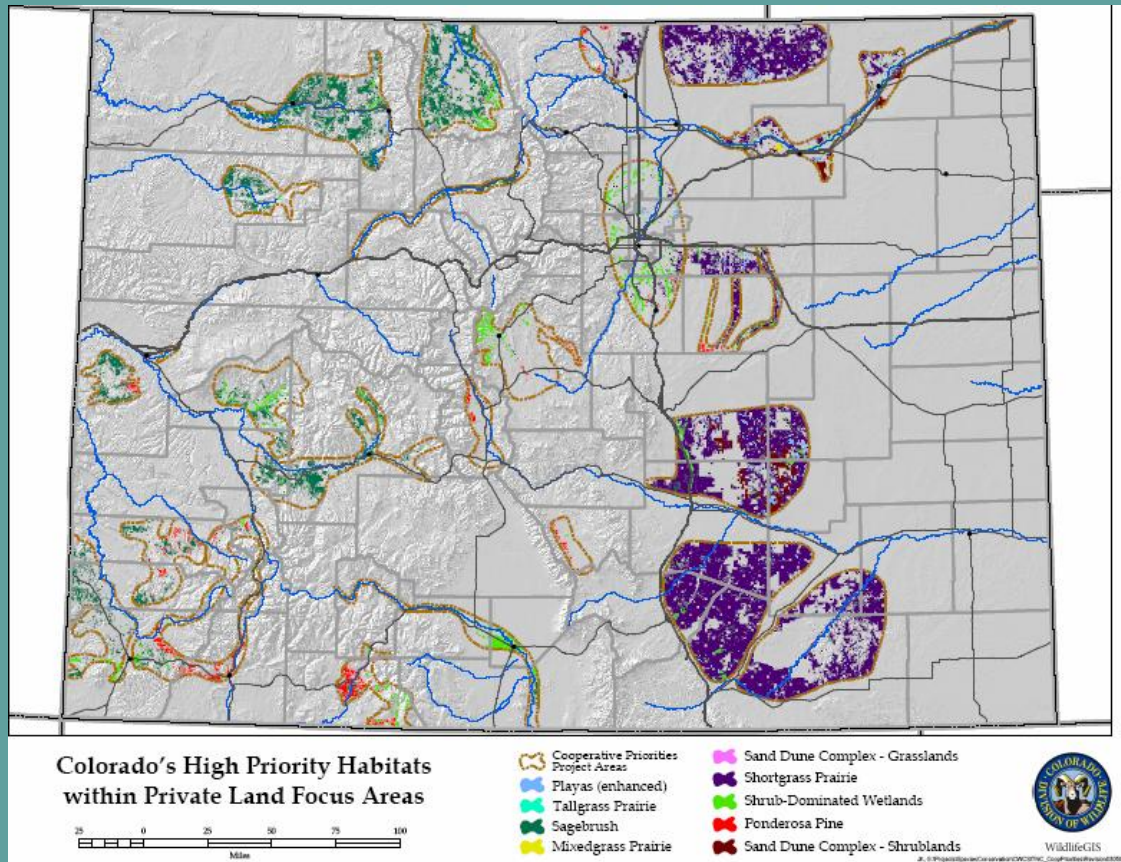
Statewide Map
No Map



2008 State Wildlife Action Plan Mapping Status (31 States)



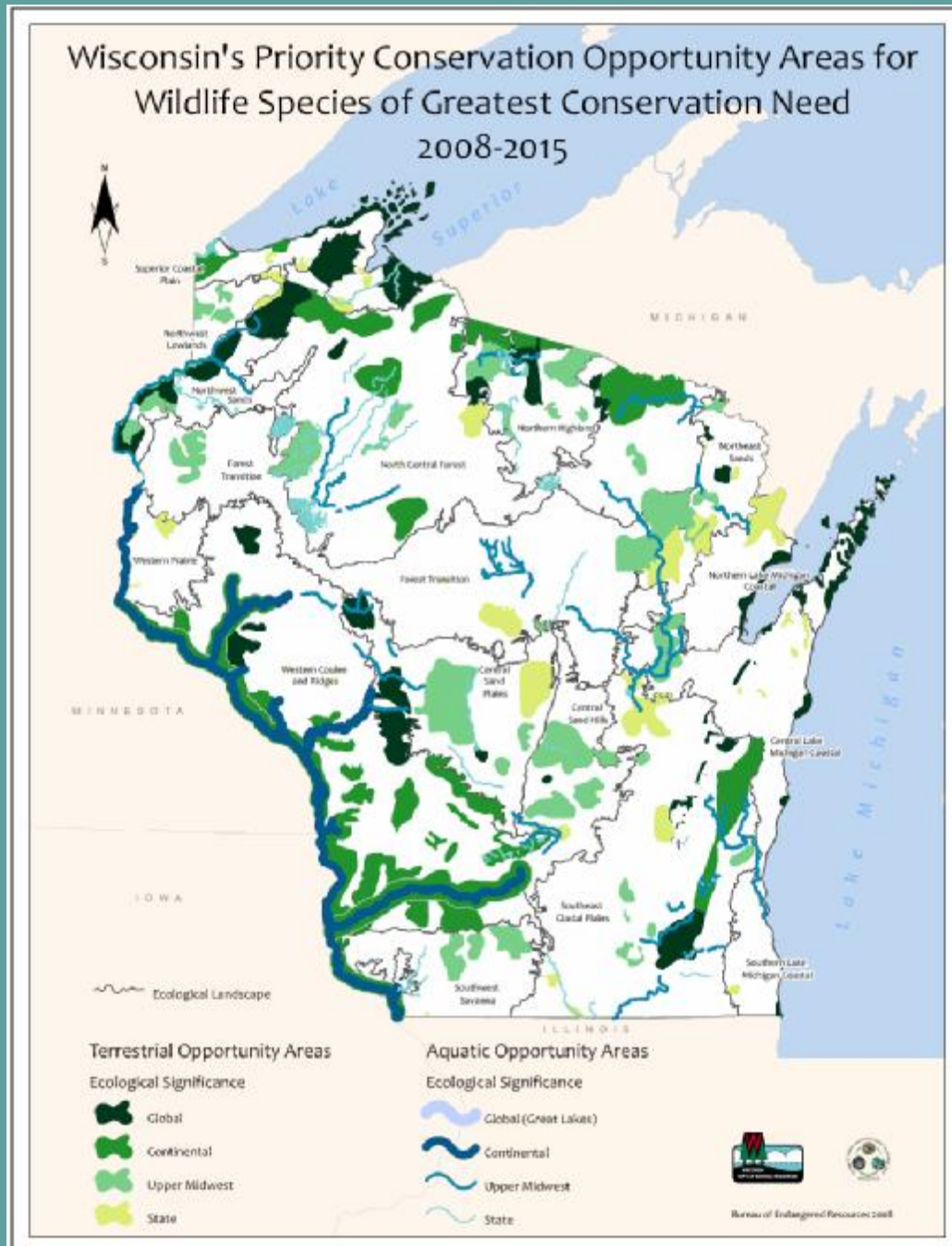
Colorado



- Statewide Map in 2008
- Requirement for Land Protection Funding
- Private Lands Focus

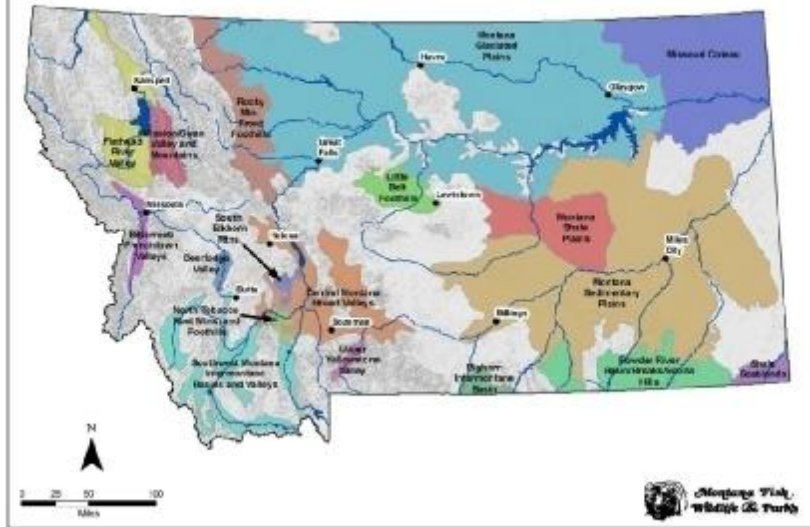


Wisconsin

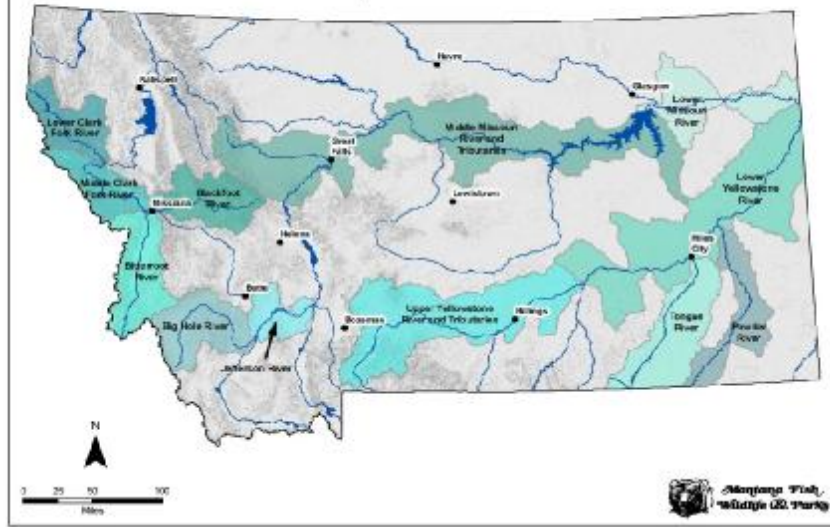


Montana

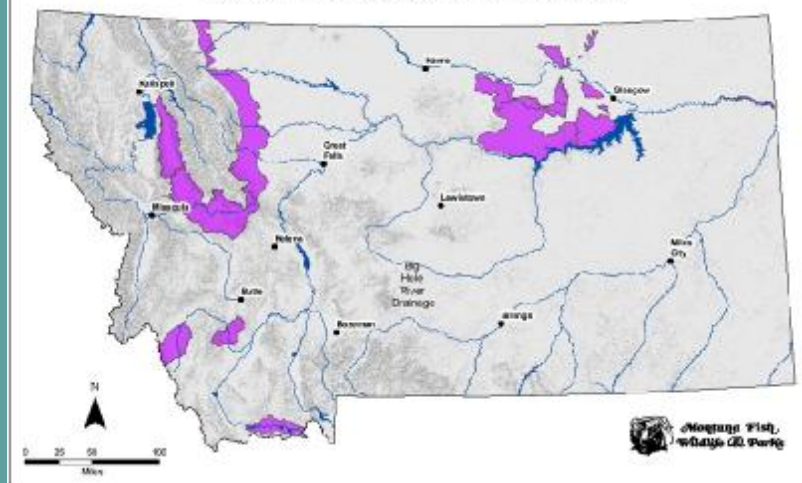
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy
Terrestrial Focus Areas



Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy
Aquatic Focus Areas



Commonly Identified Conservation Focus Areas



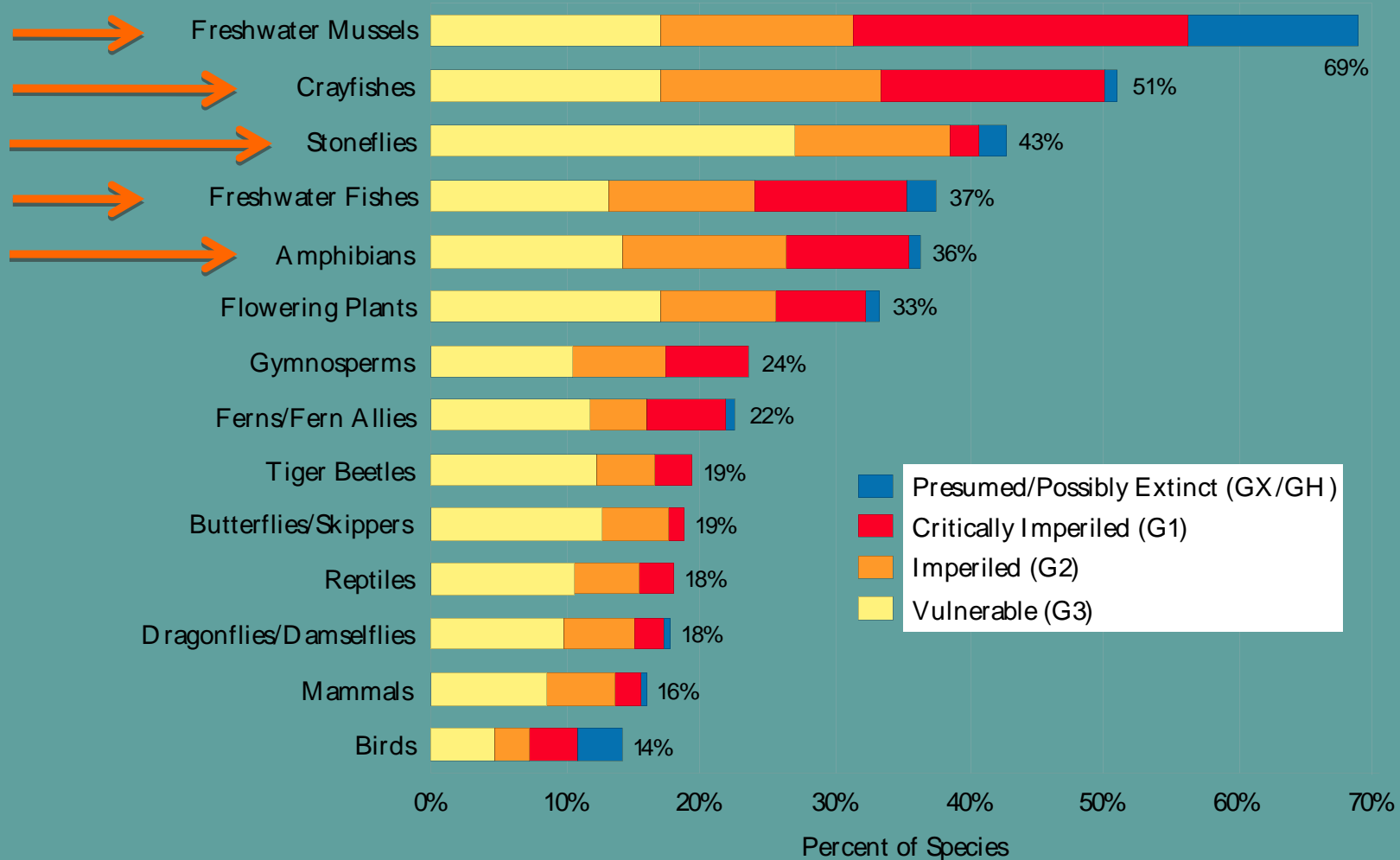
Future DDCF Land & Water Investments



- Over the next five years, DDCF will continue to provide capital and operating funds to states to protect lands identified in SWAPs
- Investments will be made in water as well as land



Aquatic Species At-Risk



Source: Precious Heritage, 2000



Importance of Aquatic Habitats

- 50% of the 1200+ species listed as threatened or endangered depend on rivers and streams
- Freshwater species are disappearing five times faster than terrestrial species
- Estimated 70% of riparian habitat already has been lost or altered in the U.S.

Sources: American Rivers, The National Park Service and USFWS



Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund 2006-2007

Ø 35 grants, totaling \$3.2 Million

Ø Implementing SWAPs:

- Habitat Restoration/Species Reintroduction
- Planning/Plan Improvement
- Communication/Landowner Outreach
- Climate Change

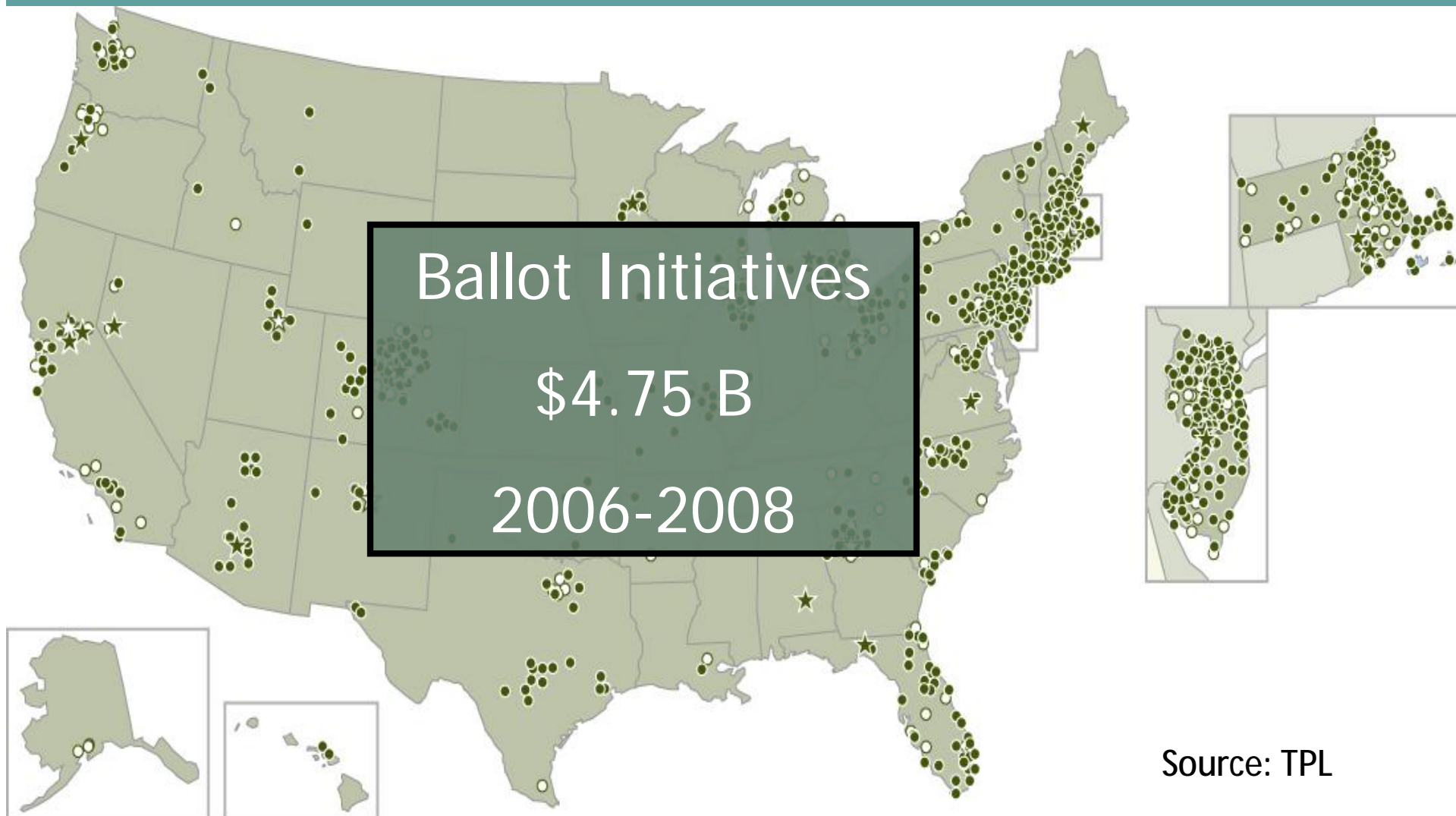
Ø Available to non-profits (including land trusts)

Ø Demand exceeds funding (739 apps/\$62 M)

Ø Administered by the Wildlife Conservation Society



Conservation Finance Initiative

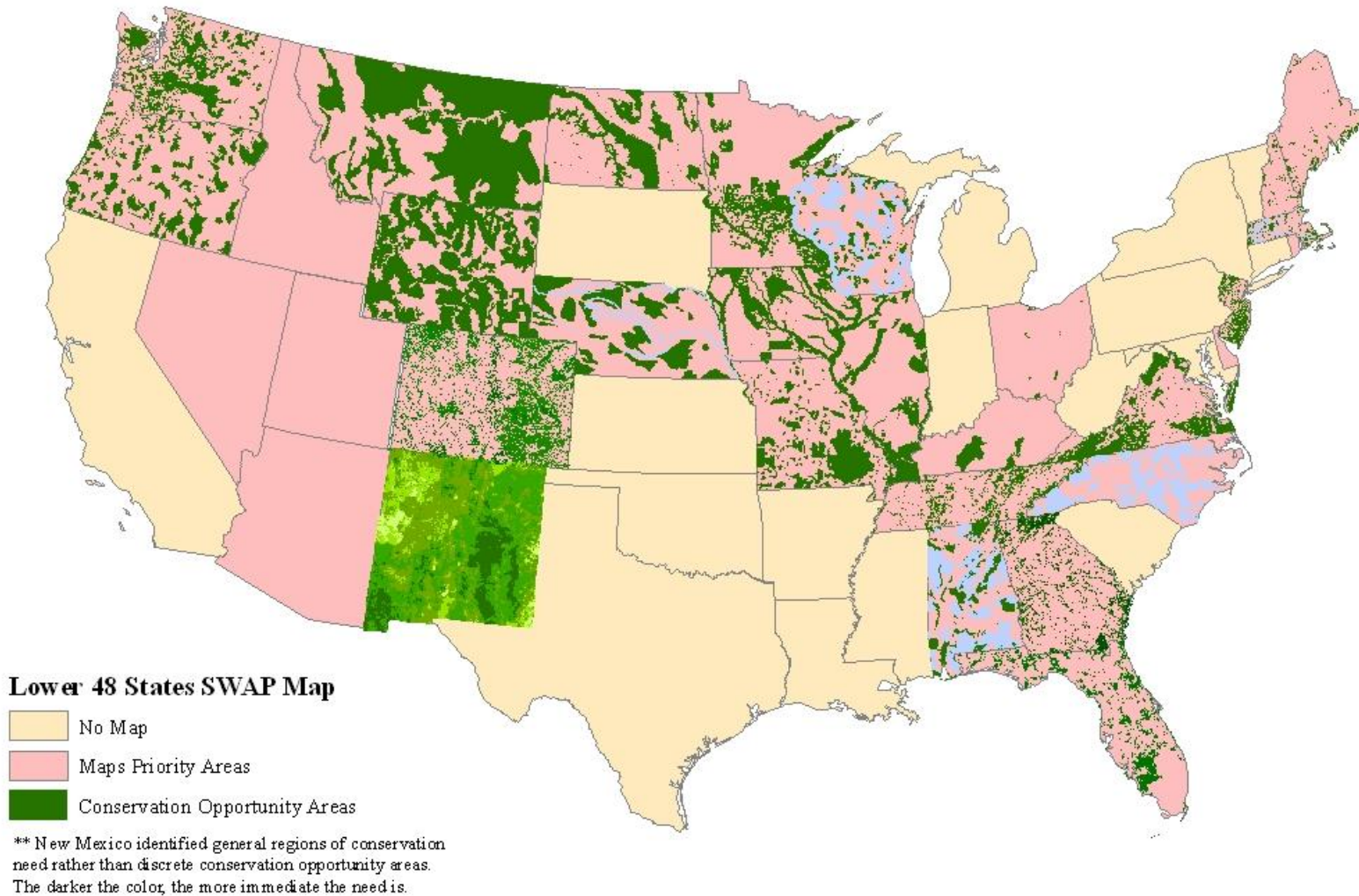


Land Trusts Opportunities on SWAPs

- Land & Water Protection Initiatives
- Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund
- Conservation Finance Initiative



Identified Conservation Opportunity Areas for the Lower 48 States – DRAFT August 2008



Open Space Institute

SWAP in New England: The Great, Good and the Misunderstood (Is that Some Kind of Interest Rate?)

Peter Howell

Open Space Institute

Land Trust Alliance

September 21, 2008

Open Space Institute



Key Topics

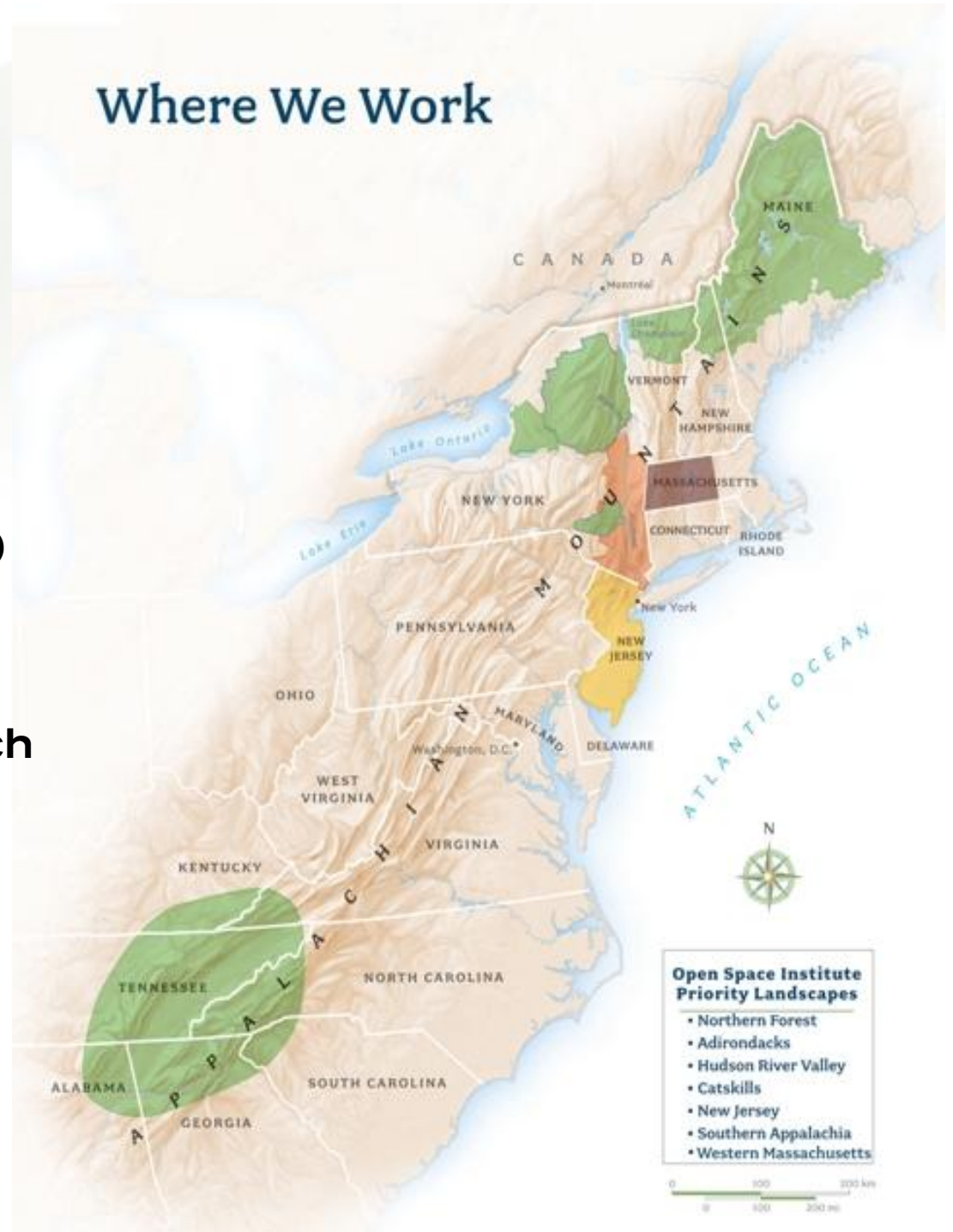
- Review OSI's Work with Land Trusts on SWAPS
- Highlight Duke-funded SWAP work in New England
- Offer Reflections on how Land Trusts Approach SWAP

OSI at a Glance

- **Mission:** Provide loans and grants for important transactions in selected regions of eastern US
- **Programs**
 - Land Acquisition in New York
 - Conservation Finance in selected landscapes in the East
 - Research Program

Where We Work

- Land Acquisition (NY)
- Conservation Finance (Maine to Georgia)
- Conservation Research (largely eastern US)



Regrant Program

- **Historic Focus on Large Forested Landscapes in Northern New England**
- **Potential Other Initiatives**
 - Community Forestry (NH)
 - Trans-Border Conservation(VT, NH, ME, + Canada)
- **New Focus on Wildlife Habitat in both New England and Georgia**

Trans-border Assessment

- Nearing completion of study on ways to accelerate trans-border conservation in northern NE and southeastern Canada
- Study is being funded by Partidge Foundation and builds on our prior work in the region, and loan in Quebec
- Canadian connection is essential to ensuring ongoing viability of protection efforts in US (“source sink” relationship)

Transborder Assessment

- US focused on private land acquisition, Canada on public lands redesignation.
- But we found pending and potential land acquisition projects on both sides of border.
- Partridge Foundation is interested in providing \$1M in matching capital for transactions/capacity building along the border and having OSI administer fund.
- There is potential to leverage various philanthropic funds for some transactions.

Protecting Wildlife Habitat

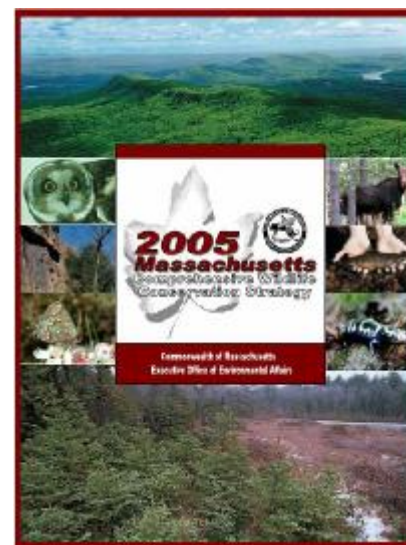
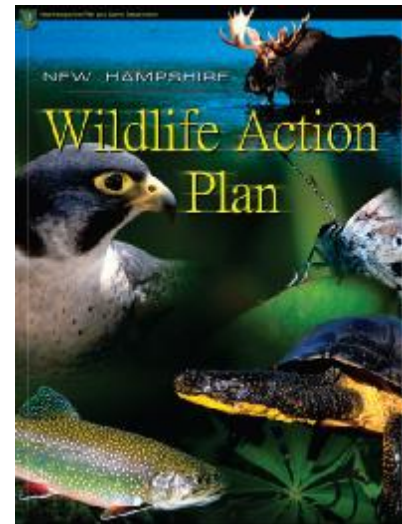
- OSI is now operating regrant funds in GA (\$2.25M) and New England (\$6M) focused on habitat protection
- Both represent strategic partnerships with major foundations
- Both are focused on implementing State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPS)

What are SWAPS and Why Are They Important To Land Trusts?

- Each state must prepare plan and map to protect non-game, as well as game species
- Plans designed to halt species loss through array of strategies, including acquisition
- About \$70M available federally (for acquisition, etc), requires 75% non-federal match
- Some 20 states have been identified by Duke Charitable Foundation as having exemplary plans and maps

Key SWAP Elements

- Priority species and habitats
- Conservation threats
- Conservation actions
- Coordination with other agencies
- Public Participation



State Wildlife Action Plans Mapping Status Summer 2007



Northwest Georgia: Going Local with SWAP

BENWOOD FOUNDATION

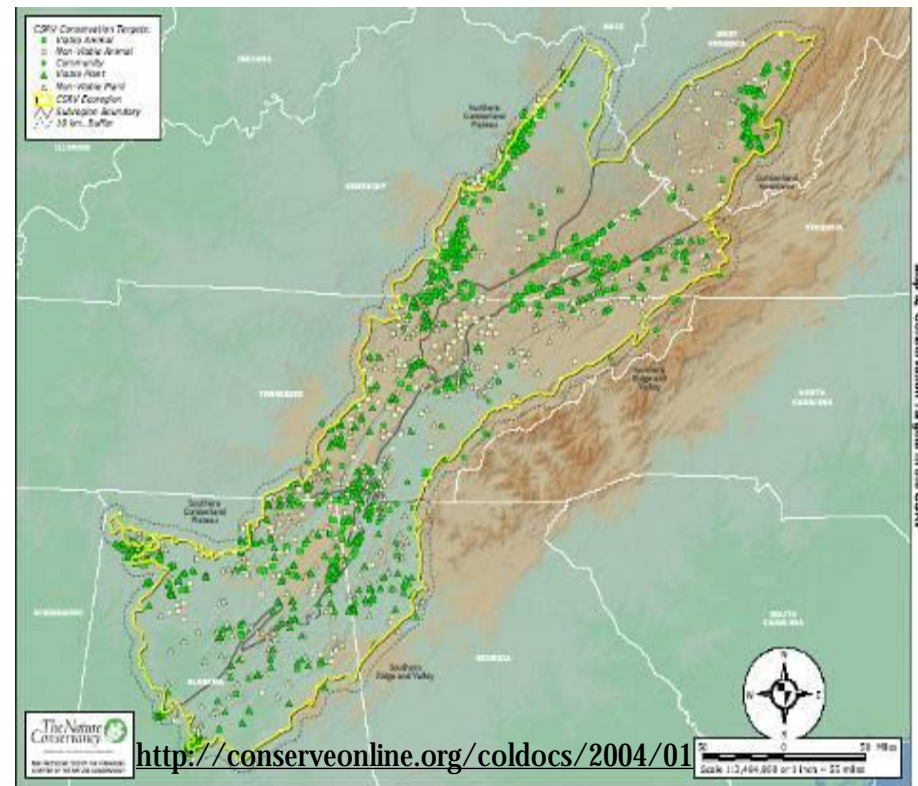


LYNDHURST FOUNDATION

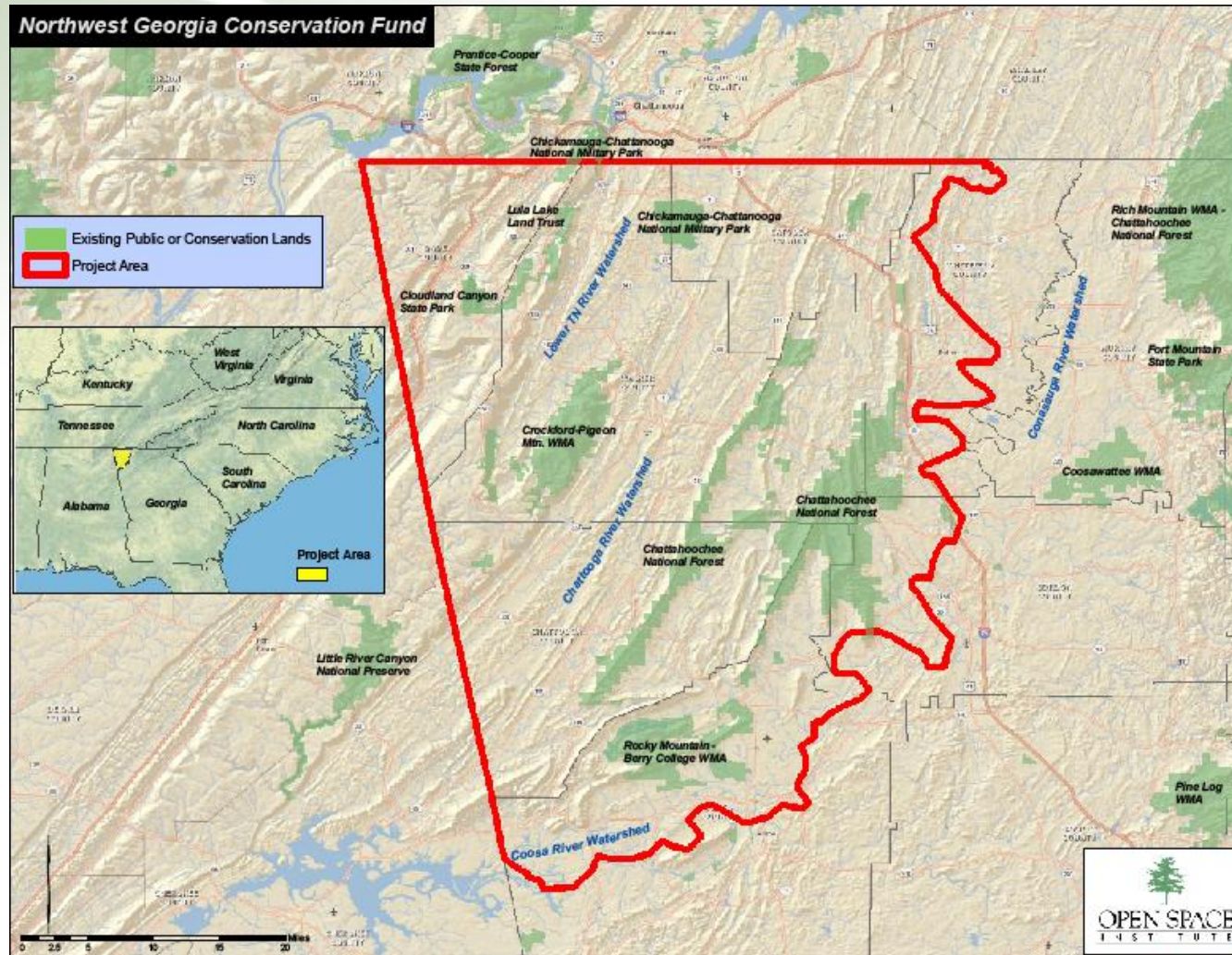
- OSI Created \$2.25M Acquisition Fund with Lyndhurst and Benwood Foundations
- Goal: protect critical and threatened wildlife habitat in 1 million-acre region in NW GA
- Created local advisory committee and developed grantmaking criteria
- Goal: protect 7,000 acres of high priority wildlife habitat

A Region of High Biodiversity

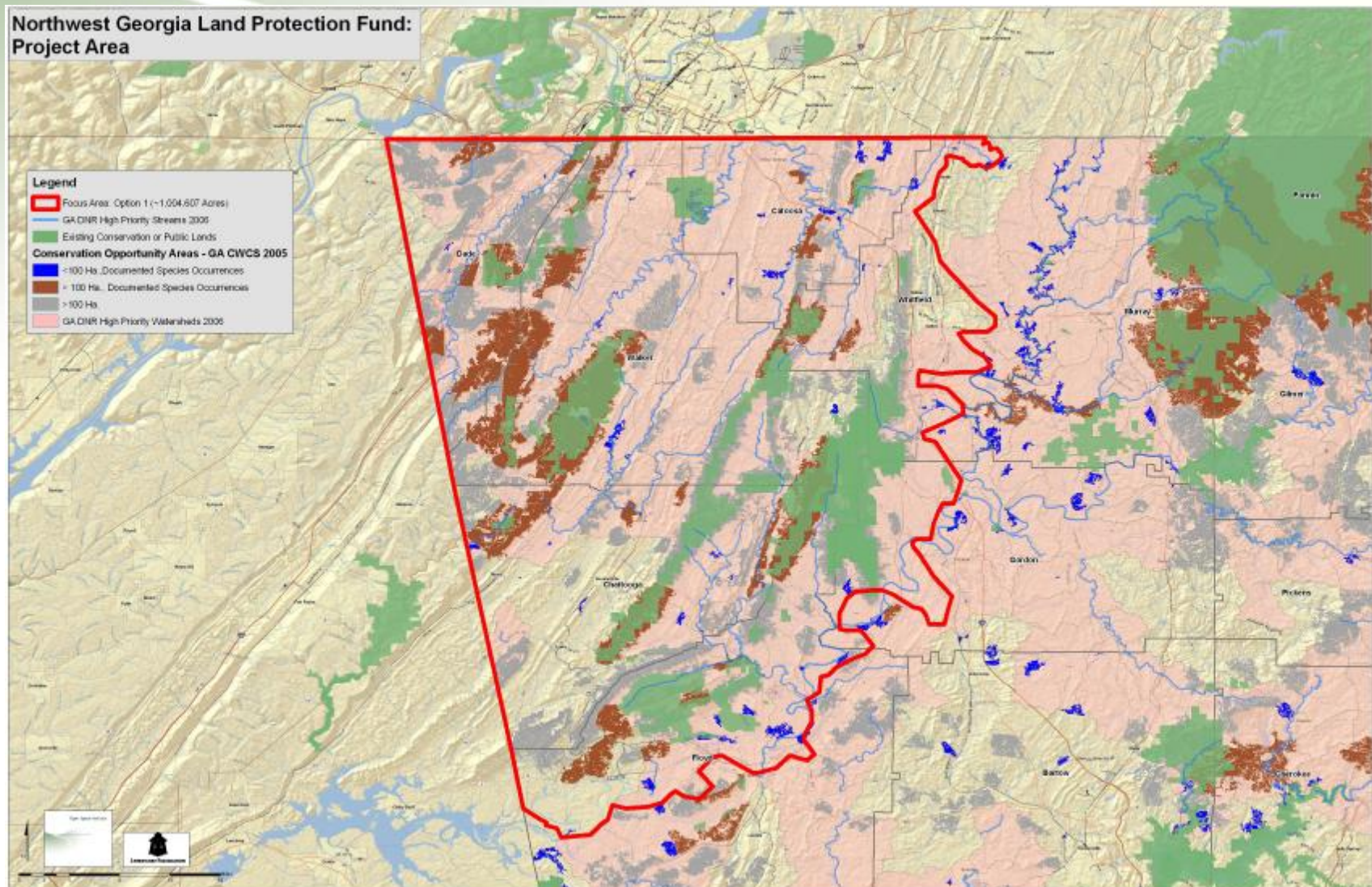
- 29 high priority terrestrial conservation areas (~459,428 acres)
- 16 aquatic conservation areas
- Numerous rare and endangered species
- 16 cave sites



Northwest Georgia Land Protection Fund

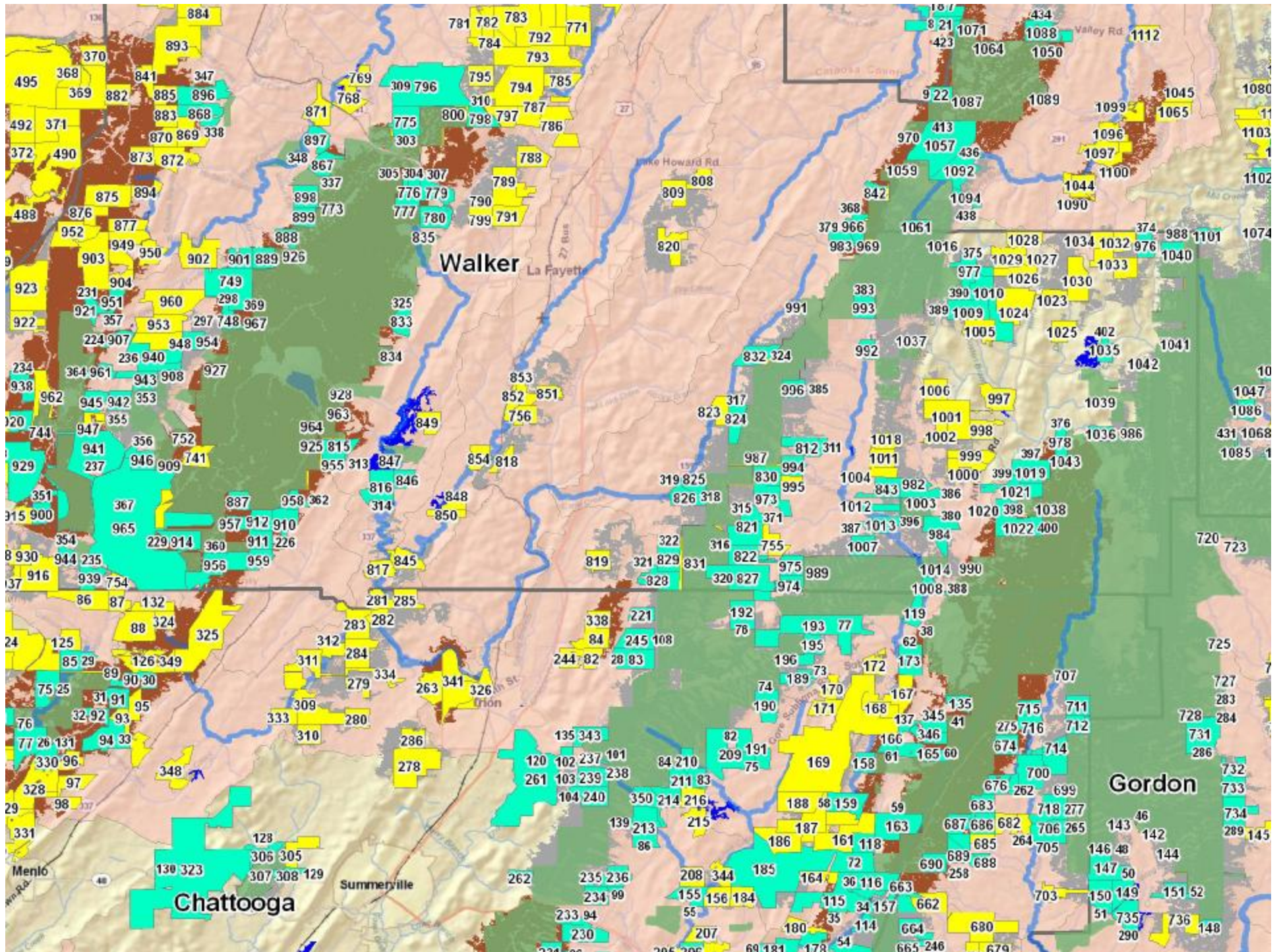


SWAP + conservation land



Mapping Wildlife Habitat

- Of 293,000 acres identified for protection in NW Georgia by SWAP, 204,000 acres remain unprotected.
- Of that amount, about 76,000 acres have been designated as “high priority.”
- By protecting 7,000 acres of high priority habitat, Fund would increase by 10% amount of such protection under the plan.
- Early indications are that we might push closer to 14,000 acres, or 20%.



What Significant about the NW Georgia Work

- Helped to focus land trust on neglected region in Southern Appalachians
- Given incentives for land trust to make SWAP a priority (Georgia Land Trust, Lookout Mountain Land Trust)
- By concentrating on smaller area, can make significant progress
- Model for regional philanthropy

Taking SWAP to Scale: Duke's \$6M Grant to OSI in New England

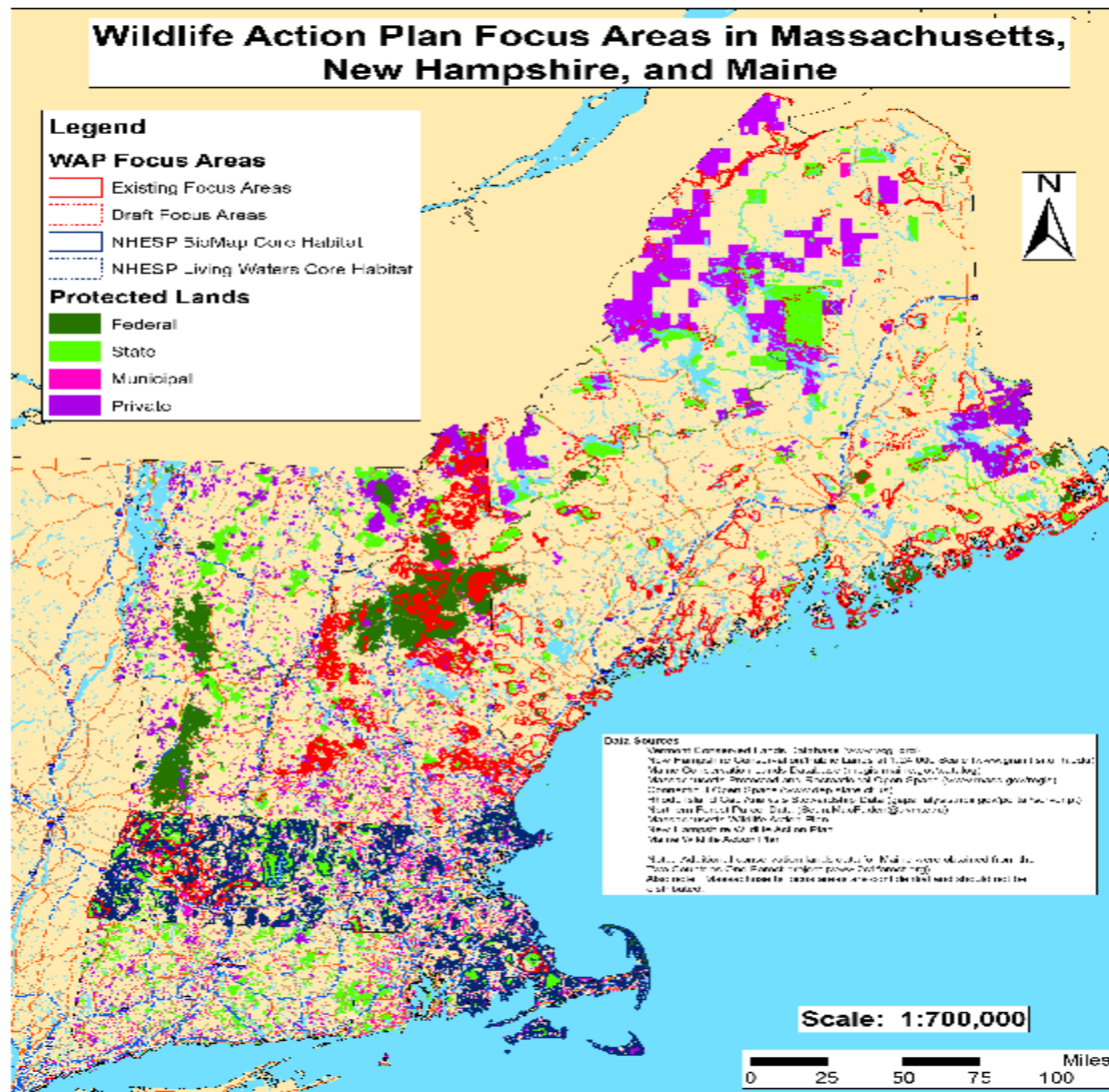
- Grant Focus: NH, ME and MA
- Breakdown of Funds:
 - \$5M for land acquisition, on 5:1 matching basis
 - \$700,000 for "amplification"
 - \$300,000 for administration, convening
- Support 9 – 15 land transactions over two year period

Taking SWAP to Scale: Goals of Amplification

- Secure additional capital
- Publicize projects and approach
- Increase support among critical decision makers
- Advance integration of SWAP into land protection prioritization processes and funding allocations, including the “non-traditional” (e.g. state transportation)

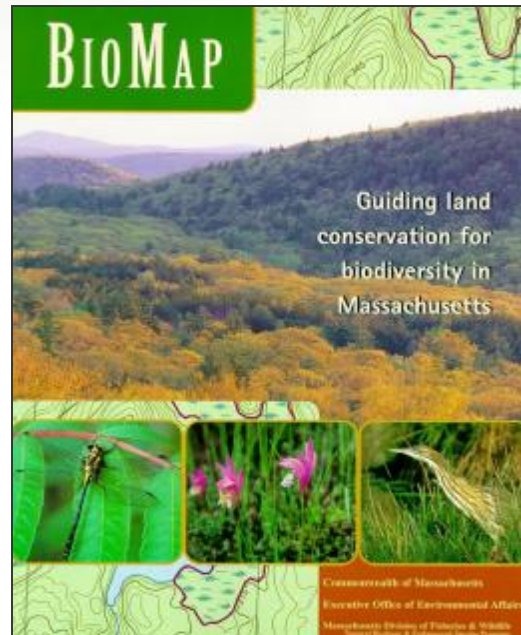
Status of Fund

- Hired Field Coordinator (Jennifer Melville)
- Establishing tri-state advisory committee
- Anticipate putting out Request for Proposals in November and making grants before year end

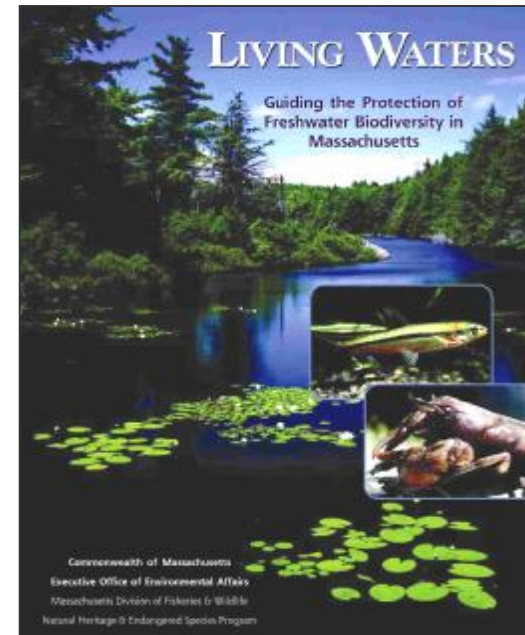


BioMap and Living Waters Projects

- Comprehensive review of Natural Heritage data
- Two complementary statewide conservation plans

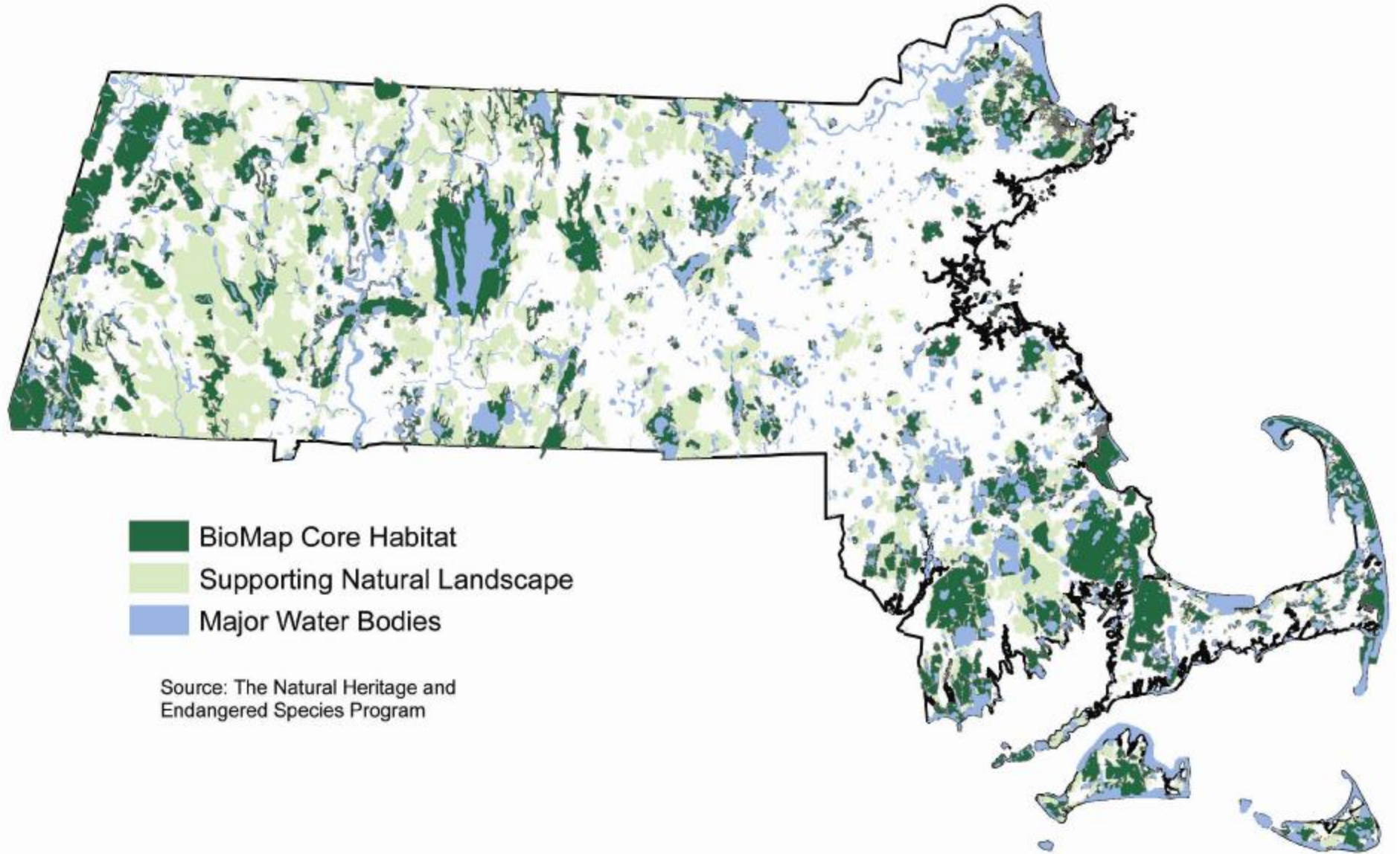


2001

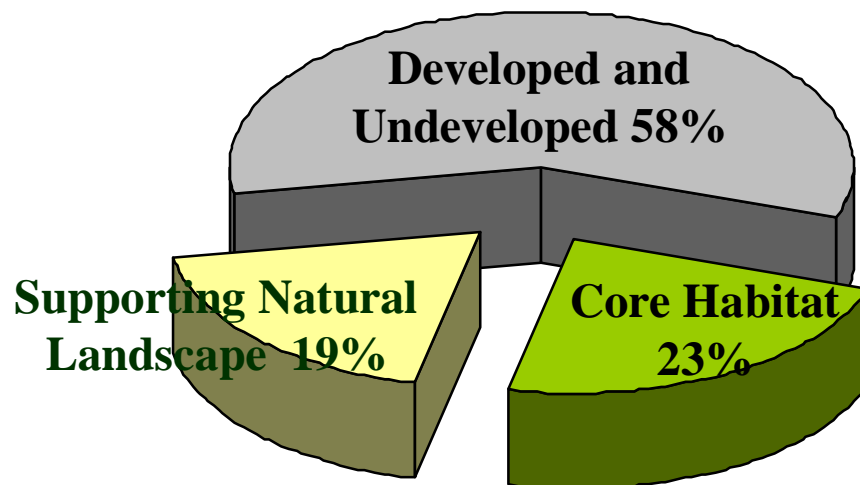
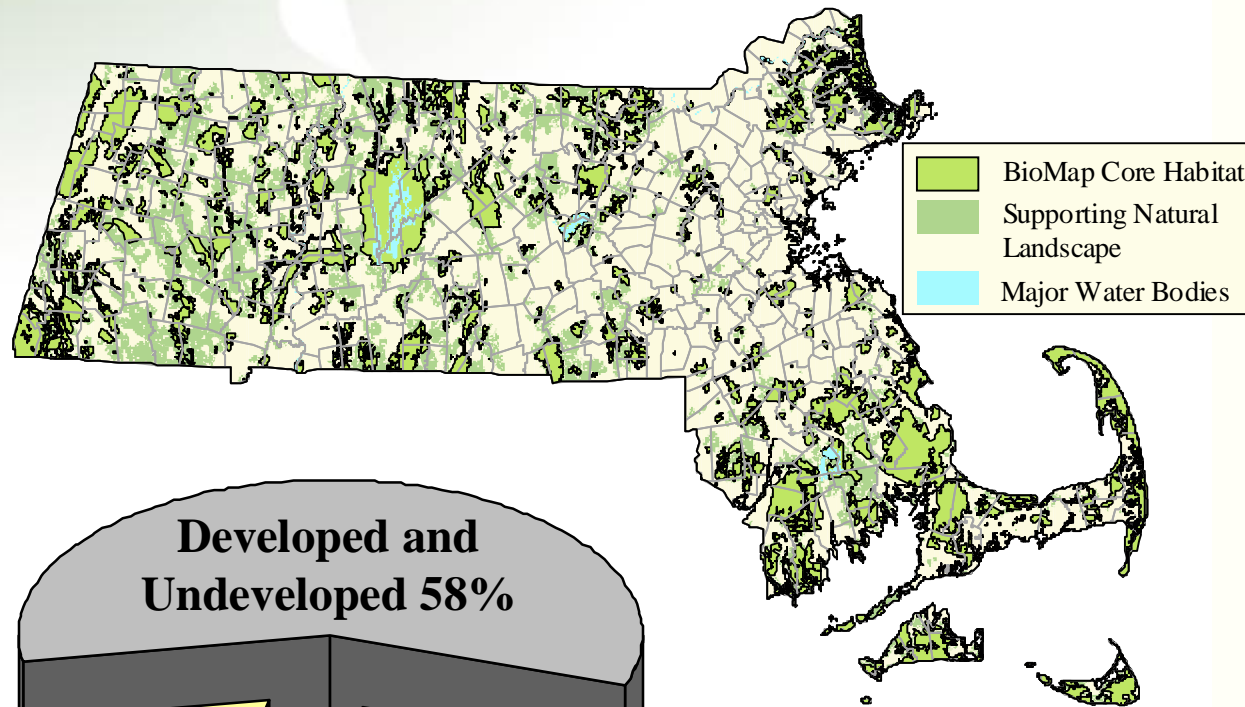


2003

Massachusetts BioMap



Massachusetts BioMap Core Habitat and Supporting Natural Landscape



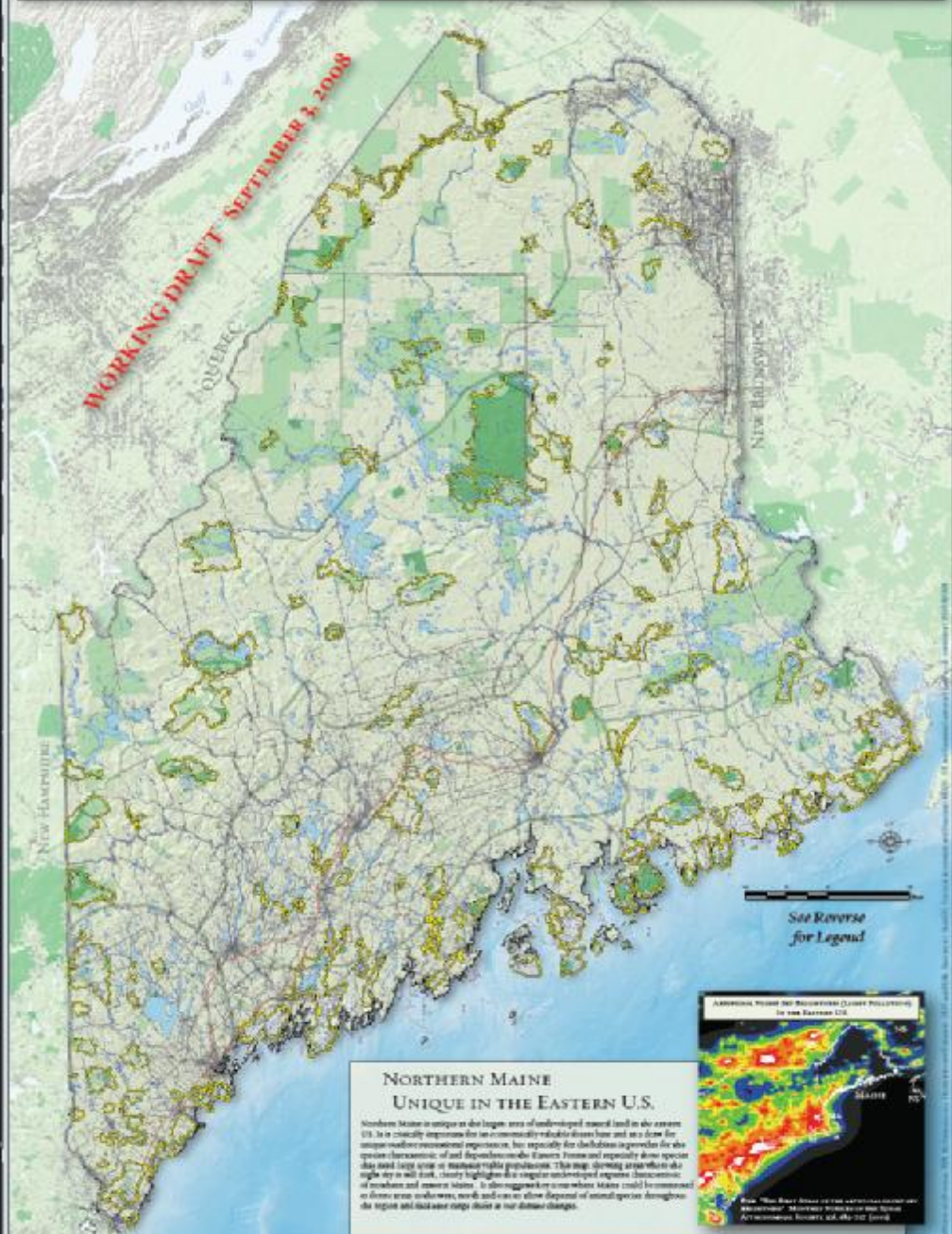


The Greening with HABITAT



MAINE CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

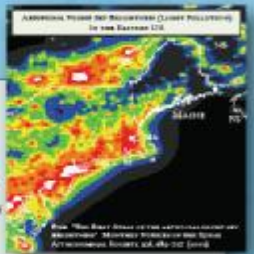
WORKING DRAFT SEPTEMBER 3, 2008



See Reverse for Legend

**NORTHERN MAINE
UNIQUE IN THE EASTERN U.S.**

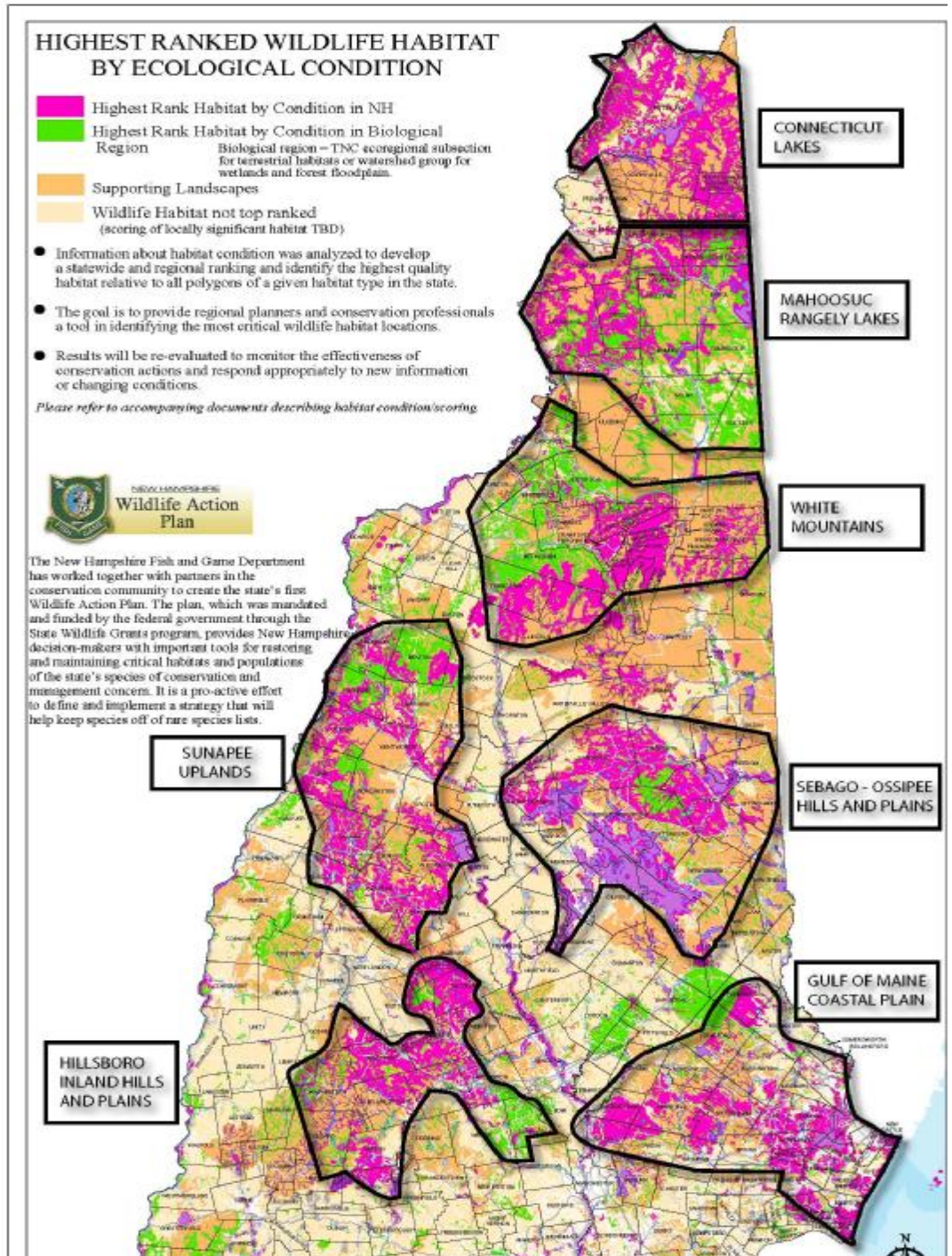
Northern Maine is unique in the largest area of undeveloped forest land in the eastern U.S. It is critically important for its commercially viable forest base and as a home for unique and/or threatened species, but especially for the habitat important for the species characteristic of and dependent on the Eastern Forest and especially those species that need large areas of mature high quality forest. This map shows areas where the single tree is well stock, clearly highlights the unique undeveloped regions characteristic of northern and eastern Maine. It also suggests areas where Maine could be considered as diverse areas and where, north and east of these regions of natural species throughout the region and that water ways that in our diverse changes.



NE SWAP: Focus on New Hampshire



DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



Connecticut River Forest Project

- 2,100-acre fee deal by Society for the Preservation of New Hampshire Forests in CT Lakes region
- High priority on NH SWAP map
- Nested within matrix of protected lands, including several projects supported with past OSI regrants and loans
- Project closed recently (About \$3M, with variety of federal and state sources)

Proposed Connecticut River Forest



Connecticut River Forest
2,100 ac.

Connecticut River Forest
 Subject Property
 2,100 +/- acre

Conserved Lands
 Fee Owned by Public Agency,
 Non-Profit Group, or Private Institution

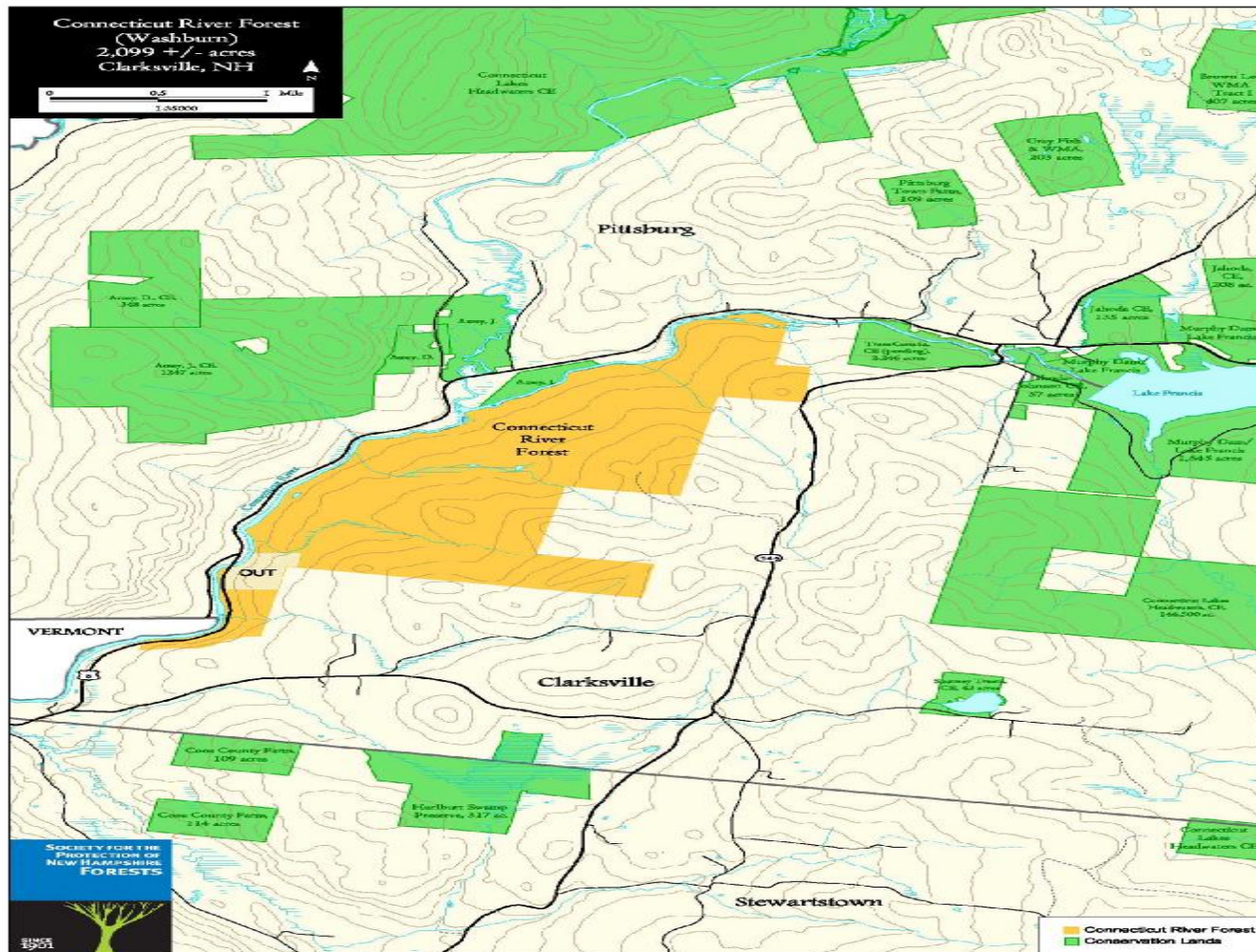


Open Space Institute

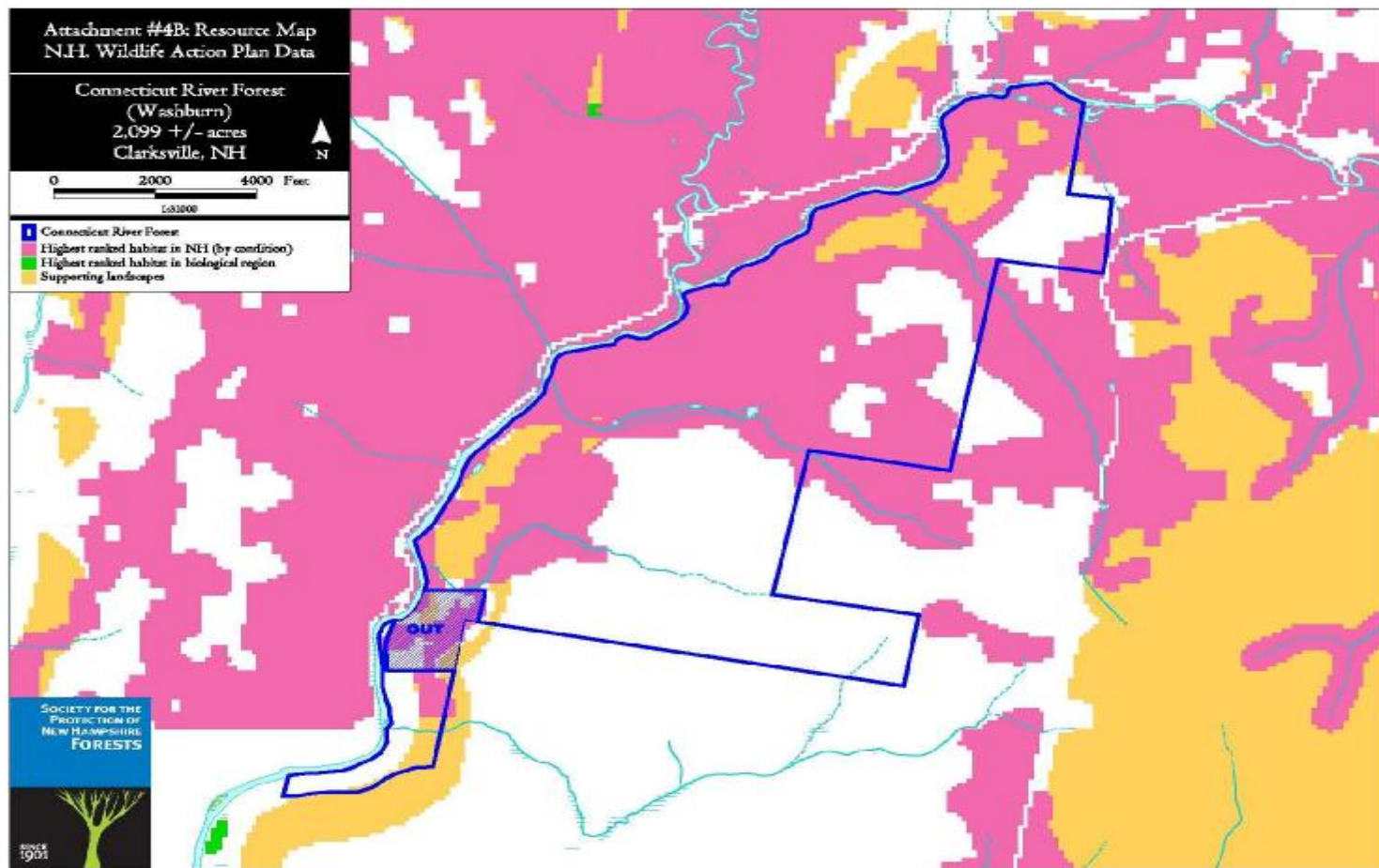
Connecticut River Forest Project



Connecticut River Forest Project



SWAP and Connecticut River Forest Project



Society of Protection of New Hampshire Forests and SWAP

- One of nation's oldest land trusts
- In past, priorities often determined by landowners' interest
- SWAP has brought new focus to SPNHF's work and significant implications for conservation more generally

SPNHF and SWAP Key Changes

- SWAP has brought greater focus
 - Some places more important than others
 - Regions without Tier 1 + 2 become “local priorities”
- Yet it also been umbrella for other values, e.g., water quality, large forest blocks, etc.
- SWAP directing public money for purchased land and easement (state and towns, eg Warner)

SPNHF and SWAP Key Changes

- SWAP is spurring more strategic, proactive conservation
 - Increased use of GIS is spurring planning by all kinds of trusts and towns
 - Need to go beyond donated conservation and rely on public/private money adding impetus
- Will money follow?

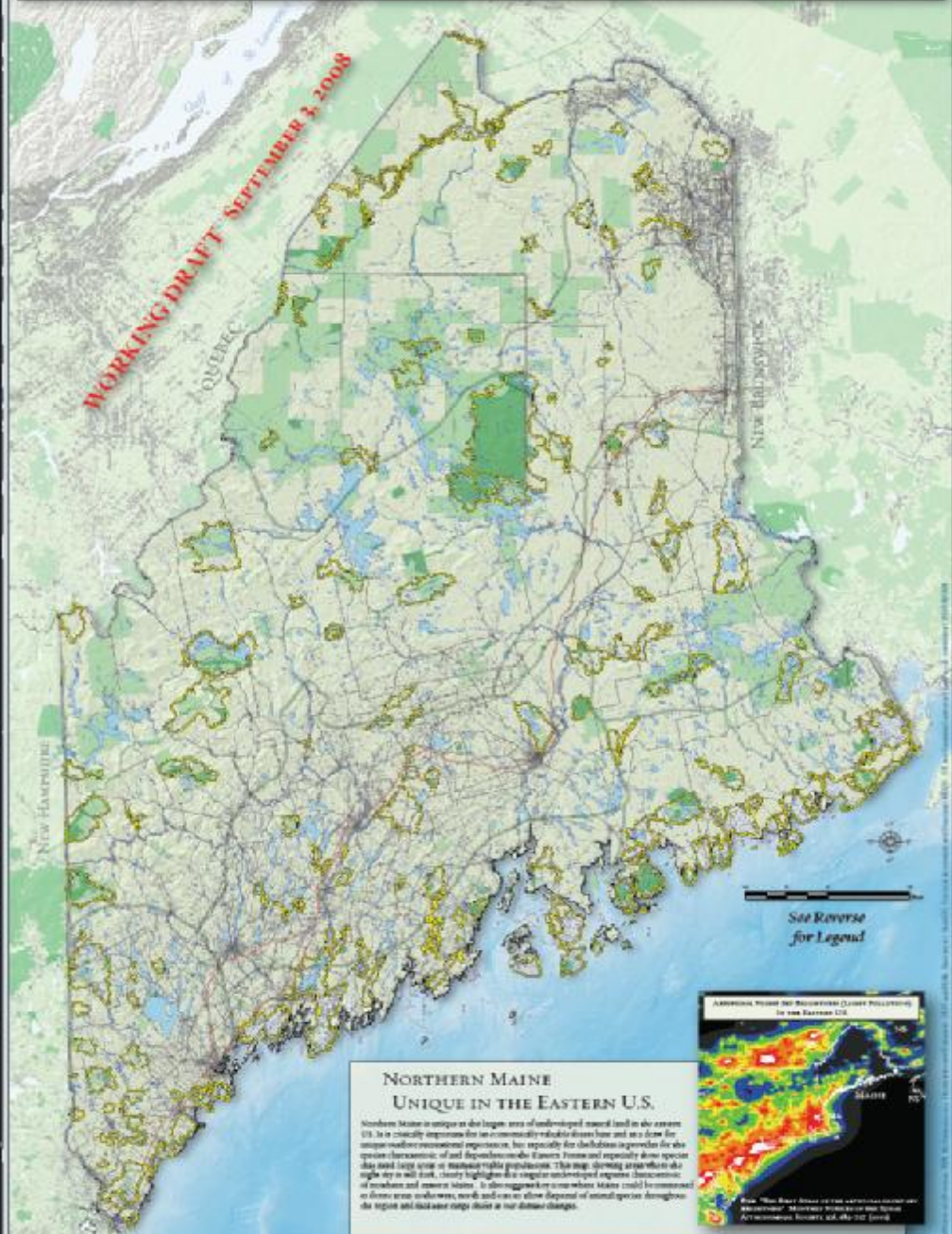


The Greening with HABITAT



MAINE CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

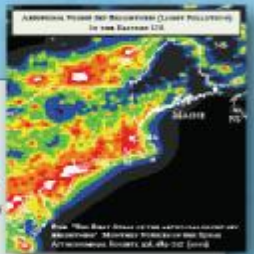
WORKING DRAFT SEPTEMBER 3, 2008



See Reverse for Legend

NORTHERN MAINE UNIQUE IN THE EASTERN U.S.

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Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea

CONSERVATION
INITIATIVE

A Conservation Plan for the Mount Agamenticus Region:

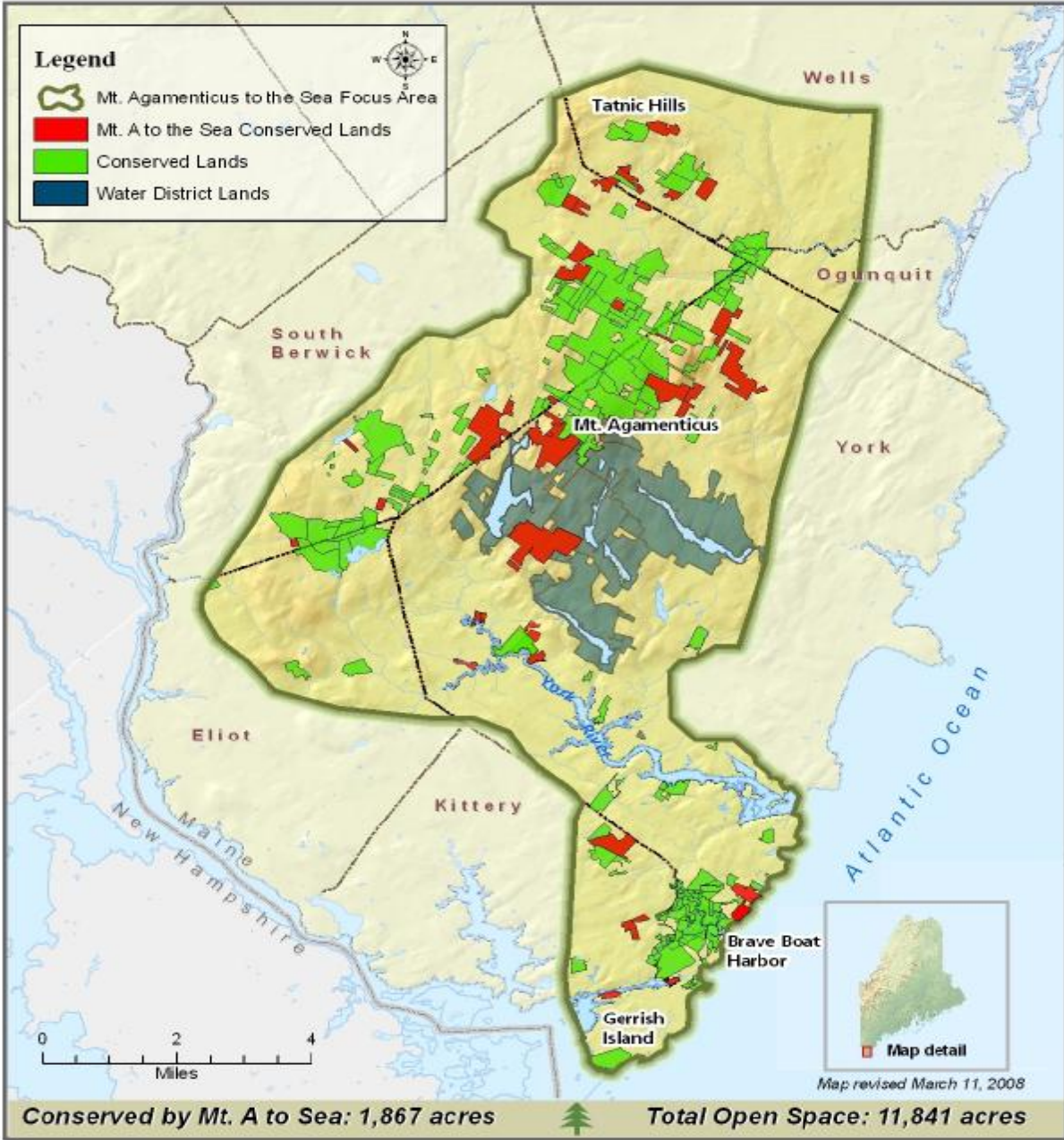


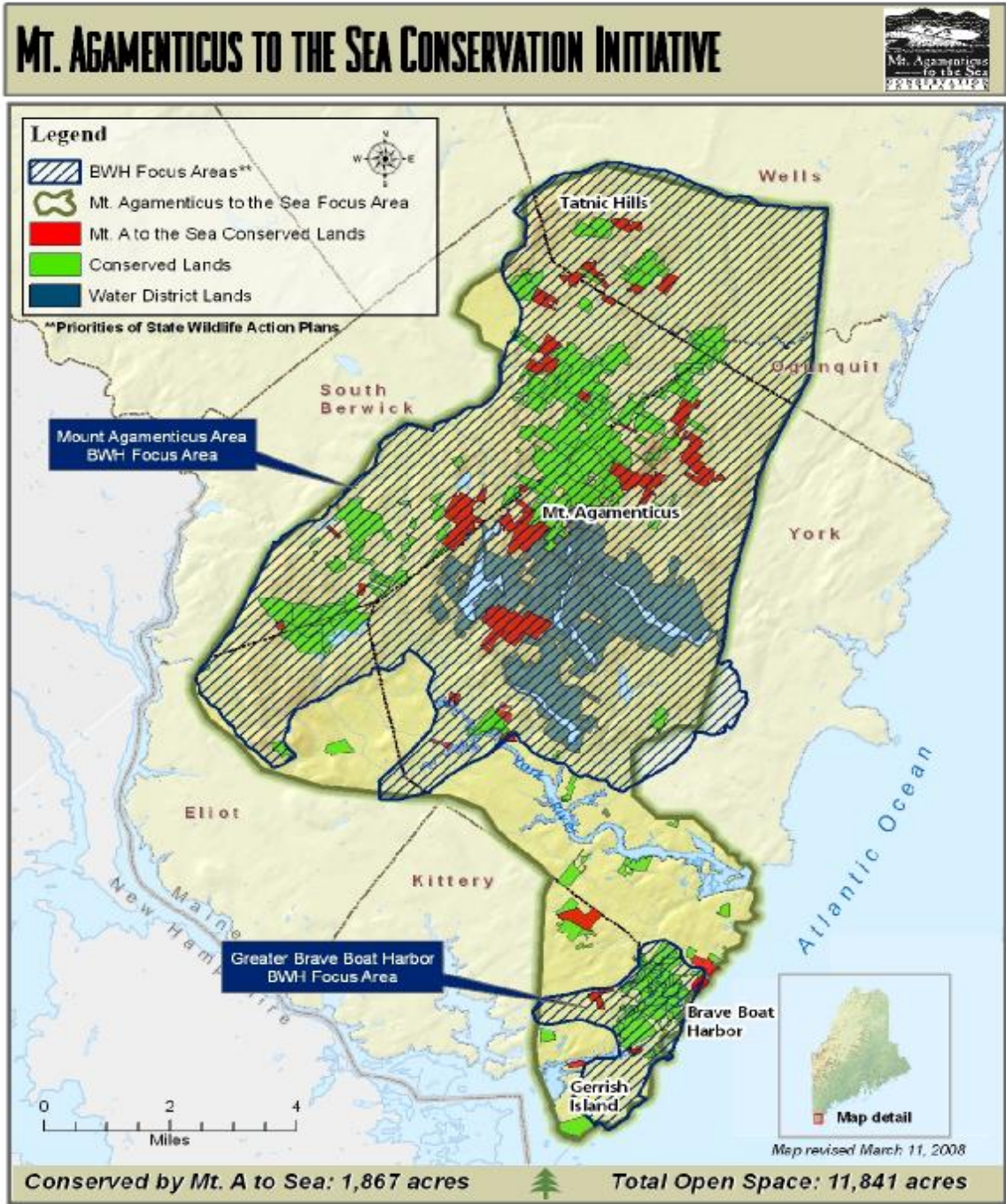
A Community Plan for the Future

Draft

April 2004

MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA CONSERVATION INITIATIVE







Rare, Endangered or Exemplary in Mt. A region

ANIMALS

- Spotted Turtle
- Wood Turtle
- Blandings Turtle
- Northern black racer
- Ribbon Snake
- Swamp darter
- Brown snake
- New England Cottontail
- Spring salamander
- Scarlet Bluet
- New England Bluet
- Ringed Boghaunter Dragonfly (globally-rare)

PLANT COMMUNITIES

- Atlantic White Cedar Swamp
- Chestnut Oak Woodland
- Pocket Swamp
- Leatherleaf Bog
- Grassy Shrub Marsh
- Sandy Lake Bottom
- Pitch Pine Bog
- Red Maple Swamp
- White Oak-Red Oak Forest

PLANTS

- Wild Leek
- White wood aster
- Upright bindweed
- Atlantic White-Cedar
- Spotted Wintergreen
- Sweet pepperbush
- Flowering Dogwood
- Eastern Joe-pye weed
- Featherfoil
- Smooth winterberry holly
- Slender blue flag
- Mountain Laurel
- Spicebush
- Broadbeach fern
- Pale green orchid
- Alga-like pondweed
- Chestnut Oak
- Tall Beak-rush
- Sassafras
- Swamp Saxifrage
- Columbia Water-Meal

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Reflections on SWAP and Land Trusts

- Land trusts tend to be reactive and opportunistic
- Conserving wildlife habitat is but one of several objectives (how many trusts have a biologist on staff?)
- What happens if your projects aren't on the SWAP map?

Reflections on SWAP and Land Trusts

- SWAP may help differentiate habitat conservation from other priorities
- SWAP could also help develop umbrella for incorporating other interests
- If SWAP reorients public funding priorities, that may be most effective in realigning land trust priorities as well (“follow the money”)
- Will SWAP also help land trusts think about integrating acquisition and management and restoration?
- Can SWAP be vehicle for building constituency and policy-maker support for increased funding?

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