

# Wildlands and Woodlands



## Farmlands and Communities

*Broadening the Vision for New England*



*Liz Thompson  
January 9, 2014  
House Committee  
on Environment  
and Energy*



## Major Partners

- Region-wide
- Nationally recognized
- Complementary WWF&C strengths

Coordinators -- David Foster & Marissa Latshaw

Steering Committee -- All organizations

Communication Group -- Most organizations)

External Advisory Council -- TBD

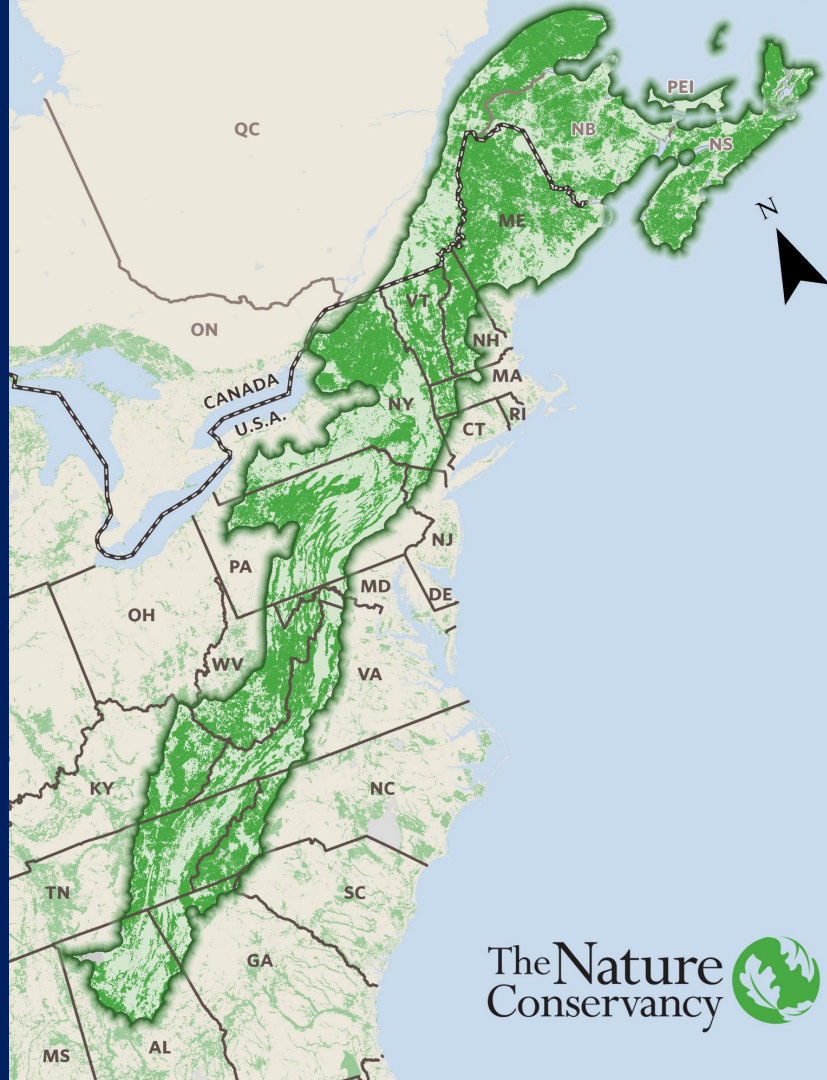


- < 34% forested
- 34-66% forested
- 66-100% forested

N  
500 miles

New England





The Nature  
Conservancy 

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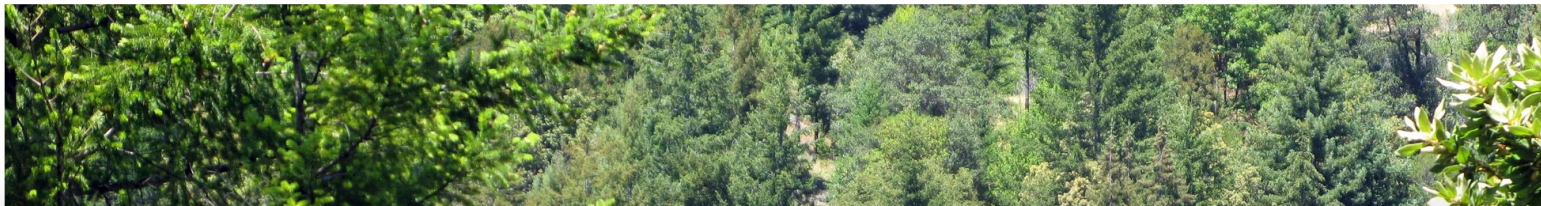
April 1995 Issue

EXPLORE ▾

# An Explosion of Green

The reforestation of the eastern United States—thanks partly to conservationists and mostly to accident—can show the developing world how to make room for people, farming, industry, and endangered species of plants and animals, which have been returning. We can give the rest of the world a better example if we address the problems that even this fortunate region still faces

By Bill McKibben



# A History of Rewilding

# A Second Chance for New England's Forests

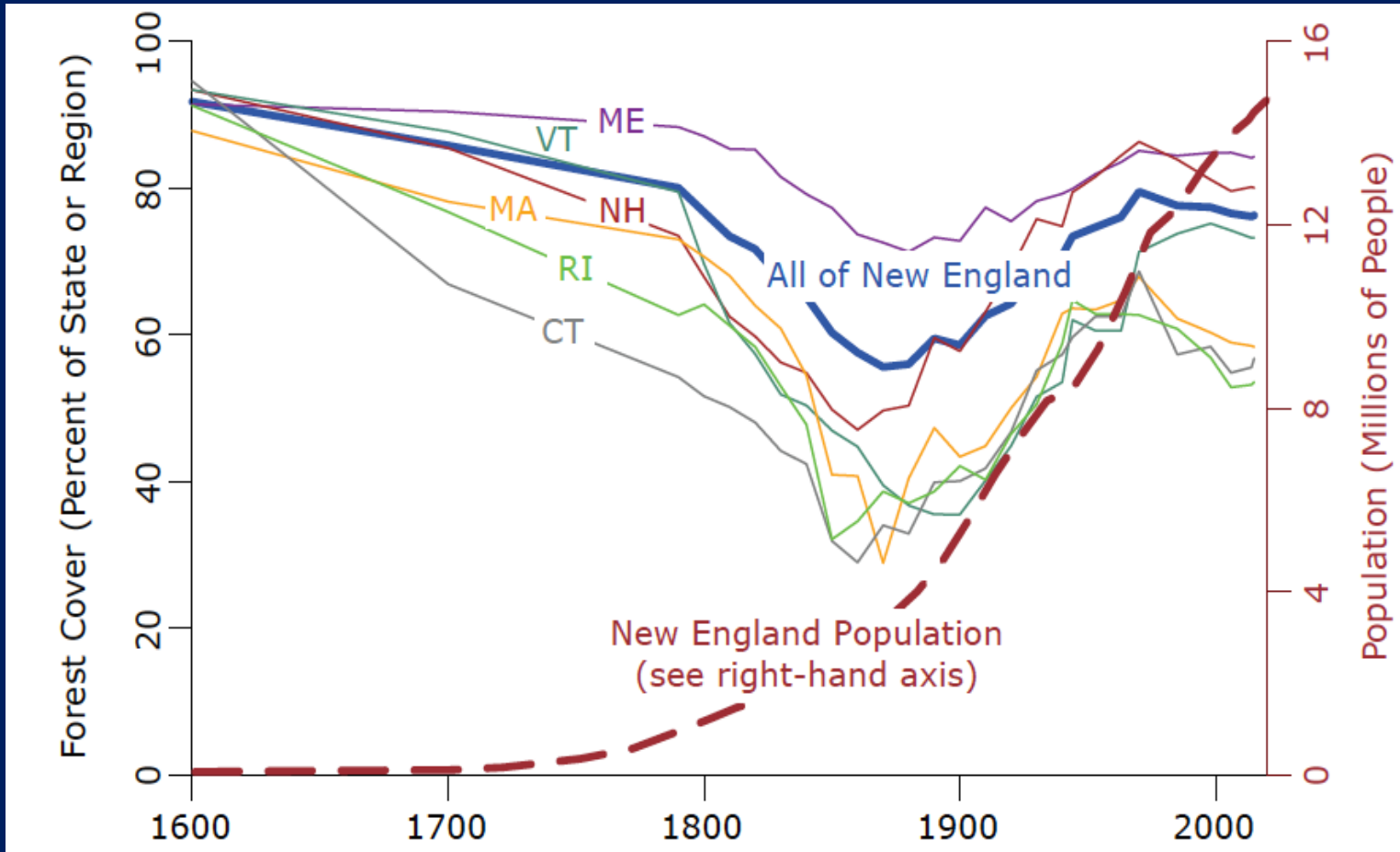
1880's

Today

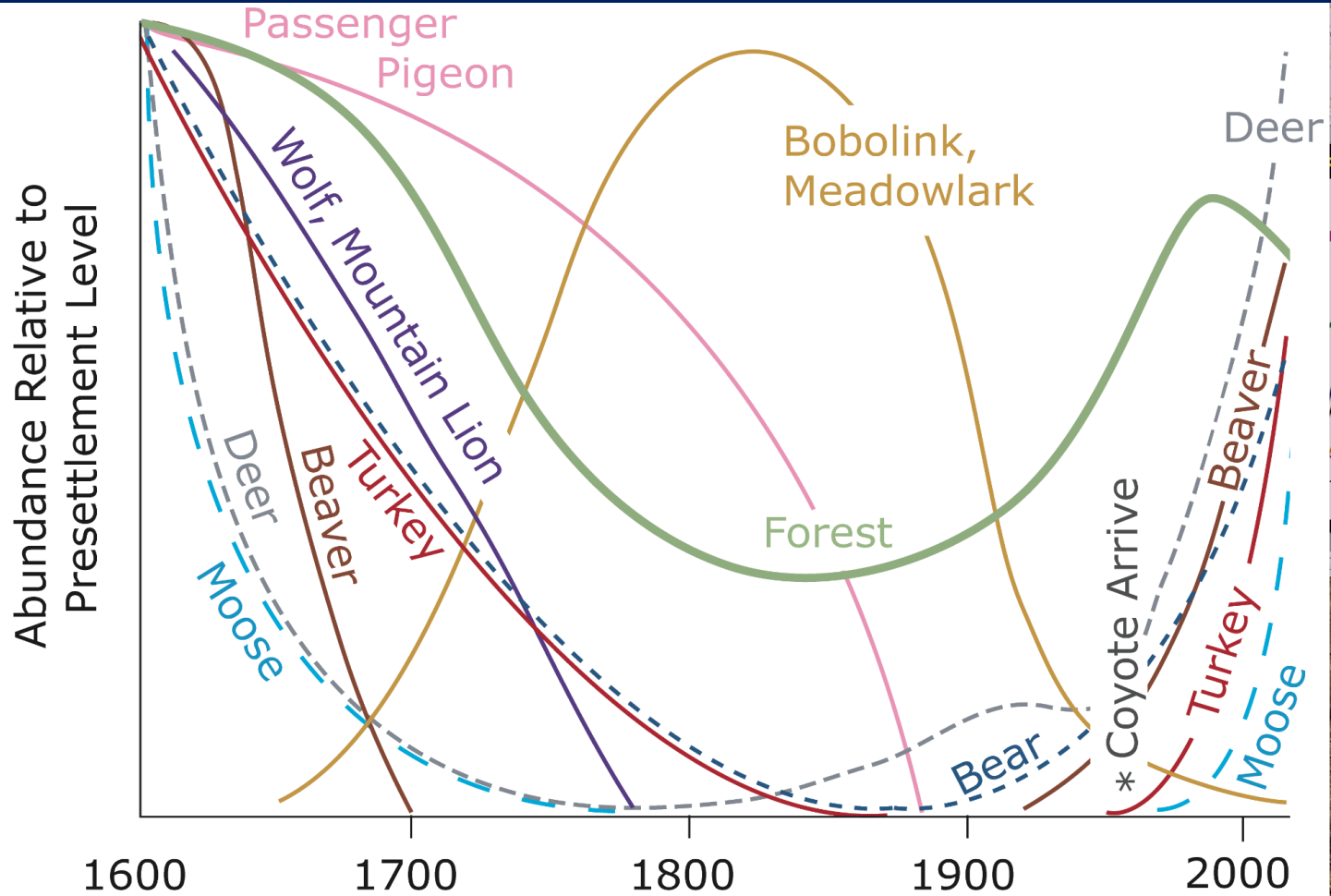
Swift River -- Petersham, Massachusetts



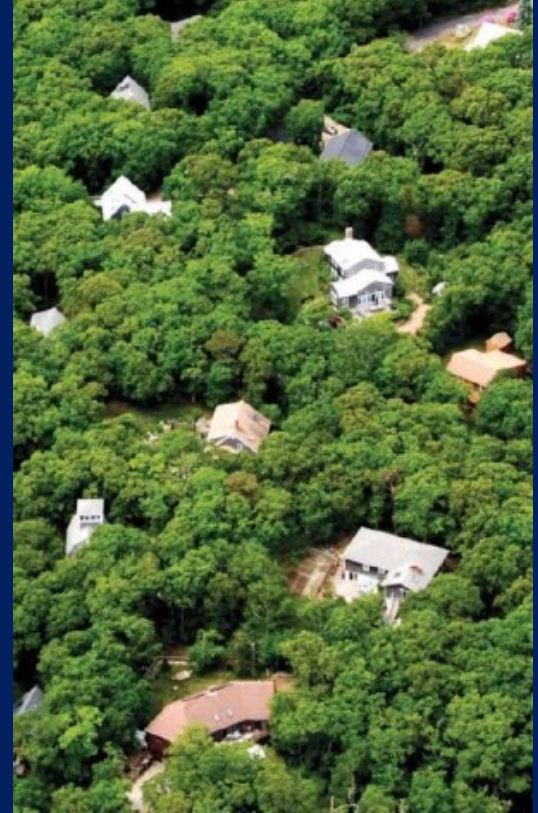
# New England – “A Great Environmental Story”



# Wildlife Dynamics in the New England Landscape









GENT  
NAILS  
PARLO

ROAM

DO NOT  
ENTER

4322





# **Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities: A Conservation Vision for New England**

**At least 70% of New England conserved as forest (30M acres)**

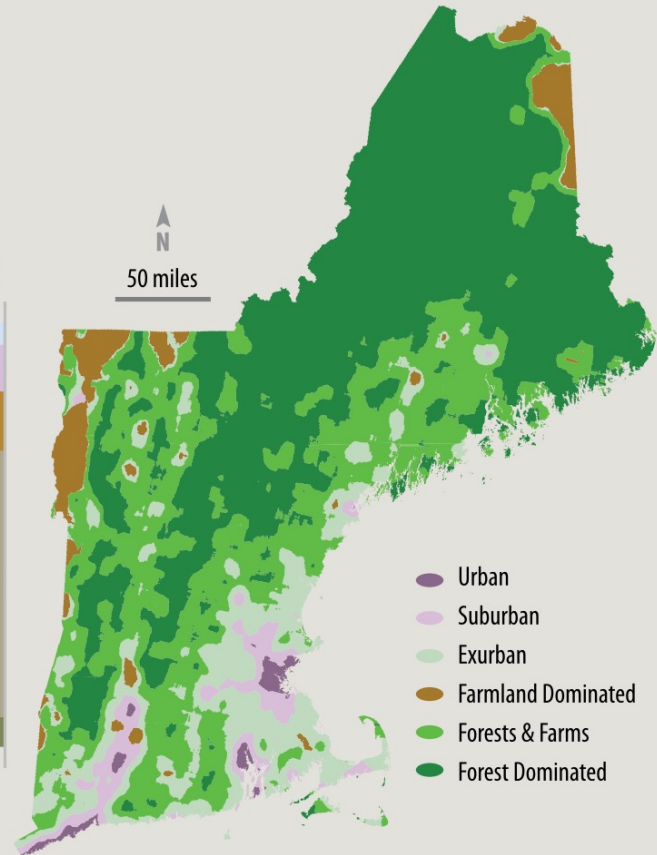
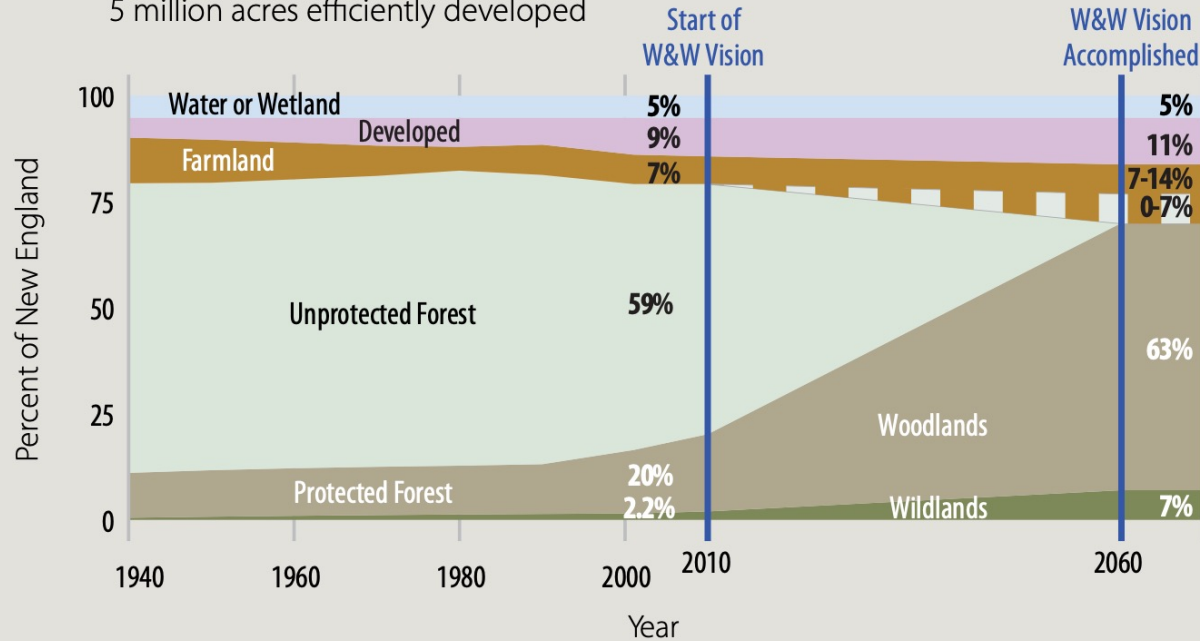
- 80-90% of these lands managed as **Woodlands** (27M acres)
- 10-20% of these lands managed as large **Wildlands** (3M acres)

**7% of New England conserved as farmland (3M acres)**

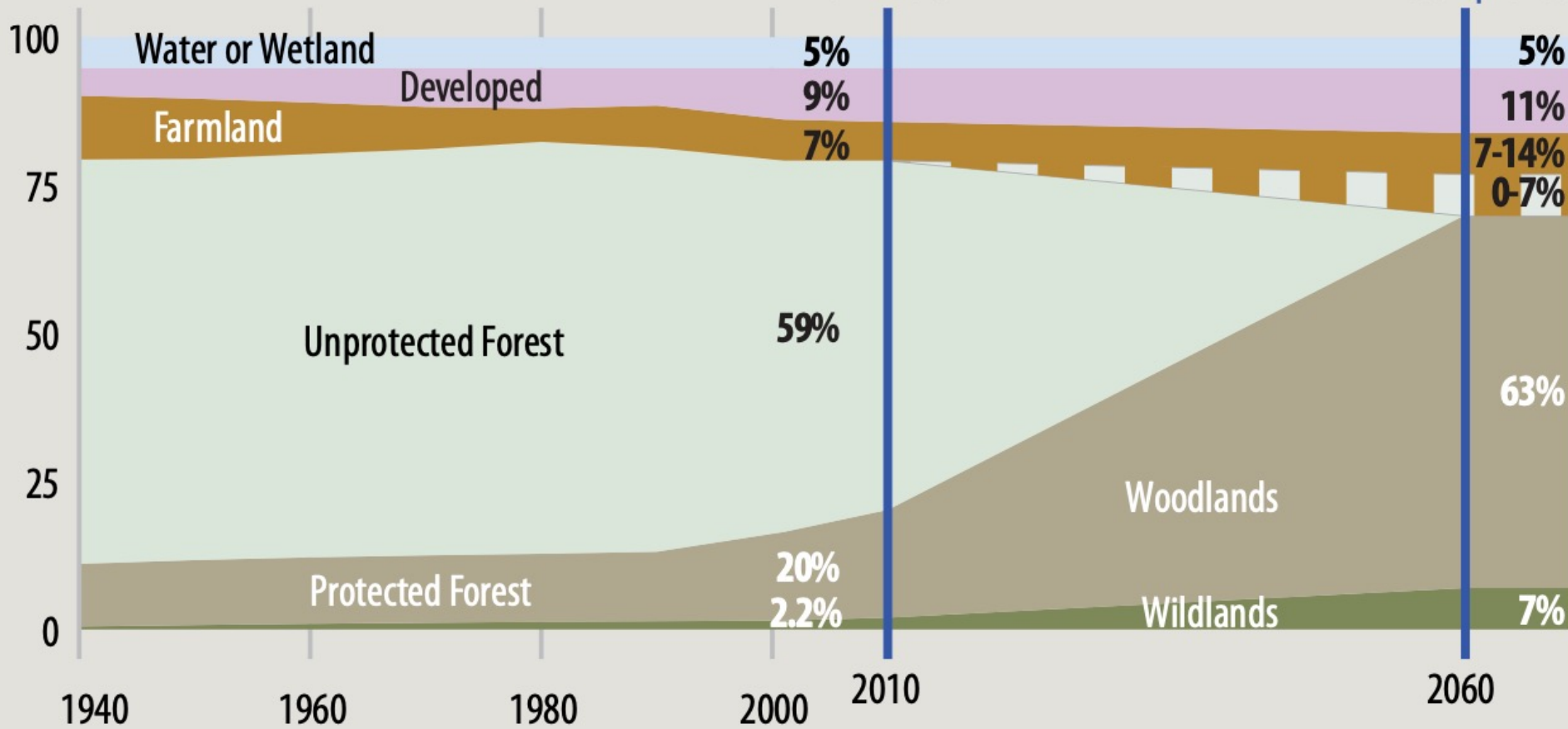
**Smart growth to complement forest and farm conversion**

## Wildlands & Woodlands Vision for New England in 2060

30 million acres conserved forest  
 90% Woodlands / 10% Wildlands  
 3-6 million acres conserved farmland  
 5 million acres efficiently developed



**Figure 1.** In a Wildlands and Woodlands future, New England will remain a diverse landscape with local conditions, community priorities, and landowner choices determining the relative amounts of forest, farms, and developed lands in each location.



# Wildlands



# Wildlands in New England

*Past, Present, and Future*

***Wildlands in New England***  
is the first U.S. study to  
map and characterize all  
permanently conserved  
lands in one region that are  
managed to be forever  
wild.

The study provides a baseline and  
path forward to secure more land as  
Wildlands.



An Integrated Conservation Initiative





# Why we need Wildlands

Intrinsic value

Biodiversity

Carbon storage

Ecological resiliency

Quiet reflection

Baselines

Global, Regional, Statewide  
Conservation Goals

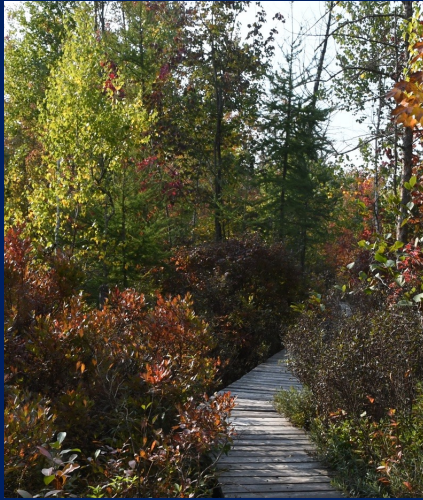


Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve in Vermont

Photo credit: Jerry Monkman

# What are Wildlands?

Wildlands are tracts of any size and current condition, permanently protected from development, in which management is explicitly intended to allow natural processes to prevail with “free will” and minimal human interference. Humans have been part of nature for millennia and can coexist within and with Wildlands without intentionally altering their structure, composition, or function.



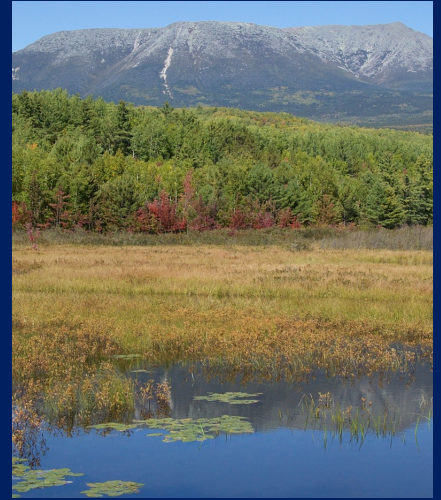
Colchester Bog, Vermont



Monhegan Island, Maine



Muddy Pond, Massachusetts



Baxter State Park, Maine

# Wildlands Criteria

- Wildland Intent
- Management for an Untrammelled Condition
- Permanent Protection



H

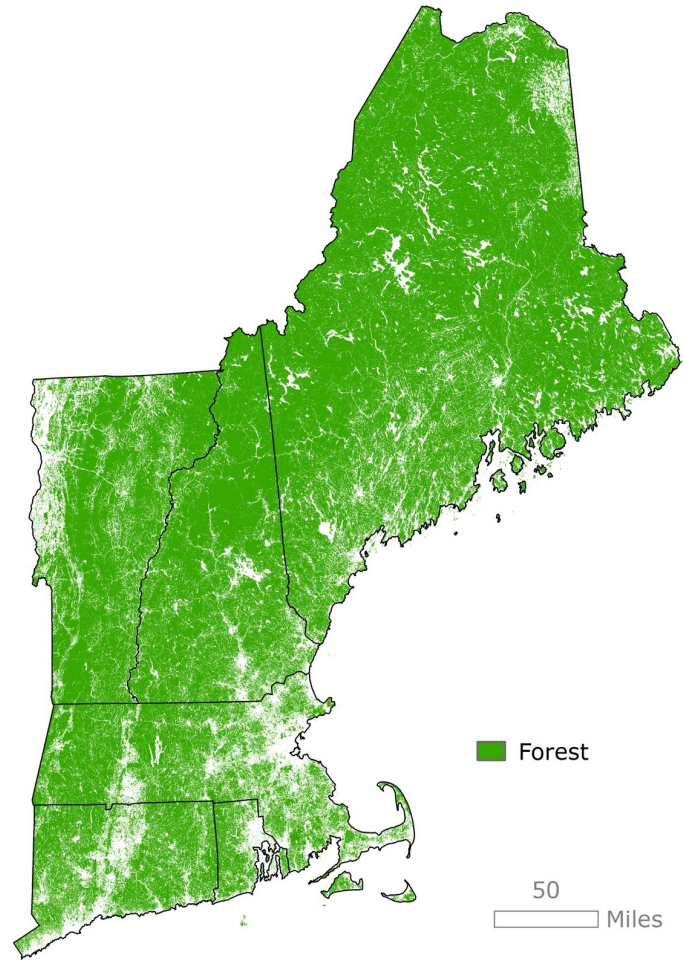
THESE WILDLANDS ARE  
ALL PRIVATELY OWNED,  
PLEASE HELP KEEP  
THEM PRISTINE .

- NO SMOKING OR FIRES
- NO WHEELED VEHICLES
- DO NOT DISTURB PLANTS
- PACK IN / PACK OUT

NO DRONES

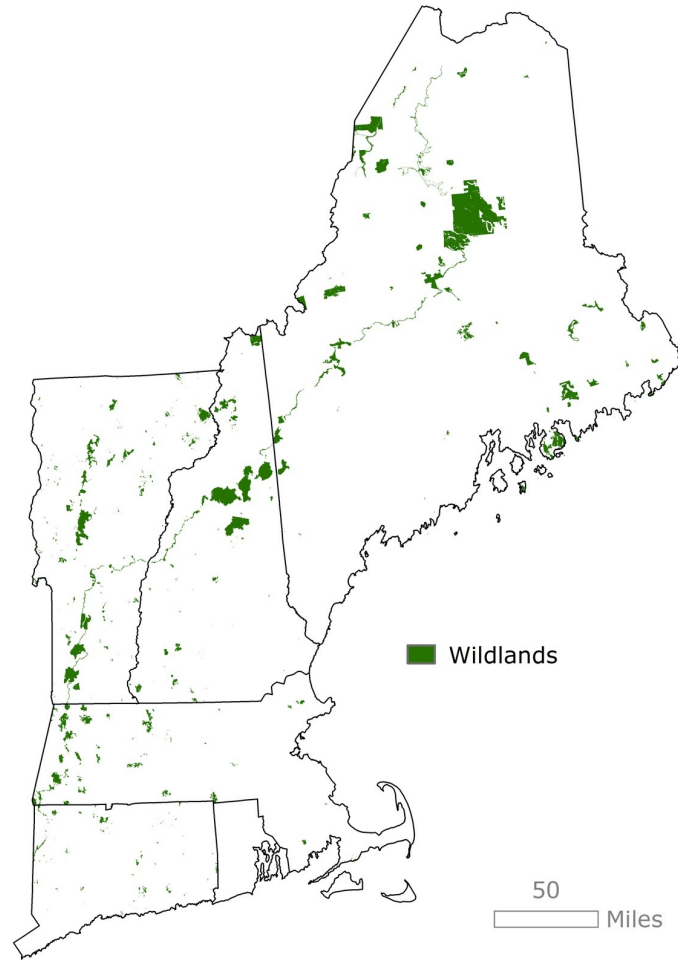
# 81%

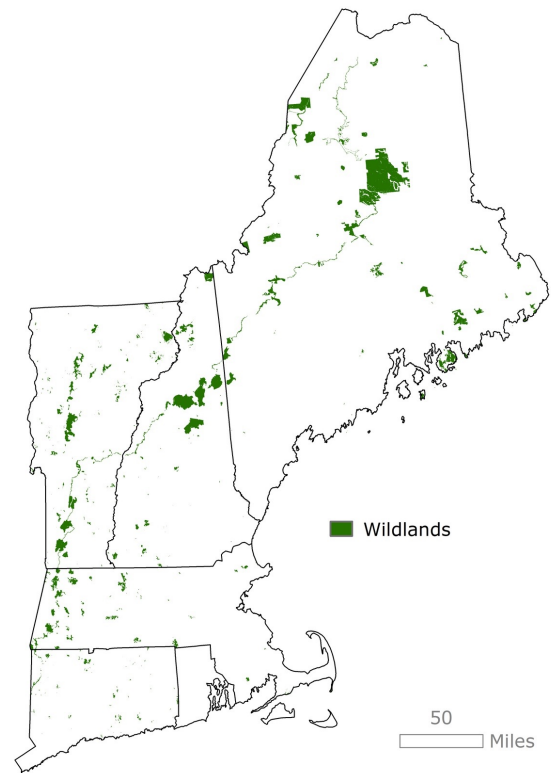
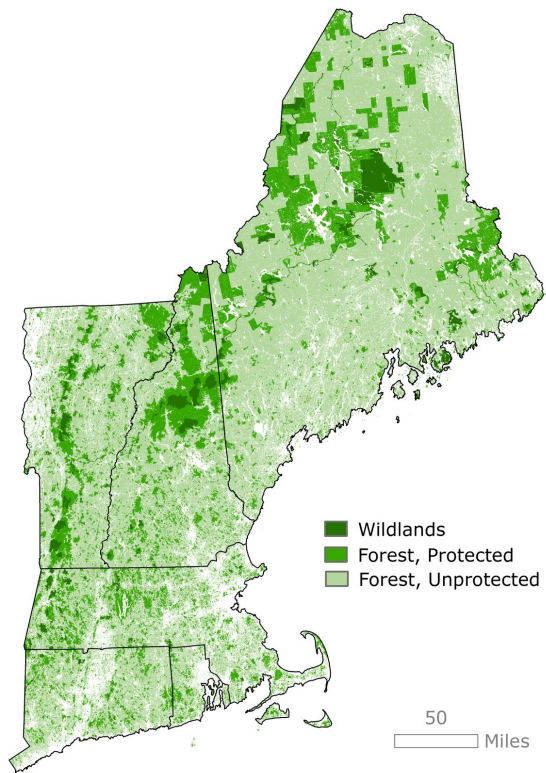
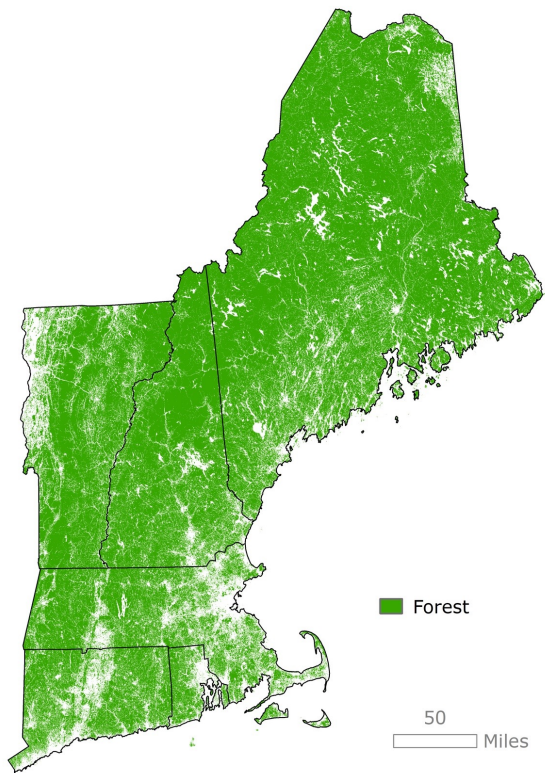
of New England is forest.



3.3%

is Wildlands.





# Woodlands

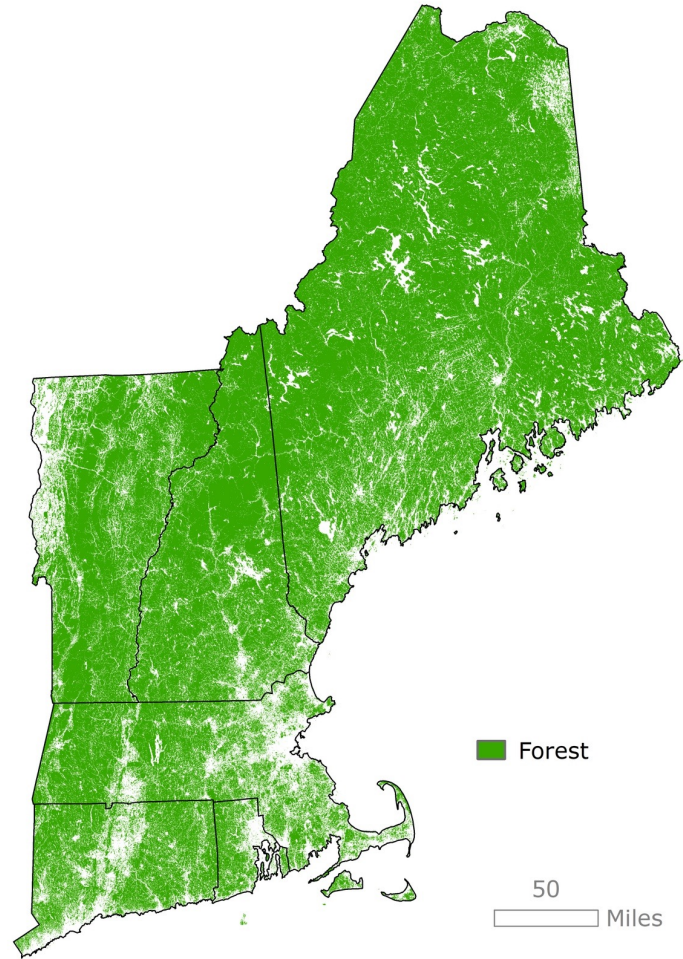


# Woodlands

Research

Communications

Collaboration







bioRxiv

THE PREPRINT SERVER FOR BIOLOGY

New Results

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## Do working forest easements work for conservation?

 Jonathan R. Thompson, Alexey Kalinin, Lucy G. Lee, Valerie J. Pasquarella, Joshua Plisinski, Katharine R. E. Sims

**doi:** <https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.08.24.554638>

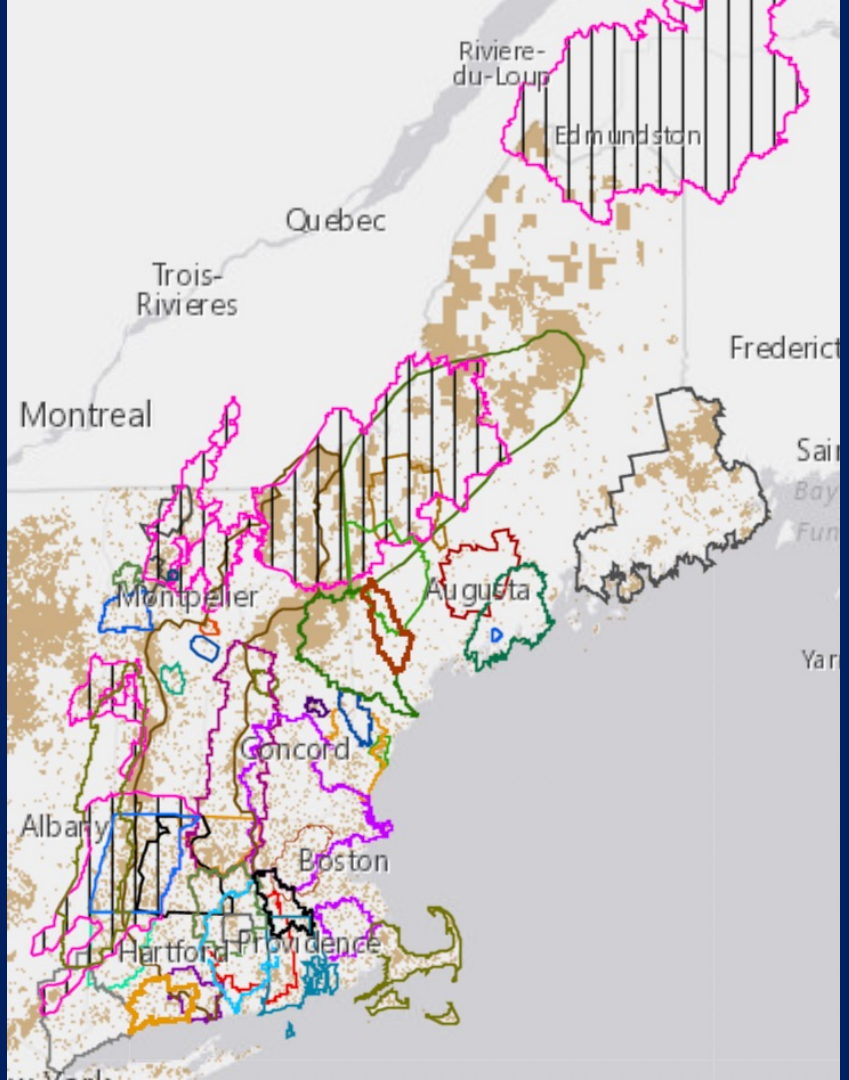
# From the Ground Up

*Conversations about conservation, climate, and  
communities in New England.*





**Regional  
Conservation  
Partnership**  
NETWORK



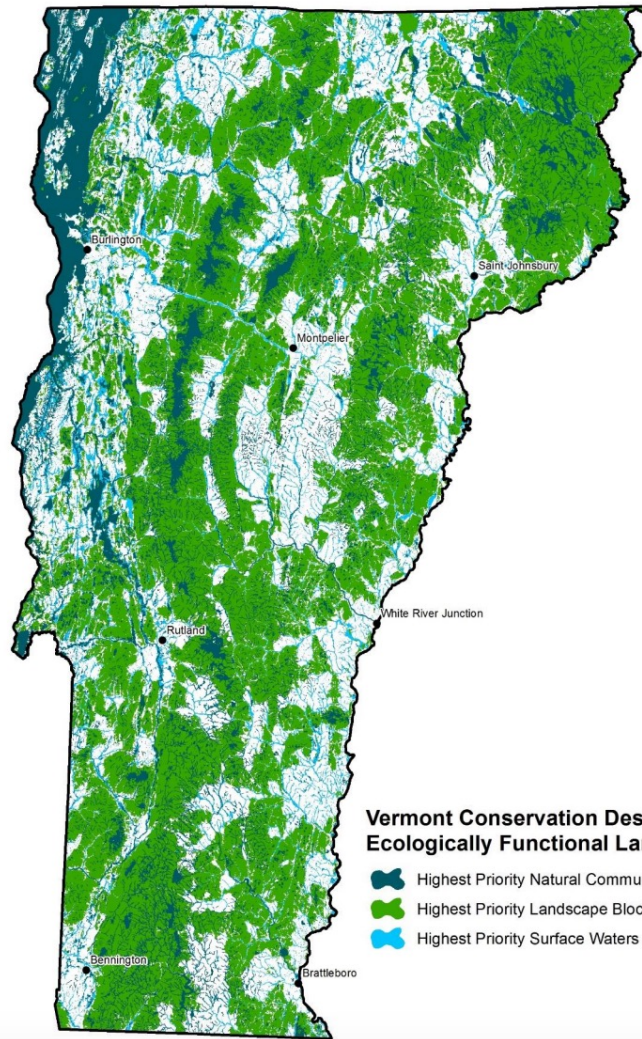
# VERMONT CONSERVATION DESIGN

*MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING AN ECOLOGICALLY FUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE*



*Summary Report for  
Landscapes, Natural Communities, Habitats, and Species*

February 2018



### Vermont Conservation Design Ecologically Functional Landscape

-  Highest Priority Natural Community & Habitat Features
-  Highest Priority Landscape Blocks
-  Highest Priority Surface Waters and Riparian Areas

# Farmlands



# A New England Food Vision



- *Healthy Food for All*
- *Sustainable Farming and Fishing*
- *Thriving Communities*



**By 2030, 30% of the food consumed in New England is produced/harvested/caught within New England.**

Our collective effort will focus on expanding and fortifying the region's food supply and distribution systems in an equitable and inclusive way that ensures the availability of adequate, affordable, socially and culturally appropriate products under a variety of rapidly changing climate, environmental, and public health conditions.







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# A REGIONAL APPROACH TO FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE

MAY 2023





VOLUME 2

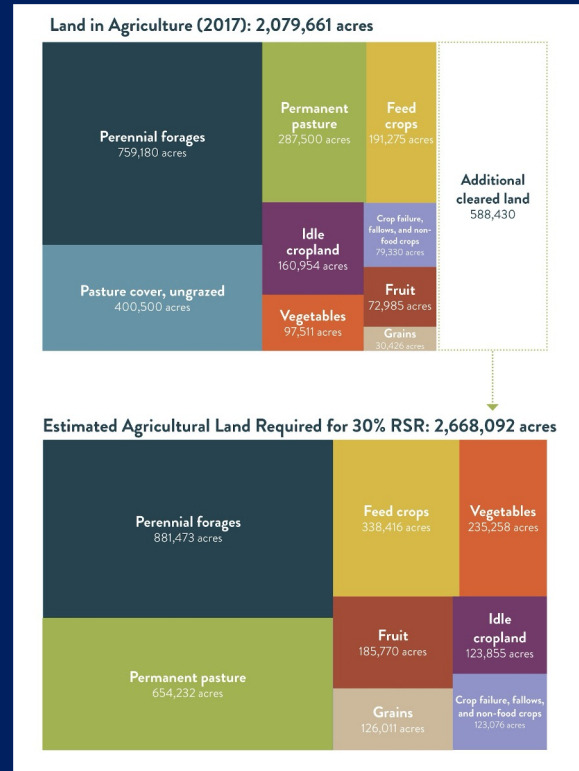
# ESTIMATING PRODUCTION FOR 30% REGIONAL SELF-RELIANCE

MAY 2023

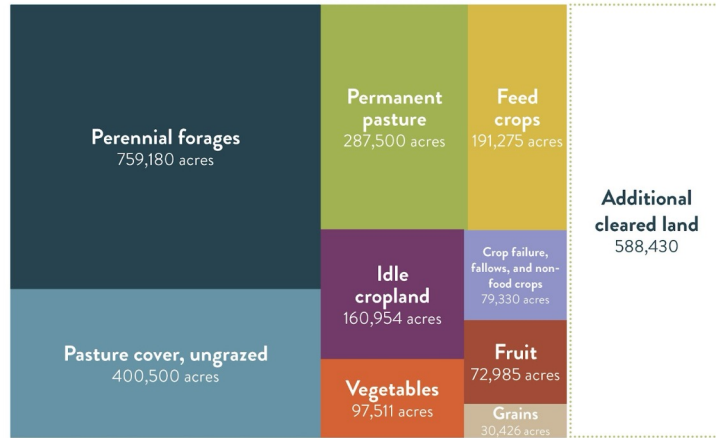


# Additional Land Needed in Agricultural Production to Achieve 30% RSR

To achieve 30% regional production available for consumption (in servings), **400,000** in existing underutilized cropland and **590,000** in new cropland would need to be brought into production.



## Land in Agriculture (2017): 2,079,661 acres



## Estimated Agricultural Land Required for 30% RSR: 2,668,092 acres



# Communities

An aerial photograph of a river valley. A large, dense forested island is situated in the middle of a blue river. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green fields, scattered houses, and more trees. In the far distance, blue mountains are visible under a clear sky. The word "Communities" is overlaid in white text in the upper center of the image.



# Pathways to Achieving the Vision



**Collaboration**



**Education**



**Funding**



**Research**



**Access**



**Community**



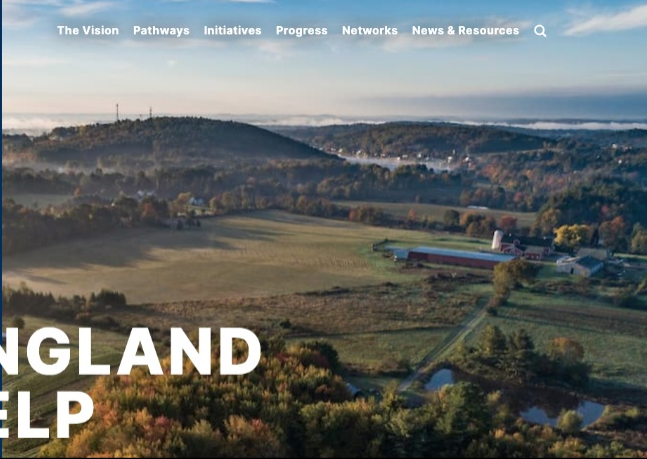
**Policy**

# From the Ground Up

*Conversations about conservation, climate, and  
communities in New England.*



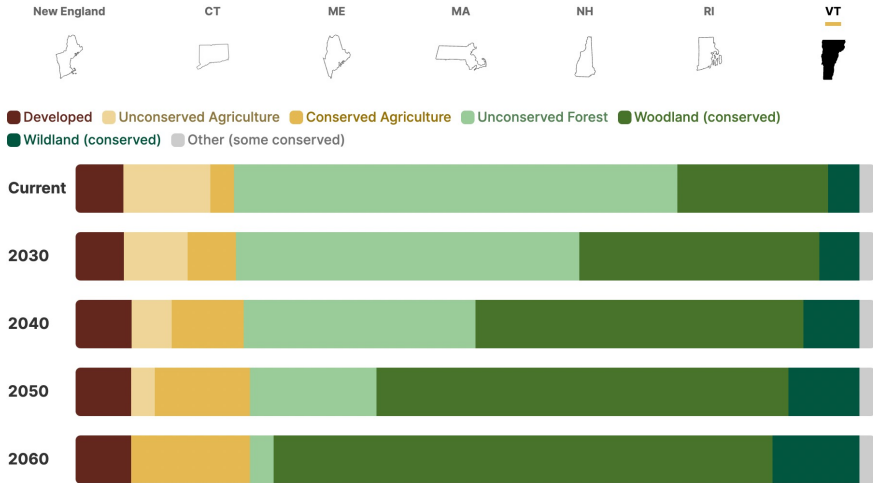




The Earth is in crisis

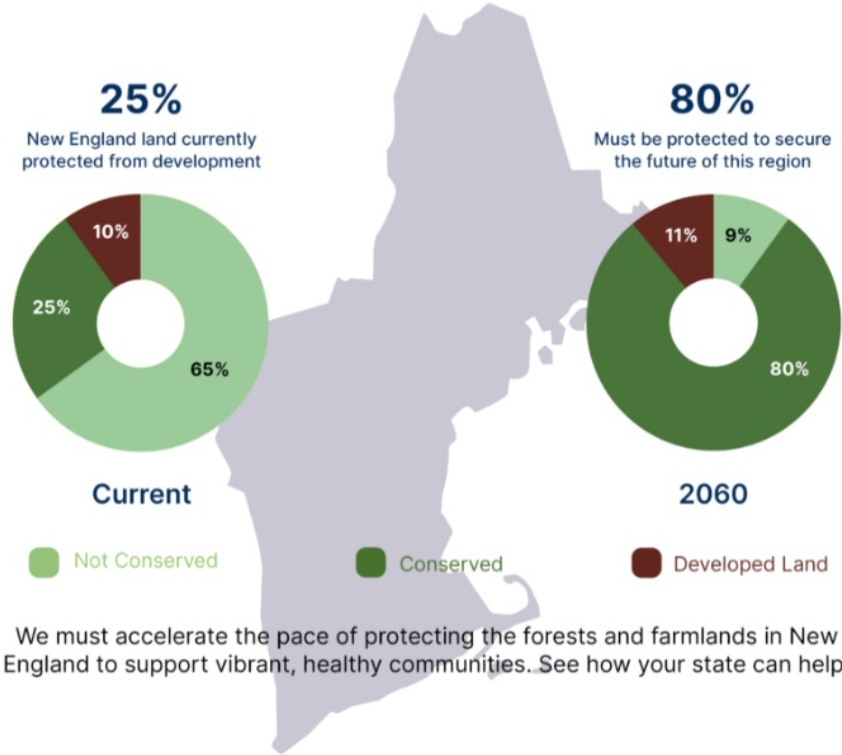
# NEW ENGLAND CAN HELP

## Conservation Targets by Land Types and State



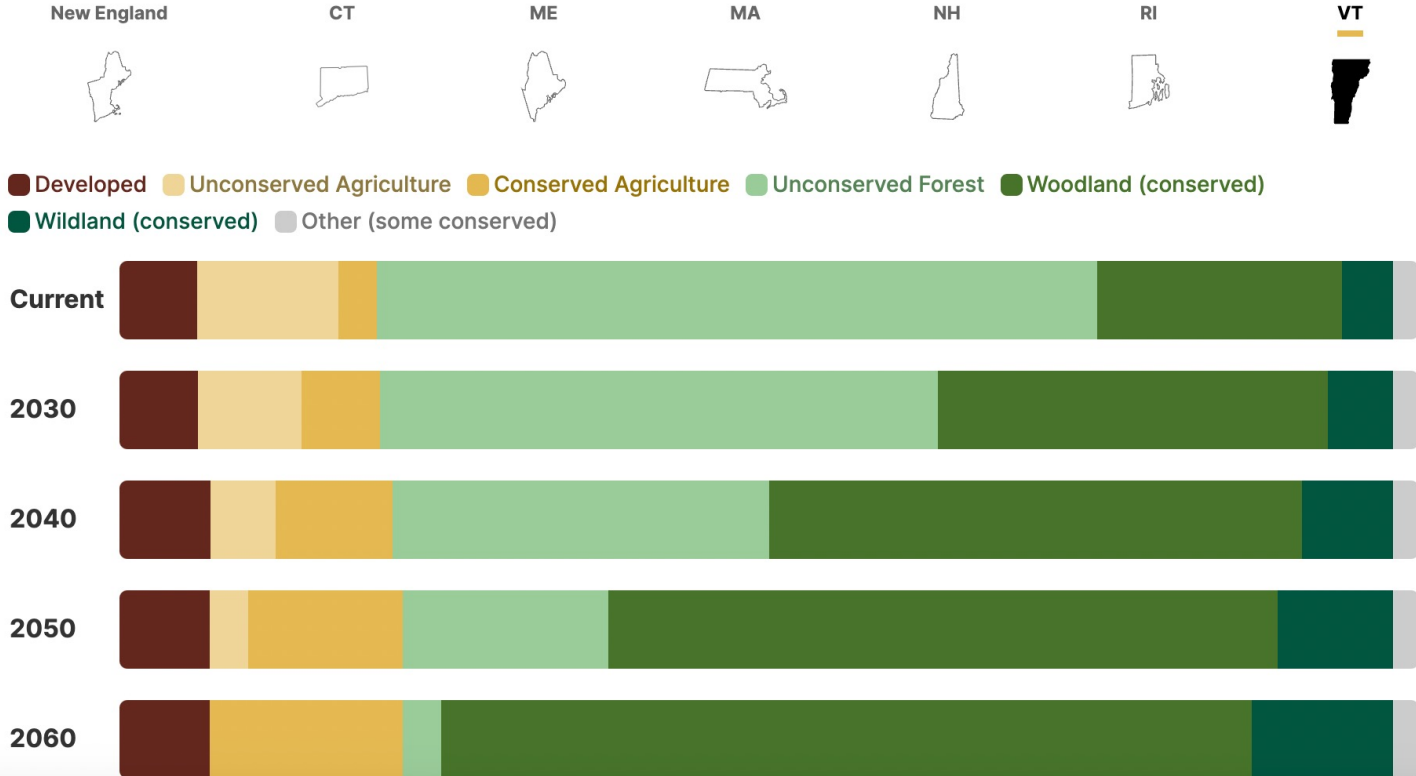
# Dashboard

Tracking the WWF&C Vision for Land Protection



We must accelerate the pace of protecting the forests and farmlands in New England to support vibrant, healthy communities. See how your state can help.

## Conservation Targets by Land Types and State



**Questions?**

