OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund

Protecting the Best Habitats for Wildlife

Made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Fund

OPEN SPACE
INSTITUTE

Open Space Institute
1350 Broadway, Suite 201
New York, NY 10018
Phone: 212.290.8200
Fax: 212.244.3441
Email: info@osiny.org
www.osiny.org

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Photo: Jerry Monkman

Introduction

The Open Space Institute (OSI) began working in New England more than a decade ago, when economic changes in the timber industry put large swaths of the 26-million-acre Northern Forest in play. OSI established the Northern Forest Protection Fund to provide grants and loans to conservation groups mobilizing to save these vast forests from fragmentation and development. Guided by decades of transactional expertise in New York State and informed by the principles of conservation biology, OSI supported the creation of core habitat reserves buffered by sustainably managed timberlands on 1.5 million acres across northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and the Adirondacks. Building on the success of this first fund, OSI has remained committed to supporting land protection that addresses specific conservation needs in the region through other initiatives: the Community Forest Fund, the Canadian/US Transborder Fund, the Resilient Landscape Initiative, and Saving New England's Wildlife.

Saving New England's Wildlife, launched in 2009, shifted the focus to central New England, where woodlands have reclaimed millions of acres of abandoned farmland but are at risk from sprawling development. This more densely populated part of the region has significant biodiversity but also bigger obstacles to conserving land: development risk is significant, parcels are smaller, and land prices are higher. To make the most effective use of scarce philanthropic and public funding in protecting species diversity, the fund honed in on the best and most at-risk habitats, informed by state data on animal and plant species.

With the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Saving New England's Wildlife fund supported 30 land conservation projects protecting more than 20,000 acres in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, concentrated in landscapes with the greatest diversity of habitat and species at risk. The program also supported 11 innovative efforts that led to greater regional cooperation and spurred support and funding for conserving wildlife habitat. By expanding organizational capacity and strengthening relationships between land trusts and state wildlife agencies, the fund built a strong foundation for OSI's ongoing work to protect a connected and resilient landscape for wildlife in New England and its broader ecological region.

I would like to acknowledge the dedicated guidance of the Open Space Institute's Trustees and the hard work of OSI's staff. OSI is pleased to provide the following report, which describes the mission and scope of Saving New England's Wildlife, summarizes its outcomes, and presents feedback from a focus group of grantees.

Kim Elliman
President and Chief Executive Officer
Open Space Institute

Saving New England's Wildlife Advisory Committee

Susan Arnold
Director of Conservation
Appalachian Mountain Club

Dan Donahue
Director of Land Protection & Stewardship
Norcross Wildlife Foundation

John M. Hagan, Ph.D.
President
Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences

Andrew Milliken
Coordinator, North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ellen Pope
Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Maine Community Foundation

Pam Resor
Massachusetts State Senator

Stuart V. Smith
Chair
Hubbard Brook Research Foundation

Brendan Whittaker
Forester

Open Space Institute Staff

Peter Howell
Executive Vice President, Conservation Capital Program

Jennifer Melville
Vice President, Conservation Grants & Loans

Samayla Deutch
Vice President & Associate General Counsel

Yasemin Unal-Rodriguez
Program Associate

A Second Chance for New England's Wildlife

Hiking in the New England woods, one often encounters stone walls winding through the trees. Artifacts from a time when much of the region's ancient forest had been cleared for farming, they are reminders of the striking change in the landscape.

After food production shifted west in the mid-19th century, millions of acres of New England farmland were abandoned and the process of forest succession began anew. The growing national conservation movement, which had begun earlier in the century, led to the protection of wild forestland and scenic landscapes in national forests, parks, and preserves throughout the region. Now, forests cover nearly 80 percent of the landscape. Moose, bobcat, and bear, once extirpated or driven north by hunting, trapping, and habitat loss, are returning as far south as Connecticut. At the same time, the human population has reached 14 million, concentrated in southern and central New England.

Though the region's forests differ in age, complexity, and species composition from the unbroken ancient woodlands that astonished the early colonists, they harbor a great variety of natural communities and diverse species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and plants. They also provide vital ecological and economic benefits. Forested landscapes collect, filter, and store drinking water for New England's major urban centers and hundreds of towns. They sustain a wood products industry that, despite restructuring over the past two decades, remains an integral part of northern New England's economy and culture. Offering a wealth of places to hunt, fish, hike, camp, canoe, and experience wilderness within reach of major population centers, New England's forests contribute to the region's high quality of life and an increasingly important tourism industry.

Today, forest acreage is declining for the first time since the mid-1800s. Especially in central and southern New England, suburban and exurban sprawl is reaching into the large forest blocks that many species need to survive and reproduce, as well as severing the links between core habitats that allow wildlife to migrate and adapt to climate change. But New England still has a chance to set aside natural landscapes, maintain diverse native flora and fauna, and allow species to adapt as the climate changes. As one of the earliest regions in the country to be settled, as well as the birthplace of the conservation movement, New England can be a model for maintaining thriving ecological communities in a landscape shaped and dominated by humans.

Moose in Silvio A. Conte National Wildlife Refuge

Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

The Fund's Goals

OSI launched Saving New England's Wildlife in 2009 to accelerate the protection of ecological hotspots, focusing on species and habitats designated as the highest priorities in state wildlife action plans (SWAPs). These plans identify, map, and assess the level of threat to lands with rich diversity, unusual ecosystems, exemplary natural communities, and at-risk wildlife—"species of greatest conservation need."

Capitalized by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF), the fund provided $5 million for land protection projects in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, the three New England states that have produced the most scientifically rigorous SWAPs, with maps pinpointing critical habitats and prioritizing protection goals.

With $500,000 in "amplification grants," the program also supported projects to improve the ability of state agencies and land trusts to protect wildlife habitat as the climate changes, foster regional cooperation for protection of priority habitats, and increase public support and financial resources for wildlife habitat conservation.

Saving New England's Wildlife built on OSI's first grant and loan fund, the Northern Forest Protection Fund. Established in 2000 with support from DDCF and the Surdna Foundation, this fund addressed a new threat to the region's northern woodlands: as the timber industry responded to global market forces, forest products companies began divesting their forest holdings and subdividing and selling off large blocks of land. This restructuring threatened to permanently fragment habitat and upend the region's traditional economic base and way of life. OSI joined an intensive effort by conservation groups, states, and the federal government to permanently protect these forestlands. The model that emerged was based on principles of conservation biology: conserving core habitat reserves surrounded by timberlands that met sustainable forestry standards. From that beginning, OSI has honed in on the most important and vulnerable wildlife habitat throughout New England, its strategies evolving as conservation science advances.

Loon on Little Bear Brook Pond, Androscoggin Headwaters

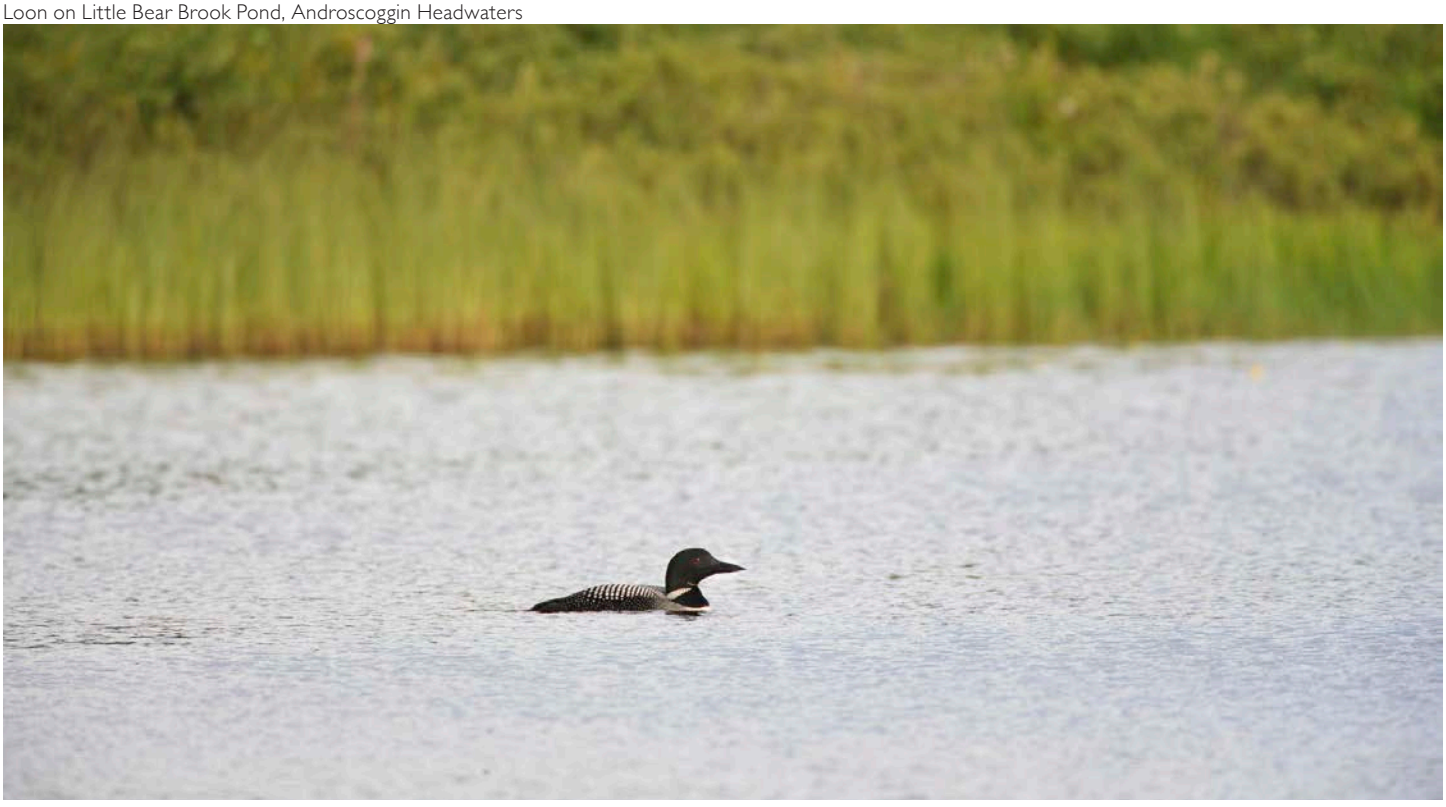
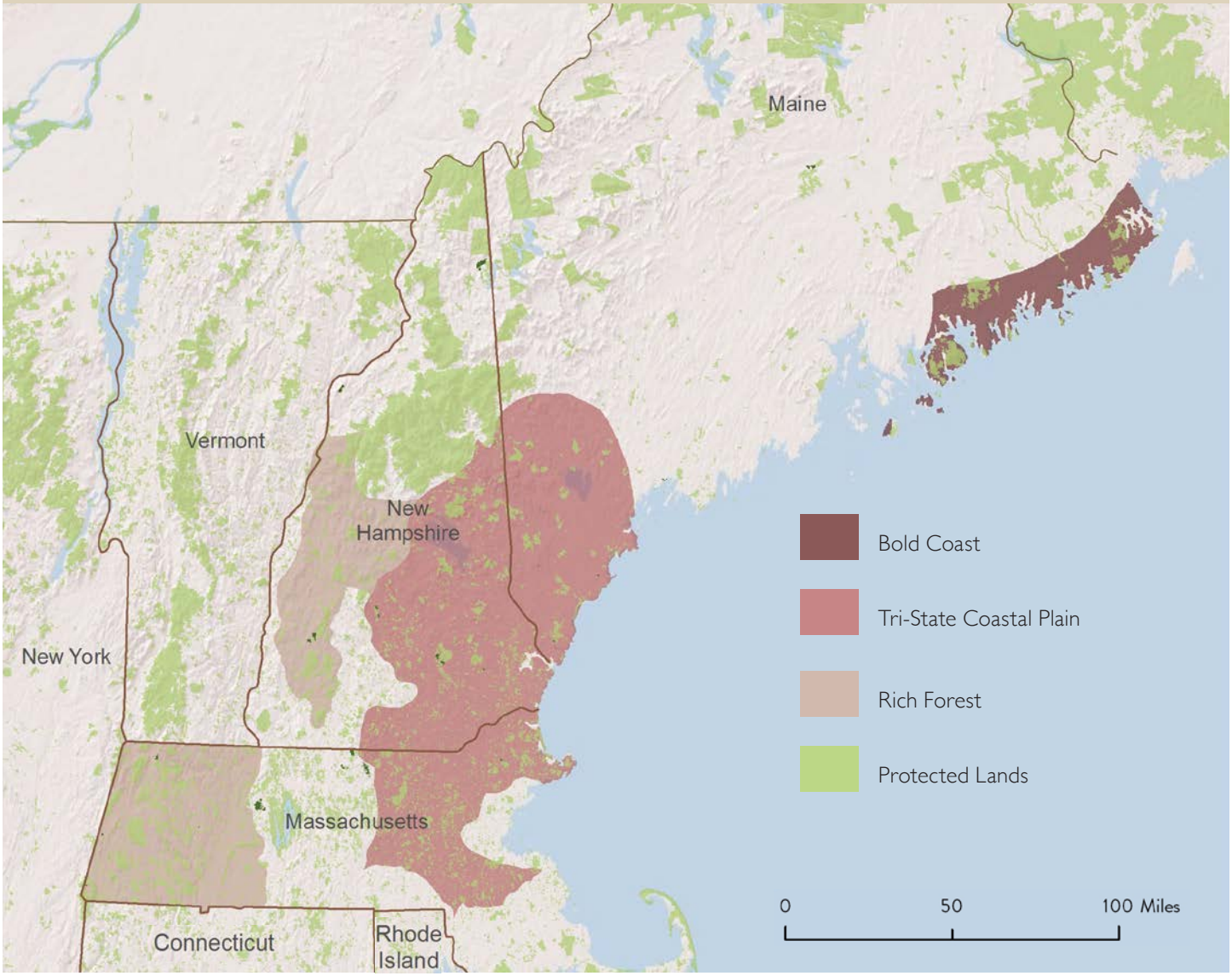


Photo: Jerry Monkman

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Priority Ecological Areas



A Science–Based Strategy

In designing Saving New England's Wildlife, OSI sought to determine where focused grant funding could have the greatest impact. OSI made a careful analysis of the Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire landscape, using the following criteria:

- high percentage of species of greatest conservation need;
- regional and national significance of SWAP priority species;
- immediate or near-term threat; and
- land conservation opportunities.

The effort was also guided by research on the importance of habitat connectivity and other factors that support species' resilience to climate change. From this analysis, three geographic areas emerged as the focus of grant making.

Rich Forest of North-central Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire

Here, rich soils and large blocks of forestland covering hills, valleys, and river bottomlands produce exceptionally high species diversity.

Bold Coast of Downeast Maine

With rocky headlands, offshore islands, spruce-fir forests, and the ecologically productive estuary of Cobscook Bay, the coast is home to an abundance of birds, including flocks of shorebirds that forage on mudflats, seabirds that nest on rocky islands, and passerines traveling the Atlantic Flyway to breed in the coastal forests.

Coastal Plain of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts

This area, which is facing tremendous development pressure, has a mosaic of ecological communities—salt-marsh estuaries, barrier beaches, oak-pine forests, and pitch pine patches—that harbor high concentrations of species in critical need of protection.

To shape the fund's focus and assess grant proposals, OSI brought together expert advisers with deep knowledge of New England's wildlife habitat, funding opportunities, conservation policy, and protection opportunities and needs. OSI also worked closely with state wildlife agency staff throughout, incorporating their data and on-the-ground knowledge and comparing proposed projects against state conservation priorities. OSI encouraged land trusts to coordinate with the agencies as they developed their projects.

OSI brought decades of experience in land transactions to assess the feasibility of potential projects and the availability of potential matching public and private funds. The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's support for the fund enabled OSI to expand staff's capacity to advise and assist land trusts and help to shape the strongest projects.

Baby Bog Turtle

Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Major Accomplishments

Over four years, Saving New England's Wildlife helped land trusts complete 30 projects that protected more than 20,000 acres of the highest-priority wildlife habitat in Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. With 24 of 30 projects in the three focus regions, the fund achieved its goal of targeting scarce philanthropic and public dollars to the most biodiverse and vulnerable landscapes.

Several projects conserved habitat for imperiled species, such as the timber rattlesnake, bog turtle, and New England cottontail. Highland Farm in York, Maine, for example, is part of a regionwide effort to restore New England cottontail habitat to keep this rapidly declining species from reaching federally endangered status. Other projects filled gaps and added stepping stones in protected networks essential to the survival of wide-ranging mammals like moose, lynx, and black bear, and conserved important feeding and breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. The Androscoggin Headwaters project, which buffers Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge and connects some 80,000 acres of conservation land in northern New Hampshire, exemplifies this approach.

> *"Most land trusts are based in one town. Saving New England's Wildlife got them to think on a bigger scale, to look across town boundaries and partner with regional and statewide land trusts and state agencies."*
>
> Bob O'Connor
> *Massachusetts Forest & Land Policy Director*
> *Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs*

Through both land protection projects and amplification grants, the fund moved the needle on the interest and ability of land trusts to integrate habitat protection into their strategies and to work across larger regions.

Given reduced public and private financial support during the recent recession, the fund was even more important than originally envisioned in helping land trusts secure matching dollars. OSI's investment of $5 million in capital grants protected land with a value of $50 million, a 10-to-1 match. The fund leveraged $13 million of additional philanthropic capital, $16 million in federal grants, $13 million in state funding, and $3 million in local support.

Kayaker on Sand Pond

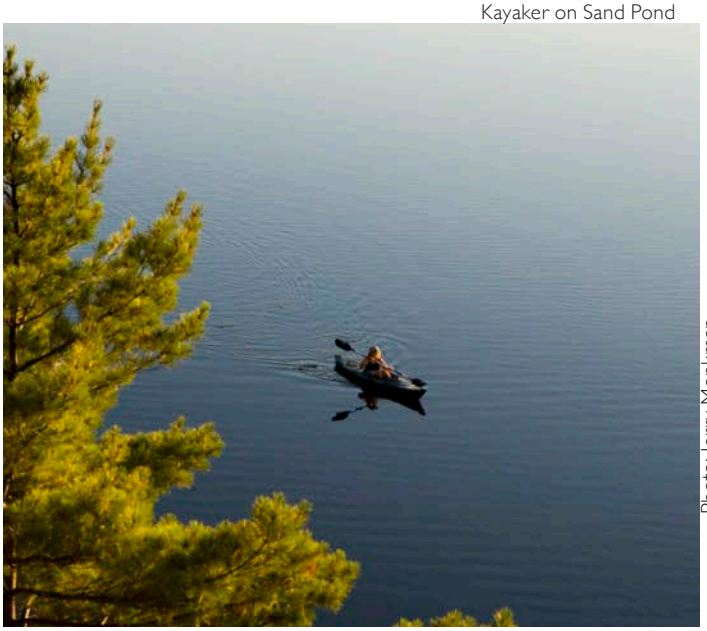


Photo: Jerry Monkman

Outside of the program's three focus areas, OSI supported projects that stood out because they not only exceeded the fund's criteria but also protected lands facing considerable threat, provided significant leverage opportunity, and conserved species imperiled across the region. Noteworthy was the protection of 1,080 acres on New Hampshire's Gardner Mountain, home to one of the largest bat hibernacula, or wintering habitats, in the state.

Biologists believe that the Gardner Mountain hibernaculum is critical to bats' recovery from white-nose syndrome, which has devastated bat populations in the East and Midwest.

> *"It was really important that OSI was flexible enough to consider properties outside of the priority areas that rose to the top for reasons they might not have anticipated."*
>
> Emily Preston
> *Wildlife Biologist*
> *Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program*
> *New Hampshire Fish & Game Department*

Brushy Mountain, Massachusetts

Perhaps the fund's most emblematic project was the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' purchase of a conservation restriction on 5.4-square-mile Brushy Mountain in the north-central part of the state. This sustainably managed timberland was a top priority for the state wildlife agency because of its scale—an entire mountain and adjoining lands on Brushy Mountain in the Connecticut River Valley. The project is the largest conservation easement project in Commonwealth history.

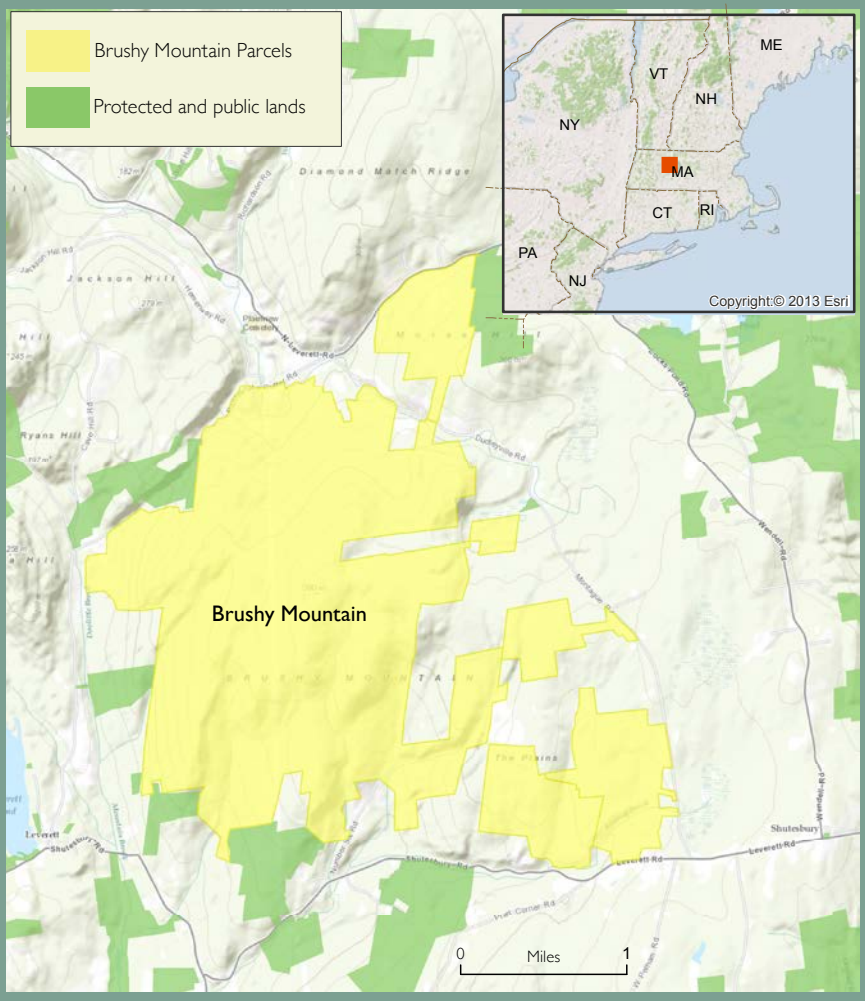
"We were thrilled to have OSI's support for this project to purchase the largest conservation restriction over private land in the history of the Commonwealth. The grant from OSI provided tremendous leverage to help us secure significant federal and state investment in this monumental effort."

Kristen DeBoer
Executive Director
Kestrel Land Trust

Veined with streams and wetlands, the land features a significant portion of the species native to north-central Massachusetts, as well as habitat for species of conservation concern. Adjoining 630 acres of permanently conserved land and located between several state preserves, it is a major stepping stone in a forest corridor that species like black bear, otter, bobcat, fisher, mink, and moose need to forage and breed. It is part of the largest remaining network of forestland in central New England, the two-million-acre Quabbin-to-Cardigan corridor that a regional partnership has been working to protect since 2002.

Brushy Mountain is owned and managed for sustainable timber harvesting by W.D. Cowls, Inc., a 270-year-old family company that acquired the land in small parcels beginning in 1886. The conservation restriction prevents future development but allows sustainable forestry to continue in the Paul C. Jones Working Forest, named after the family's recently deceased eighth-generation leader.

The conservation restriction was finalized in 2011 after four years of negotiations among the company, the state, and the Franklin and Kestrel land trusts. A $5 million federal Forest Legacy grant and $3 million in state funding came close to meeting the $8.8 million cost. OSI provided the critical balance of nearly $1 million with funding from Saving New England's Wildlife and the Western Massachusetts Land Protection Fund, a companion fund capitalized by a private charitable foundation.



Cobscook Bay, Maine

"We really do have the opportunity to have a major impact on the long-term survival of the many species that depend on the bay."

Betsy Ham
Director of Land Protection
Maine Coast Heritage Trust

At the easternmost limit of the United States, Cobscook Bay is part of the largest remaining wild coastal ecosystem on the eastern seaboard. Two hundred miles of winding shoreline rings this shallow estuary. The bay's extreme tides and strong currents wash cold, nutrient-laden water over vast mudflats and salt marshes, making highly productive nurseries for fish, shellfish, and other marine organisms. Located along the Atlantic Flyway, it is a major destination for migratory birds, including shorebirds that forage in the mudflats, waterfowl that winter in sheltered coves, and songbirds that breed in coastal spruce-fir forests. Seabirds and eagles nest on islands scattered throughout the bay.

With large blocks of land still undeveloped and prices relatively inexpensive for the coast, "you can make a big difference from a biodiversity standpoint," said Betsy Ham, director of Land Protection for Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Local, state, federal, and nonprofit partners have made significant progress in piecing together a network of permanently protected lands within the Cobscook Bay area, a high priority in the Maine wildlife action plan. "OSI grants were a very important piece of the puzzle," said Ham.

With two grants to Maine Coast Heritage Trust totaling $428,000, Saving New England's Wildlife supported permanent conservation of 10 properties that added 780 acres to this network, including more than eight miles of bay frontage. OSI's second Cobscook Bay grant helped secure funding from the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act and protected much of the remaining undeveloped shoreline of Sipp Bay, a small cove with significant shorebird, wading bird, and shellfish habitat.

With the addition of these lands, nearly a quarter of the total land area within the wildlife action plan's focus area has been protected—a landscape-scale achievement.

Clay Pond Headwaters and Pinkney Hill, New Hampshire

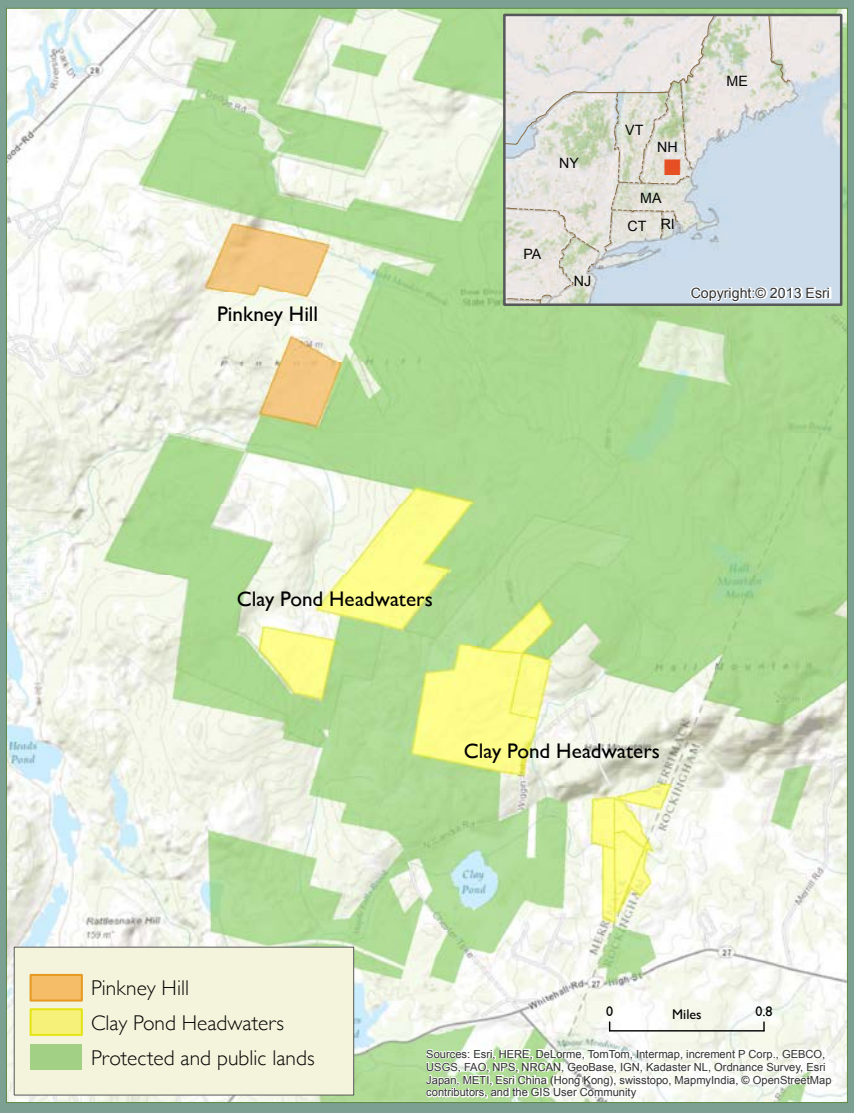
The coastal plain of northern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, and southern Maine is one of the most critical places in New England for conserving wildlife diversity. Though densely populated and rapidly developing, it still has expanses of wild habitat where forest has regrown on lands first settled hundreds of years ago. These interconnected woodlands contain a multitude of upland and wetland ecosystems and harbor some of the most diverse flora and fauna in New England, as well as the highest number of species of conservation concern. This tristate coastal plain also has the varied geology and topography that scientists believe will help many species adapt to climate change.

Two OSI-funded projects within one of the largest intact forestlands in southern New Hampshire exemplify the science-based strategy of Saving New England's Wildlife to protect at-risk species and ecological communities from development pressure and changing climate conditions.

First, with an OSI grant of $150,000, together with funds from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), Bear-Paw Regional Greenways secured a conservation easement on 539 acres at the headwaters of Clay Pond, helping to fill in a protected corridor between Bear Brook State Park and Manchester's managed water supply lands. The land includes beaver ponds, swamps, wet meadows, marshes, a sedge-dominated fen, and vernal pools—havens for several threatened turtle species and an imperiled reptile, as well as waterfowl, beaver, otter, and moose.

Second, a $50,000 grant for the Pinkney Hill project helped Bear-Paw acquire 181 acres of uplands, wetlands, riparian zones, and lakeshore as a wildlife preserve. It was the first phase of an effort by Bear-Paw and New Hampshire Fish and Game to conserve more than 500 acres on the western border of the state park, which harbors a variety of threatened species.

Together, the two projects helped enlarge a network of conserved lands within a 28- square-mile forest just east of the Concord-to-Manchester corridor and within commuting range of Boston's suburban tech belt.



Amplification Projects

The fund supported eleven innovative outreach and research efforts that raised awareness of and funding for wildlife conservation across the region. These amplification grants included support for the Community Preservation Act, Massachusetts' powerful tool for land protection. The Community Preservation Act enables communities to dedicate monies for land conservation (as well as recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing) through a voter-approved property tax surcharge supplemented by dollars from the state Community Preservation Trust Fund.

Since the act went into effect in 2001, 155 municipalities—almost half the towns and cities in the Commonwealth—have adopted it. Community Preservation funding helps bring in private and federal funding for projects and gives communities a much stronger hand in protecting their open space. But decisions about which lands to protect, made by citizens' committees, are often reactive and benefit from greater long-term planning.

An OSI amplification grant to the Community Preservation Coalition, which assists towns and cities in adopting and implementing the act, supported outreach to help communities direct land protection funding to preserve their most important wildlife habitat before it is at risk. At conferences, workshops, and community presentations, coalition staff showed citizens' committee members how to use the state's Biomap, an interactive tool pinpointing the parcels containing key species and habitats. "It has become a staple of how we work on open space in our communities," said coalition executive director Stuart Saginor.

The OSI grant also allowed the coalition to reach out to new towns with large amounts of unprotected core habitat, raising awareness about the value of protecting such land and about the funding mechanism. In the forested Berkshires of western Massachusetts, for example, this effort paved the way for Great Barrington voters to approve the act in 2013. Over the coming years, the coalition will be working to expand adoption to neighboring towns.

Several other amplification grants fostered collaboration beyond state lines. An outstanding example is a project by the National Wildlife Refuge Association to help integrate the Massachusetts and New Hampshire wildlife action plans into the proposed expansion of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, which spans four states along the Connecticut River.

OSI also supported the development of tools and maps for biodiversity conservation, such as a climate-sensitive update of Massachusetts' detailed habitat mapping, BioMap2. An amplification grant supported outreach by the Commonwealth to publicize this work by mailing the report to all the state's cities, towns, and land trusts and giving presentations to local, state, and regional conservation organizations, planning agencies, and land-use conferences.

The fund also influenced public funding dedicated to habitat conservation. In New Hampshire, for example, an amplification grant funded research by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to gauge public opinion on the state's land conservation program, the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). A survey commissioned by the Forest Society and partner groups found strong public support for the program, as well as deep dismay that legislators had eliminated LCHIP's dedicated funding. This information helped persuade legislators to restore full LCHIP funding—typically $4 million annually—instead of diverting dollars into the general fund. In 2013, when funding was restored, 10 of the 11 conservation projects that LCHIP approved included priority SWAP habitat.

Saving the New England Cottontail

Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Lessons Learned

At the conclusion of Saving New England's Wildlife, OSI brought together grantees from 14 organizations in a focus group to hear their perspective on the fund's grant-making approach and suggestions for how OSI can help land trusts make their work more effective. A summary of the feedback follows.

Catalyst for success

Whether OSI provided early money or the "last dollars in," participants said that the funding was critical to the success of their projects, in some cases spurring a more ambitious effort or enabling a project that would not have happened otherwise. Some grantees, however, found it difficult to discern whether the primary purpose of the fund was to spur new initiatives or support ongoing efforts. Each approach has both benefits and drawbacks: new projects are more likely to fail but can also be groundbreaking, and supporting projects already in the pipeline may be more successful but perhaps less innovative.

Seal of approval

Many grantees noted that the involvement of national and regional groups, such as DDCF and OSI, boosted projects' credibility and strengthened relationships with the municipal officials, state agencies, partner organizations, and landowners who were essential to the projects' completion. Bringing money into the region—instead of redirecting existing funds—is one of the hallmarks and highlights of this and other OSI funds.

Spotlight on habitat conservation

The fund played an important role in encouraging states to translate their wildlife action plans into on-the-ground conservation and fostering partnerships between state agencies and land trusts to make that happen. DDCF's and OSI's reputation for scientific rigor highlighted the significance of priority habitats and the importance of specific projects. Some applicants found it challenging, however, to derive species information from the SWAP models, as required in the OSI application. In many cases, the species inventory information did not exist and could not be obtained within a reasonable timeframe, illustrating one drawback of using SWAPs.

> *"As we implemented Saving New England's Wildlife, it became clear that there weren't consistent approaches for prioritizing areas for wildlife conservation across states. The program encouraged a regional context for state wildlife agencies' work, which will be better reflected as Wildlife Action Plan priorities are updated."*
>
> **Andrew Milliken**
> ***North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative Coordinator***
> ***U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service***

Photo: Jerry Monkman

Clear and open process

Clear application guidelines and explicit goals allowed grantees to judge up front how well a project fit the Saving New England's Wildlife program. Grantees reported that the process was made easier by the transparency of the application process, the ability to discuss projects with OSI staff, and prompt turnaround. Some applicants, especially those funded in the first round, when OSI was still working out the kinks of the program, were frustrated by cumbersome due diligence requirements.

Hands-on support

Grantees appreciated program staff's help in shaping successful projects, which included site visits, assistance in drafting conservation easements, and publicity timed to give projects a boost. Participants suggested that OSI could be an even more effective ally by generating statewide visibility for small land trusts and offering expertise in running capital campaigns and doing public relations. Participants appreciated OSI's adaptability to shifting circumstances, such as a change in project size or transaction structure, noting that OSI program staff were "incredibly helpful in navigating changes."

Leverage in securing matching funds

Participants found OSI's rigorous yet flexible assessment process helpful in securing matching funds for projects. OSI's credibility raised the profile of a project with other funders, and its flexibility left room for adjustments required by other funders, which was helpful because much of the matching funding was from federal and state sources.

Challenging match requirement

A number of grantees found the 5-to-1 match requirement challenging, especially for smaller projects, where the grants were not large. Grantees understood, however, that the fund's goal was to spread out the funding and attain maximum leverage.

Short project timeframe

A number of participants found the 18-month timeframe for closing transactions an essential lever to get projects finalized. Others, particularly those with large projects involving multiple funding sources and federal funds, found the deadline too tight, causing frustration and fear of project failure.

Silvio A. Conte National Wildlife Refuge hosted a traveling refuge

Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Toward a Resilient Future for New England's Wildlife

Looking forward, the next challenge is to incorporate climate resilience into land protection efforts, so that the places we conserve will be those that support the greatest diversity of plant and animal species in a shifting and unpredictable climate. In this effort, OSI has been guided by new research that identifies landscape elements that provide footholds for species as they adapt to the changing climate. Critical factors are the connectivity of natural systems and the diversity of underlying geology and surface landforms that create varied microclimates and ecological options.

Relationships developed through Saving New England's Wildlife have helped OSI work closely with state wildlife agencies and land trusts as they incorporate climate considerations into conservation planning.

> *"The Saving New England's Wildlife program helped inspire the new Landscape Partnership grant program at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs by showing that whole landscapes can be conserved via public-private partnerships. It also demonstrated that land trusts could take on large landscape-scale projects. We have since committed over $10 million in state funds for 12 Landscape Partnership grants conserving over 10,000 acres, and land trusts have been involved in every project."*
>
> Bob O'Connor
> *Massachusetts Forest & Land Policy Director*
> *Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs*

OSI continues to collaborate with the region's conservation community to conserve key wildlife habitat in two current programs, the Transborder Land Protection Fund and the Northeast Resilient Landscape Initiative, guided by ongoing research pinpointing the specific places most important to protect. Selecting the most critical lands to conserve for wildlife in New England entails several efforts:

- identifying climate-resilient landscapes and integrating that information into land protection strategies;
- working with wildlife agencies to benefit from their research and on-the- ground knowledge of wildlife and habitat;
- expanding regional collaboration to protect habitat connections across watersheds, large landscapes, and ecological regions; and
- helping land trusts interpret and apply emerging climate science in their plans and projects.

By developing partnerships with state wildlife agencies, encouraging an ecoregional approach, and increasing the capacity and interest of local land trusts in protecting wildlife habitat, Saving New England's Wildlife not only conserved critical places but also laid the groundwork for effective future protection of the region's wildlife habitat.

Cobscook Bay State Park

Photo: Jim Boynton

Saving New England's Wildlife by the Numbers

30
project grants

3,480 acres
conserved through largest-ever conservation easement in Massachusetts

20,380 acres
critical wildlife habitat protected forever

Hundreds of species of conservation concern protected such as Blandings turtles, blue spotted salamander and bald eagles

1
federally threatened species—bog turtle

1
candidate species for the Endangered Species List—New England cottontail

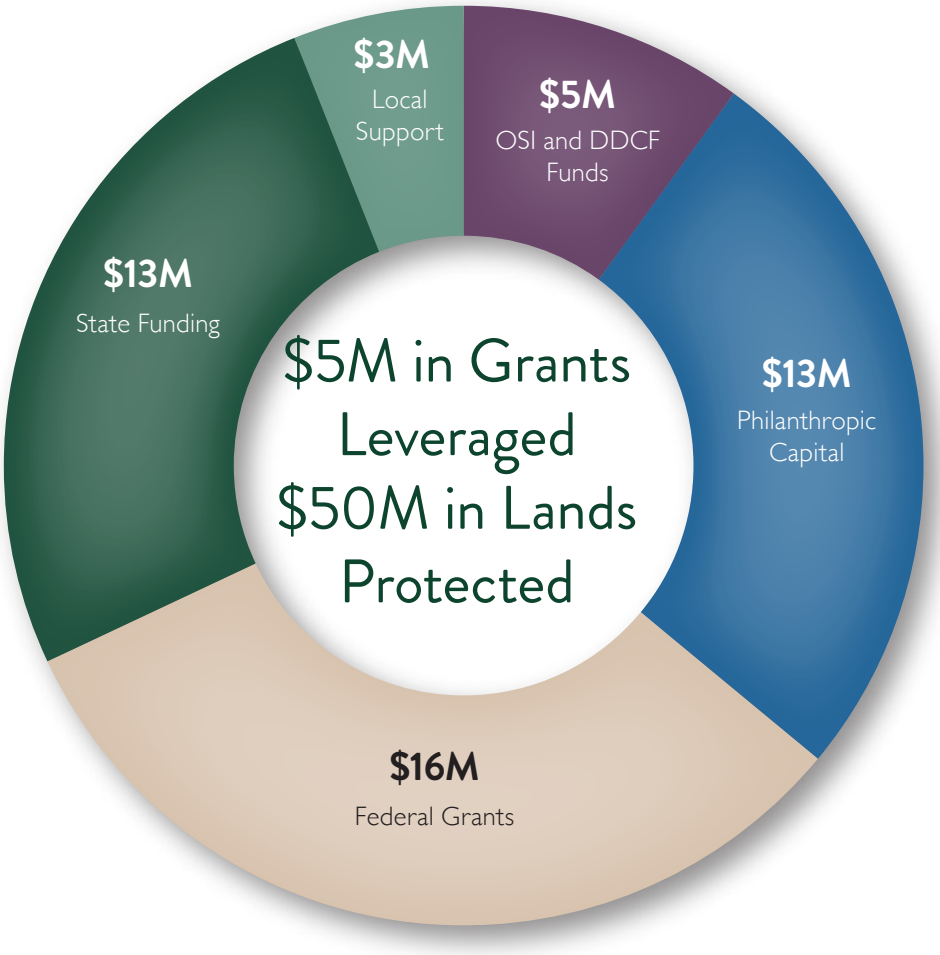
6
projects that help protect drinking water supply as well as wildlife habitat

11
amplification projects that drew attention to wildlife protection

38
Massachusetts towns that received presentations about funding to protect high-priority wildlife habitat

5
initiatives that increased statewide and federal funding for wildlife conservation

Saving New England's Wildlife by the Numbers



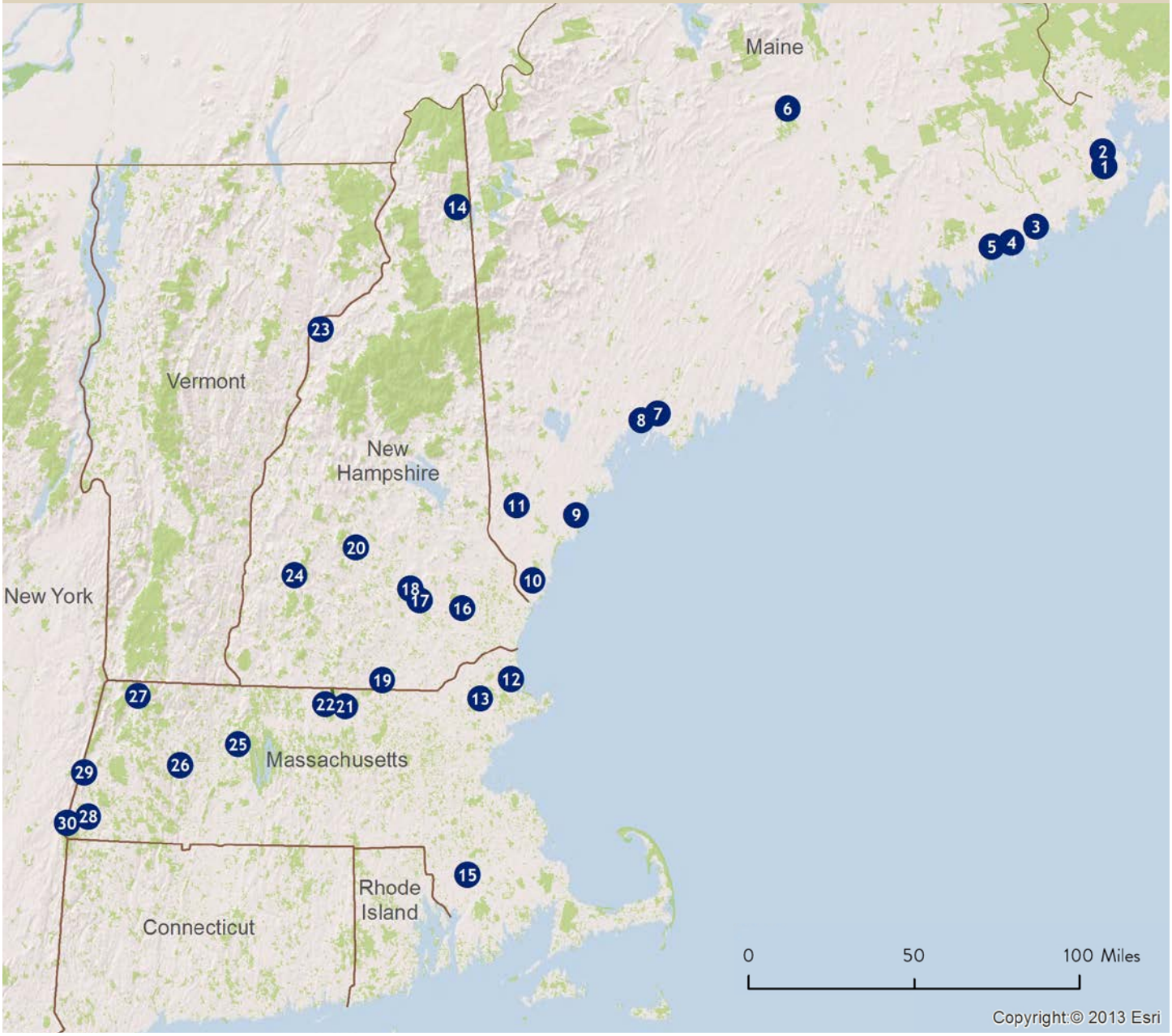
Mussels from the Maine Coast

Photo: Bob Stone

The Open Space Institute

OSI has been preserving land in eastern North America for 40 years. Radiating from its base in New York's Hudson River Valley, OSI operates regrant and loan programs in New England, the Middle Atlantic, the Southern Appalachians, and southeastern Canada. In every region, OSI's approach is to support projects that advance strategic regional conservation strategies and achieve the greatest benefit for limited conservation dollars.

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Capital Grants



1 Cobscook Bay

Pembroke, Trescott & Eastport, ME
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
540 acres, Project Cost: $3,316,000; Grant: $300,000
Local, state, federal and non-profit partners have worked to permanently protect over 6,800 acres within the Cobscook Bay Wildlife Action Plan Focus Area. An OSI grant helped conserve three additional areas, including an undeveloped coastal island, supporting critical wildlife habitat.

2 Sipp Bay

Perry & Pembroke, ME
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
241 acres, Project Cost: $1,575,000; Grant: $127,940
Five miles of conserved wild shoreline on Sipp Bay, a contained tidal inlet within Cobscook Bay, provides high value habitat for wading birds and waterfowl.

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Capital Grants

3 Mason Bay
Addison, ME
Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation
656 acres; Project Cost: $1,560,000; Grant: $100,000
OSI's grant contributed toward a multi-partner effort to protect eight properties with 4.2 miles of intertidal shoreline, 656 acres of coastal wetlands, and surrounding uplands.

4 Pleasant Bay Wildlife Management Area
Addison, ME
Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation
168 acres, Project Cost: $857,500; Grant: $145,000
The project conserves the first six parcels of a 2,000-acre wildlife management area, including intertidal and fresh water wetlands and their forested buffers.

5 Grain Point
Millbridge, ME
Downeast Coastal Conservancy
209 acres; Project Cost: $502,000; Grant: $30,000
Grain Point, which lies within Maine's Pleasant Bay Focus Area, contains exceptional habitat for wintering and migrating water birds.

6 Piscataquis Preserve
Atkinson, ME
Northeast Wilderness Trust
1,163 acres; Project Cost: $1,185,000; Grant $200,000
Conservation of the Piscataquis Preserve leveraged the permanent protection of an additional 3,859 acres of habitat rich land. The project is a key component in a larger matrix of contiguous conservation land, totaling nearly 20,000 acres.

7 Maquoit Bay — Bunganuc Point
Brunswick, ME
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
53 acres; Project Cost: $1,230,000; Grant: $150,000
The property, which includes more than 2,000 feet of tidal frontage, is considered significant by state and federal wildlife agencies for the high-value habitat it provides for wading birds, ducks, and migrating shorebirds.

Clay Pond

Photo: Jessica Cady

8 Maquoit Bay-Chase Reserve
Brunswick, ME
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
240 acres; Project Cost: $1,124,000; Grant: $141,900
OSI's second grant on Maquoit Bay conserves high value tidal wading-bird and waterfowl habitat and part of the largest remaining forest block on the coastline of Casco Bay.

9 Cranberry Marsh North
Biddeford, ME
Upper Saco Valley Land Trust
168 acres; Project Cost: $264,000; Grant: $25,200
The property is situated within a 1,350-acre undeveloped habitat block, hosts endangered turtle species, and is part of the adjacent 500-acre working farm and forest. Unfragmented forest blocks of this size are rare in southern coastal Maine.

10 Highland Farm
York, ME
York Land Trust
151 acres; Project cost: $2,700,000; Grant $118,000
Highland Farm, a New England cottontail restoration site, is a keystone property in the 48,000-acre Mount Agamenticus-to-the-sea Conservation Initiative.

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Capital Grants (cont'd)

11 Walnut Hill Focus Area

Shapleigh, ME
Three Rivers Land Trust
88 acres; Project Cost: $184,000; Grant: $21,000
Conservation of this parcel kicks off an effort to protect a state-designated focus area that includes vernal pools, pocket swamps, and floodplain wetlands that support state-endangered Blanding's turtle and the northern black racer.

12 Great Marsh

Rowley, MA
Massachusetts Audubon Society
75 acres; Project Cost: $2,300,000; Grant: $250,000
Many partners have worked to conserve thousands of acres in the Great Marsh—among the most significant ecosystems in Massachusetts. This OSI-supported tract will be managed for the high-priority migratory birds that use this ecosystem.

13 Windrush Farm

North Andover and Boxford, MA
Trust for Public Land
195 acres; Project cost: $3,500,000; Grant: $300,000
This property, with its mix of fields, forest and a rare Atlantic White Cedar Bog that is prime wildlife habitat, is also the longtime home base of a therapeutic riding center.

14 Androscoggin Headwaters

Errol & Wentworth Location, NH
Trust for Public Land
2,920 acres; Project Cost: $3,240,000; Grant: $500,000
This project launched a multi-phase effort to conserve wildlife habitat, water quality, and productive timberland on 31,000 acres at the headwaters of the Androscoggin River through expansion of the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge and with working forest conservation easements.

15 Westville Conservation Area

Taunton, MA
The Trustees of Reservations
54 acres; Project Cost: $1,090,000; Grant: $50,000
With almost a mile of frontage on the Three Mile River, the property contains seven of 22 habitat types in the Massachusetts Wildlife Action Plan and habitat for two rare turtle species.

16 Pawtuckaway River

Raymond & Epping, NH
Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
311 acres; Project Cost: $1,654,800; Grant: $200,000
The project conserves frontage and upland buffer for the Pawtuckaway River and hosts key species, including state endangered Blanding's turtles and state-threatened spotted turtles.

Canoe on Little Bear Brook Pond, Androscoggin Headwaters

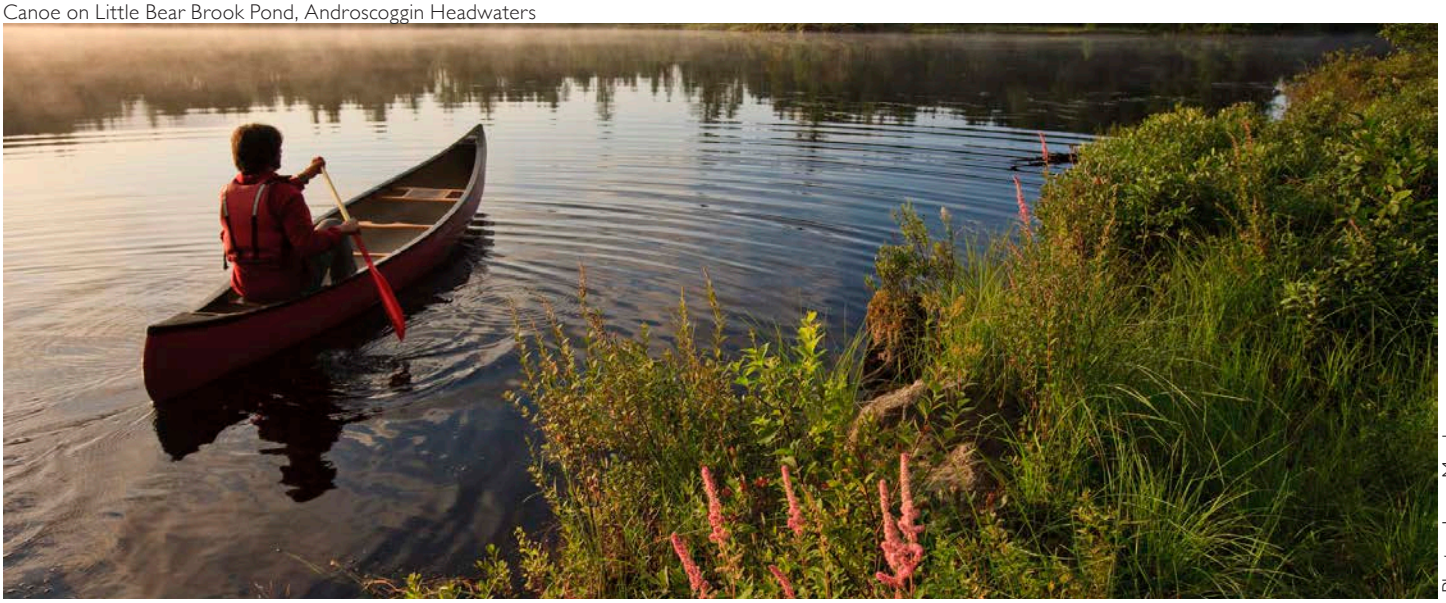


Photo: Jerry Monkman

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Capital Grants (cont'd)

17 Clay Pond Headwaters
Hooksett, NH
Bear Paw Regional Greenways
539 acres; Project Cost: $881,000; Grant $150,000
Clay Pond Headwaters encompasses ecologically significant natural lands, including habitat for Blandings and spotted turtles, bobcat and one of the state's most imperiled reptile species.

18 Pinkney Hill
Allenstown, NH
Bear Paw Regional Greenways
181 acres; Project Cost: $244,000; Grant: $50,000
Pinkney Hill is the first phase to protecting over 500 acres of priority habitat adjacent to Bear Brook State Park, which is home to threatened wildlife species including Blanding's turtle and whippoorwill.

19 Whaleback
Hollis, NH
Beaver Brook Association
79 acres; Project Cost: $615,000 Grant: $75,000
Protection of the Whaleback property builds on a network of 4,000 acres that provides habitat for vulnerable species of amphibians and reptiles. Roads are a major concern, so expansion of unfragmented blocks is key to the species' survival.

20 Schoodack Brook
Webster, NH
The Nature Conservancy
680 acres; Project Cost: $561,000; Grant: $103,560
This project links 5,700 protected acres, resulting in the conservation of a complex of forests, riparian areas and wetland systems large enough to provide endangered turtle populations with sufficient food, shelter, and nesting areas.

21 East Ashburnham Reserve
Ashburnham and Ashby, MA
The Trustees of Reservations
2920 acres; Project cost: $3,579,000; Grant: $167,500
Comprised of upland forest, wetlands and cold-water streams, this project expands conservation of a north-south corridor from Fitchburg, Massachusetts to New Hampshire's Wapack Range and provides important wildlife habitat for state-threatened species, such as Blanding's turtle and the Incurvate Emerald dragonfly.

22 Greater Ashburnham Habitat Reserve
Ashburnham, Ashby & Fitchburg, MA
Mount Grace Conservation Trust
1,260 acres, Project Cost: $2,082,000; Grant: $280,000
Lying within 30,000-acre conservation network, this land includes woodlands, wetlands and streams providing habitat for six state listed wildlife species.

Brushy Mountain

Photo: Kestrel Land Trust

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Capital Grants (cont'd)

23 Gardner Mountain
Lyman, NH
Trust for Public Land
1,084 acres; Project Cost: $500,000 Grant: $150,000
Critical bat habitat and a significant portion of Gardner Ridge have been protected with a conservation easement that supports sustainable timber management, safeguards wildlife habitat, and precludes residential and commercial development.

24 Ashuelot River Headwaters
Lempster, NH
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
1,773 acres; Project Cost: 2,098,000; Grant: $250,000
The project includes 29 miles along the headwaters of the Ashuelot River, as well as three miles of undeveloped frontage on Ashuelot, Long, and Sand Ponds and the summit of Silver Mountain.

25 Brushy Mountain
Leverett and Shutesbury, MA
Kestrel Land Trust
3,480 acres; Project Cost: $8,800,000; Grant: $400,000
Brushy Mountain conserves the largest block of unprotected forest in the Commonwealth. This property, home to moose, threatened turtle species, and other wildlife, is now protected with a sustainable forestry conservation easement and open to recreation.

26 Deadbranch Brook
Chesterfield, MA
The Nature Conservancy
378 acres; Project Cost: $340,000; Grant $44,500
More than 78 miles of the Westfield River's tributaries and main branches have been designated Wild and Scenic by the National Park Service. This project preserves 2,000 feet of frontage along this high-quality tributary to the Westfield River.

27 Hoosac Range
North Adams, MA
Berkshire Natural Resources Council
128 acres; Project Cost: $567,000; Grant: $98,400
This effort conserved the last two parcels in a continuous corridor from Route 2 to the Savoy State Forest.

28 Sheffield–Egremont Wildlife Corridor
Sheffield and Egremont, MA
Sheffield Land Trust
97 acres Project Cost: $1,850,000; Grant: $250,000
Through this project a family farm will continue to operate, subject to an agricultural easement, while portions of the land that provide rare turtle habitat will be state owned and managed.

29 Symphony Lakes–Cranberry Pond
West Stockbridge, MA
Berkshire Natural Resources Council
300 acres; Project Cost: $1,339,000; Grant: $184,000
Cranberry Pond is part of an initiative to preserve nearly 500 acres of broad calcareous wetlands, open meadows and adjacent upland forests, which together host an abundance of plant varieties including seven state-listed species.

30 Camp Northrop
Mount Washington, MA
The Nature Conservancy
345 acres; Project Cost: $900,000; Grant: $138,000
Located within one of the most biologically rich forests in New England, the project protects vertebrate and plant species of multi-state concern. The property augments 36,000 acres of largely unfragmented forest.

Saving New England's Wildlife Fund Amplification Grants

Climate Adaptation Plans
Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences
Grant: $45,000
Work with land and wildlife managers and landowers to develop practical approaches to adapting to climate change on demonstration sites in Maine and Massachusetts.

Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge as a Catalyst for Landscape Conservation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Grant: $50,000
Coordinate a diverse coalition to secure new and existing funding to conserve land in the Connecticut River watershed that integrates the goals of the Conte National Wildlfe Refuge and SWAPs in MA and NH.

New England Cottontail Recovery Program
Wildlife Management Institute
Grant: $75,000
Build coalitions, secure funding and protect habitat to keep New England Cottontail off Endangered Species List in MA, NH, and ME.

The Case for Wildlife
The Nature Conservancy and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Grant: $55,000
Conduct public opinion research, document unfunded SWAP priorities, and develop recommendations for Maine statewide wildlife funding.

BioMap Outreach
Mass Department of Fish and Game
Grant: $50,000
Create and disseminate BioMap 2, Massachusetts' climate sensitive resource mapping.

Maine Community Scape
The Trust for Public Land
Grant: $50,000
Provide a conservation model to help implement SWAP and leverage land protection funding by bringing together stakeholders to identify, prioritize, and map the most critical natural resources in Maine's Western Mountains.

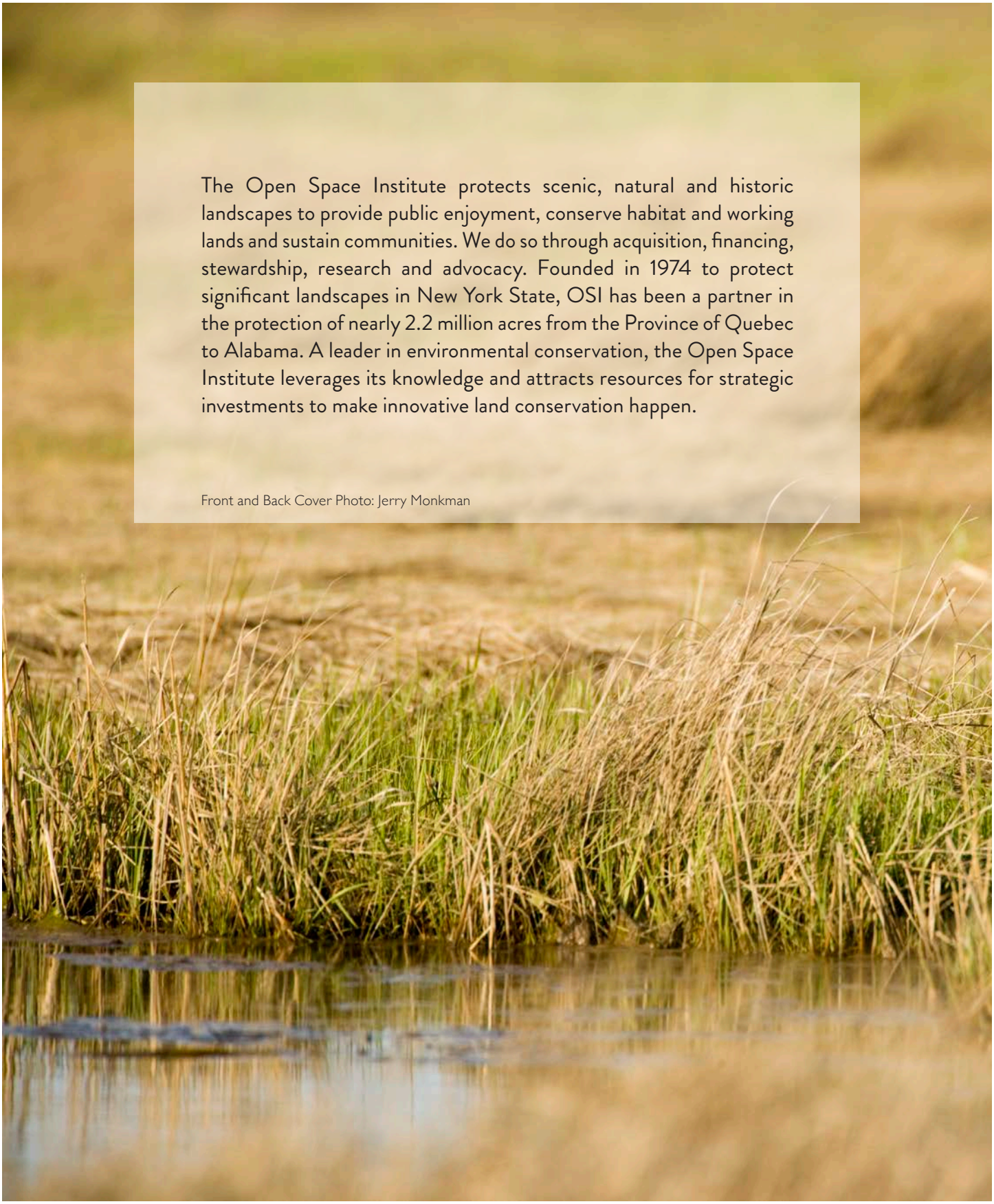
Community Preservation Act focused on Wildlife
Community Preservation Coalition (project of Trust for Public Land); Grant: $69,000
Expand Community Preservation Act funding for high priority wildlife habitat in Massachusetts.

NH Funding Initiative
Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Grant: $75,000
Support conservation partners' multi-year initiative to establish a new or newly-structured state funding program for land conservation.

High Elevation Habitat and Windpower
Appalachian Mountain Club
Grant: $20,000
Research and mapping of high-elevation spruce-fir forests to better guide wind power development away from these sensitive habitats in New England.

Maine Wind Project
Maine Economic Policy Center Consultant & OSI
Grant: $26,999
Research and recommendations for Wind Energy mitigation funding in Maine.

WSC Atlas
Wildlife Conservation Society
Grant: $15,000
Integration of Northeastern/Canadian Climate Resilience data into Two Countries-One Forest database.



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Front and Back Cover Photo: Jerry Monkman

OPEN SPACE
INSTITUTE

1350 Broadway, Suite 201
New York, NY 10018-7799
T 212.290.8200 F 212.244.3441
www.osiny.org