

# **Organizing Successful Multi-Parcel Multi-Partner Land Conservation Projects**



*This presentation was designed with:*

*Sarah Wells*

*Formerly Regional Conservationist with MassLIFT AmeriCorps  
at the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership*

*Leigh Youngblood*

*Executive Director of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust*

*Janet Morrison*

*Executive Director of North County Land Trust*

# Seven Elements of Successful Landscape-Scale Conservation Projects

1. Planning
2. Funding and Fundraising
3. Outreach
4. Coordination of Partners
5. Project Management Systems
6. Landowner Relations
7. Stewardship

# Landscape-Scale Conservation Projects

YEAR	PROJECT NAME	TRACTS	ACRES	Fed or State \$	FUNDING AMOUNT	STATUS
1996	Bear Mountain	7	420	State	\$230,000	Completed
2001-2002	Tully Initiative	104	9,100	State	\$9,000,000	Completed
2006	Quabbin Corridor Connection	20	1,848	Fed	\$3,011,500	Completed
2007	Southern Monadnock Plateau	12	1,162	Fed	\$2,700,000	Completed
2009	Fitchburg Watershed Project	3	2,050	State	\$1,774,000	Completed
2009-2013	Metacomet - Monadnock Forest	13	1,143	Fed	\$1,650,000	Completed
2009-2012	Southern Monadnock Plateau II	18	2,147	Fed	\$3,264,000	Completed
2012	Winchendon Springs Working Landscape	6 <i>(3 new)</i>	644 <i>(93 new)</i>	State	\$456,874	Completed
2012-2103	Leyden Working Farms & Forests	12	801	State	\$1,079,300	Funded
2012-2015	Quabbin Reservoir to Wachusett Mt.	21	3,000	Fed	\$5,045,000	Funded
2010,'11,'12	Southern Monadnock Plateau III	16	2,120	Fed	\$5,137,275	Failed
2010-2012	Western Massachusetts Aggregation	70	10,000	Priv.	\$14,000,000	Inactive
1996-2013	Combined Figures of All Projects	309	33,633		\$49,302,949	
1996-2013	Combined Figures of <u>Completed</u> Projects	183 Tracts	18,514 Acres		\$22,086,374	



# 1. Planning



- Identify landscape, and winning attributes and themes
- Identify the grant and funding sources
- Identify Partners
  - Understand goals and motivations
  - Find the coalescing interest
  - Resources of participants – GIS, access to funders, experience, landowner contacts, ability to coordinate
- Phasing

# Planning example: Q2W



City of Fitchburg

Town of Barre



Town of Hubbardston

Town of Petersham



Town of Phillipston

Town of Princeton



Town of Westminster





Athol

Gardner

Phillipston

Templeton

Westminster

Hubbardston

Mount Wachusett

Petersham

Princeton

Quabbin Reservoir

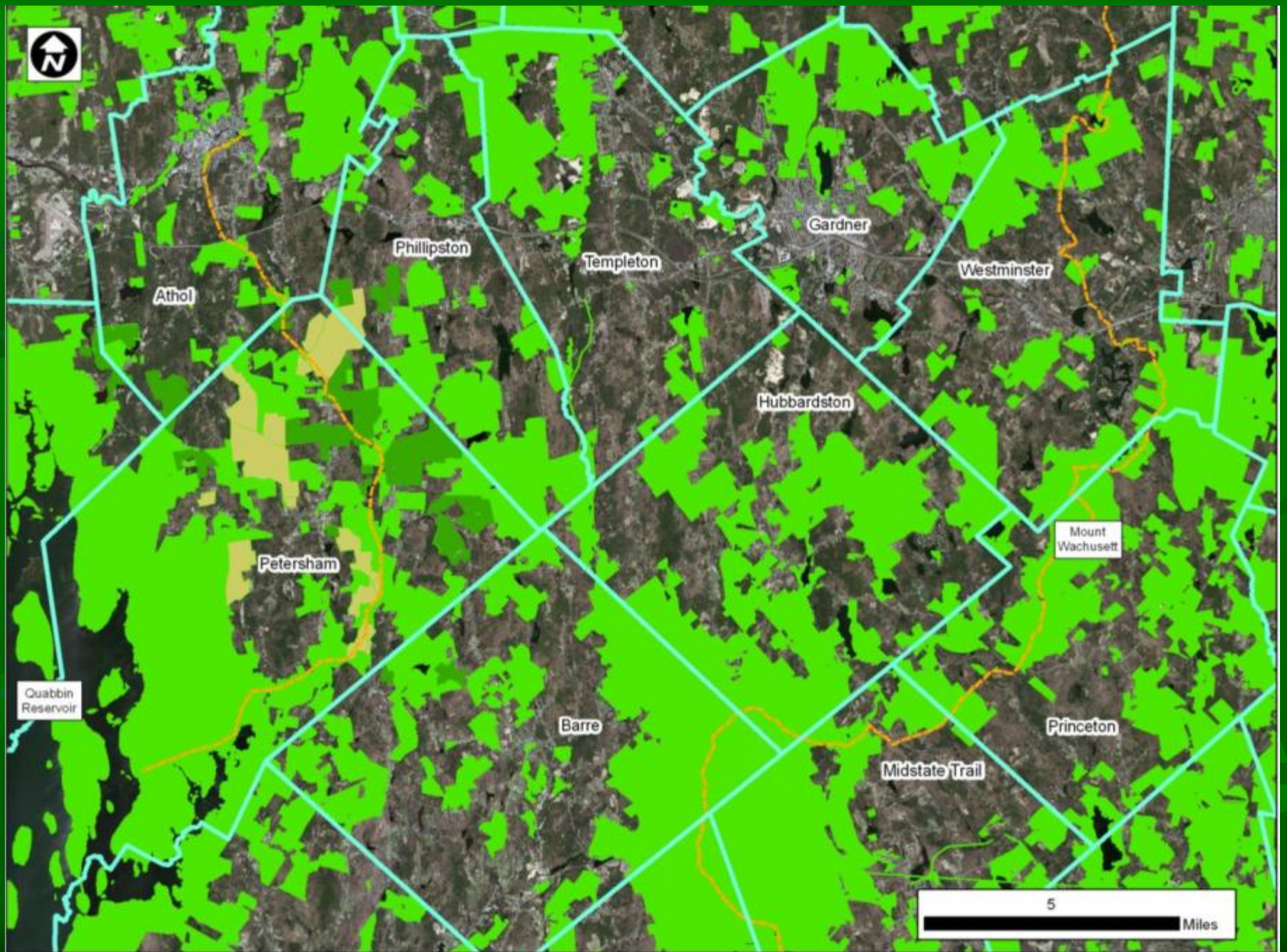
Barre

Midstate Trail

5

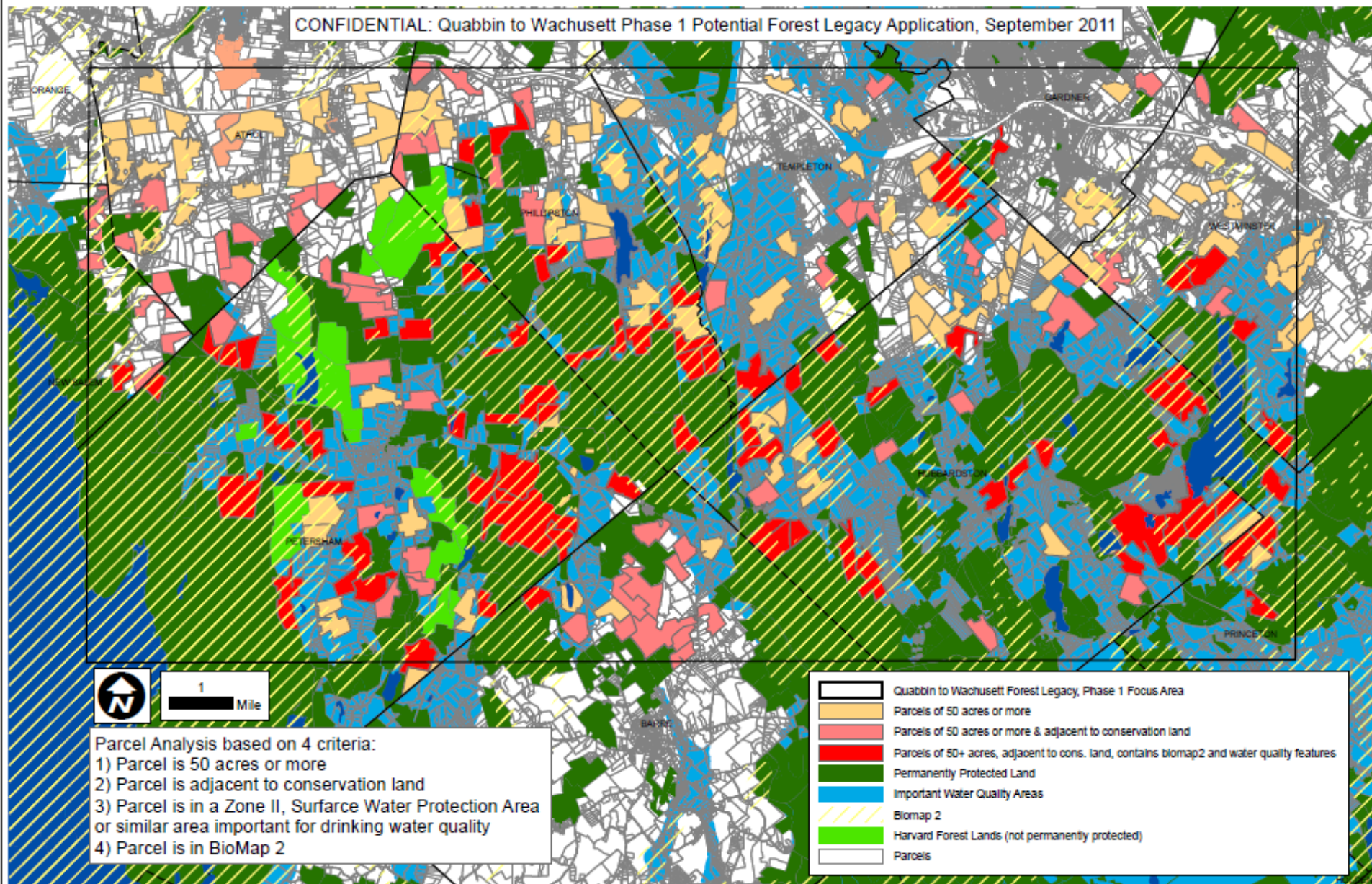
Miles





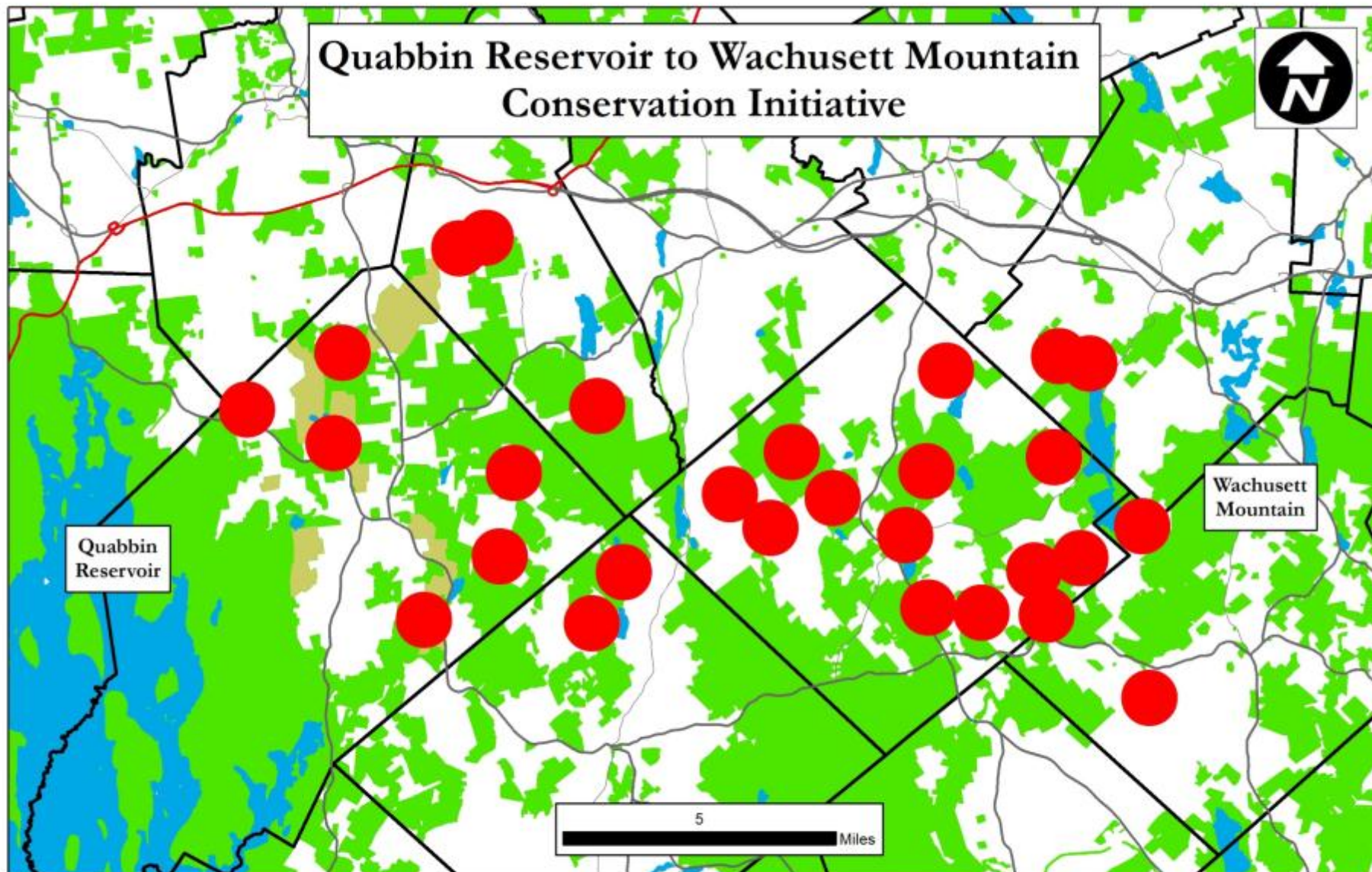


CONFIDENTIAL: Quabbin to Wachusett Phase 1 Potential Forest Legacy Application, September 2011





# Quabbin Reservoir to Wachusett Mountain Conservation Initiative



Source Credit: MassGIS



## 2. Funding and Fundraising

- Landscape projects are attractive to funders
- Know the grant programs, grant administrator
- Deciding who makes asks and submits proposals
- Be aware of complementary grant programs and build off of your core grant award



# Forest Legacy in 2 minutes

1. Is the project in a designated Forest Legacy Area?
2. At least 1,500 + acres?
3. Is the land at least 75% Wooded?
4. Does the project have National significance?
5. Is there a unifying story?
6. Does it look good on a 8.5 inch x 11 inch map?
7. Do you have the capacity to organize?
8. Do you have at least 25% “cost share”?
9. Are the landowners prepared to wait 5 years?
10. Do you have appraisals or “opinions of value”?



# 3. Outreach

- Know the story
- Use a multi-faceted outreach approach
- Be strategic and coordinated
- Use principles of fairness and trust with partners and landowners
- Share resources
- Engage Landowner Peers and Community Sparkplugs





Bearshen Conservation Area

Little Round Top

ROAD

Thousand Acre Brook

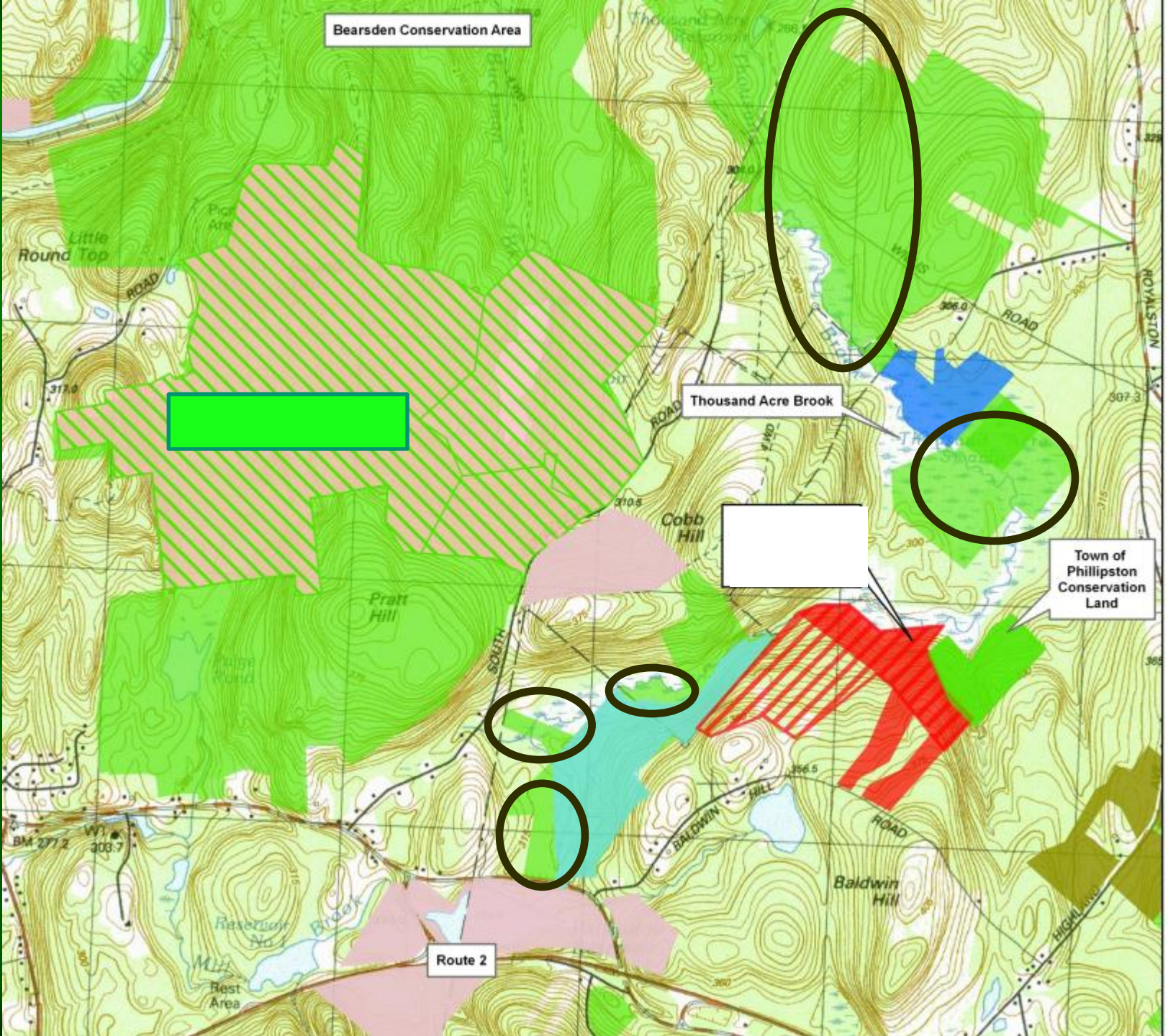
Cobb Hill

Town of Phillipston  
Conservation Land

Route 2

Baldwin Hill

Reservoir No. 1  
MLA  
Best Area





## 4. Coordination of Partners

- Find a coordinator
- Delegate and follow through
- Share credit
- Schedule regular check-ins
- Be flexible
- More Communication is better than less
- [Freeconference.com](http://Freeconference.com)



# 5. Project Management Systems

- Streamlined CR templates
- Signed Options
- Use spreadsheets for tracking match, parcels, etc.
- Have one contact person for the funder/grant administrator
- Keep information updated
- Partner communication
- Know the bottlenecks





## 6. Landowner Relations

- Set the right expectations from the beginning, timeline, chance of success
- Strike a balance between enthusiasm and caution
- Minimize change when possible
- Keep landowners engaged
- Landowners know their peers are committing to the same thing



## 7. Stewardship



- Prepare groups for the responsibility (FSP, Baselines, Monitoring)
- Use different models (Northfield)
- Plan ahead (multiple contractors) when multiple tracts are closing in the same time frame



# Lessons Learned



- Mindset → Be positive! Stay solution oriented
- Partners agree on roles and responsibilities early
- Landowners need consistent information and regular communication
- It's possible – give yourself a head start through good planning.
- Have a coordinator that actively facilitates
- Build off of your core funds

