

# Public Conservation Funding in New England

## Recent Trends in Government Spending on Land Protection

### Vermont Overview

#### FEDERAL

Vermont receives federal LWCF funds for the Green Mountain National Forest as well as the multi-state Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge, and is also a regular recipient of Forest Legacy funding. In the first three years of the fledgling Community Forest Program, Vermont was twice awarded grants – for the Barre Town Forest in 2012 and the Dorset Town Forest in 2014. Funding from other federal sources such as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund was minimal in Vermont from 2004-2014 compared to some of the other New England states.

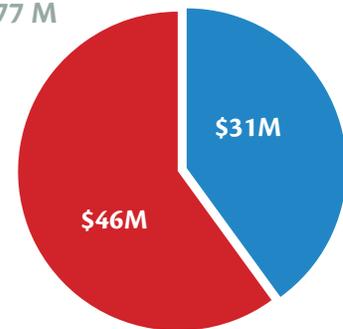
#### MULTI-SOURCE STATE FUNDING

At the state level, three conservation programs are administered by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, which is funded mostly by a real estate transfer tax (along with some appropriations and bonds). The VHCB's conservation programs are the Farmland Conservation Program, the Recreational Land, Natural Areas, and Historic Properties Program, and the Local Conservation Grant Program. On a per capita basis, from 2004-2014, the estimated state spending on conservation in Vermont was \$73.74 for the full period, or approximately \$6.70 per Vermont resident per year.

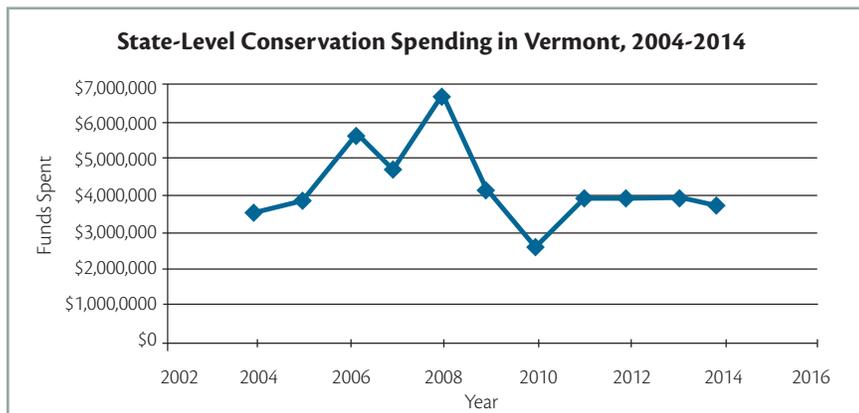


Knoll Farm in Fayston, Vermont (Photo: Vermont Land Trust)

Vermont: \$77 M



In the graph above, estimated federal contributions are represented in blue, state contributions in red. Contributions are summed for the period 2004-2014 and rounded to nearest million (M). Please see the full report for details about calculating estimates and data sources.



Data provided by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.



View from West Mountain in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom (Photo: Vermont Land Trust)

## Regional Overview

### FEDERAL

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the main source of federal funding for conservation in New England, contributing approximately 55-78% of the region's federal funding each year from 2004-2014. In late 2015, LWCF was allowed to expire for the first time in its 50-year history, and was later reauthorized for only three years. The protection of this program is crucial to the continued effort of conserving the New England Landscape.

### LWCF IN ACTION

LWCF supports the Forest Legacy Program, which has helped protect over 1 million acres of land in New England. LWCF also provides funding for regionally significant projects like the four-state Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge.

### OTHER SOURCES OF FEDERAL FUNDING

- Community Forest Program
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act
- Migratory Bird Conservation Fund
- Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
- Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program
- National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program
- Wildlife Restoration Program/Pittman-Robertson Act



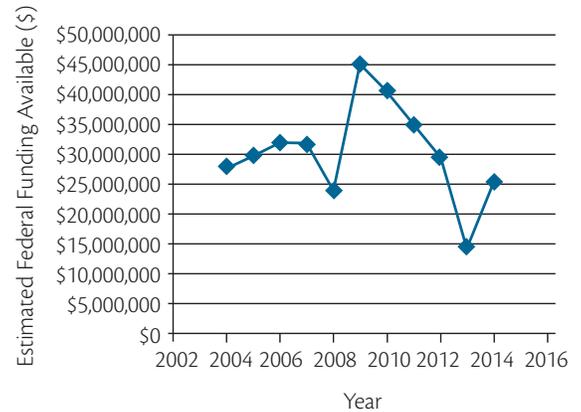
### STATE

Funding for state-level land conservation programs varies widely by state in New England. Massachusetts led the region from 2004-2014 in total state-level conservation spending, while Vermont and Rhode Island invested the most per capita. In several New England states, like Connecticut and New Hampshire, conservation programs have been underfunded or undermined in recent years. In every year from 2004-2014, Connecticut's state spending on conservation was well below the estimated average the state needs to stay on track to meet its goal of 21% of the state's acreage conserved by 2023. In 2014 Connecticut's Community Investment Act was partially diverted to the state's general fund for the 2016-2017 budget. New Hampshire's LCHIP funding was also diverted to other purposes on multiple occasions between 2004 and 2014, and in early 2015 Maine's governor withheld over \$11 million in voter-approved bond funds for the Land for Maine's Future Program, jeopardizing time-sensitive conservation projects.

### LOCAL

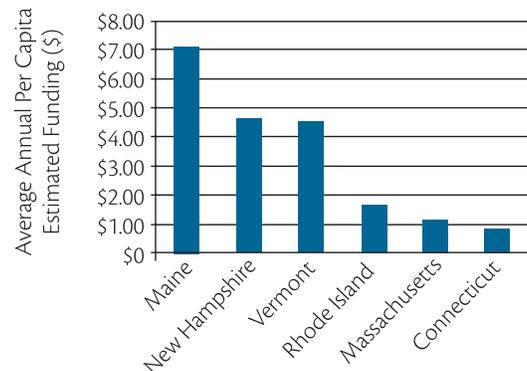
Local funds help communities preserve open space and recreation lands, and often provide critical match funding for larger conservation projects. The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) is an innovative example of strong support at the local level, allowing towns to raise money through a surcharge on local property taxes.

**Estimated New England Federal Funding Total, 2004-2014**



Per capita calculations based on 2010 U.S. Census. Please refer to the full report for additional information and data sources.

**Estimated Per Capita Federal Contributions for Land Conservation in New England States, 2004-2014**



Estimated total federal contributions for conservation (defined here as land protection through acquisition or easement) in New England. Please note that NRCS programs are excluded from these estimates because we could not obtain data for the full range of years, and some federal program data are based on appropriations rather than spending. Please refer to the full report for additional information and data sources.

To learn more and download the full Public Conservation Funding in New England report, visit [www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org/public-funding-report](http://www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org/public-funding-report). The Wildlands and Woodlands (W&W) Initiative is a collaborative effort to protect 70 percent of New England in forests over the next 50 years. Achieving the W&W goal will require considerable investment from both public and private sources and continuing innovations in conservation finance.



**Wildlands & Woodlands**  
A Vision for the New England Landscape