

Amherst Conservation Commission

FY21 Strategic Plan

Key Points

- ACC is following a “Conservation Plan” that guides its activities and ensures compliance with RSA 36-A
- ACC manages 2600 acres (13% of Amherst)
- ACC’s funding strategy attempts to balance expenses from its Town Budget with support from its Conservation Fund

Mission and Strategies

The Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC) protects and manages the town's biodiversity and natural resources, and promotes the public use of natural open space for low-impact outdoor recreation that is consistent with conservation.

The ACC's strategies for pursuing its mission are to:

- Influence zoning, planning and zoning adjustments
- Acquire property and development rights where appropriate for conservation
- Manage town forests
- Manage town grasslands
- Control invasive species on ACC-managed lands
- Promote low-impact outdoor recreation
- Educate citizens about Amherst's biodiversity and natural resources

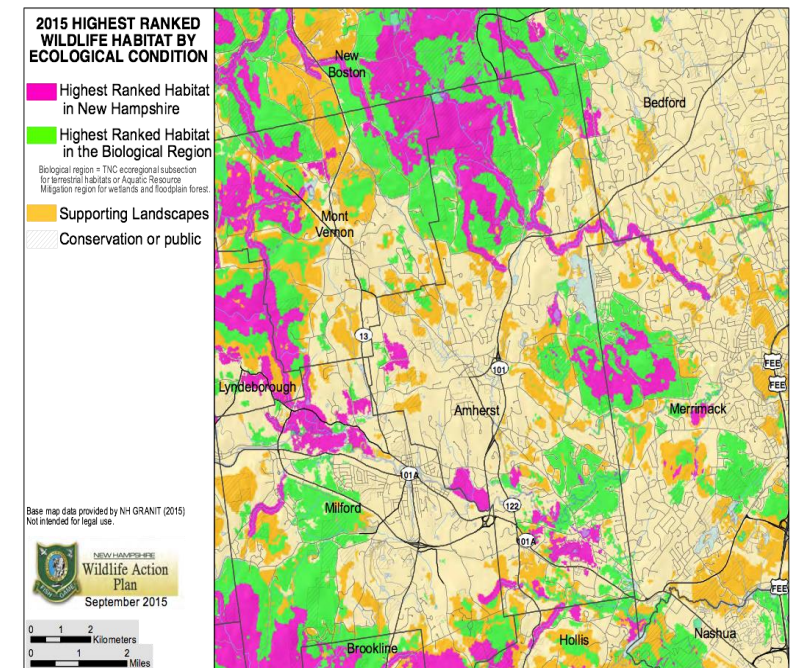
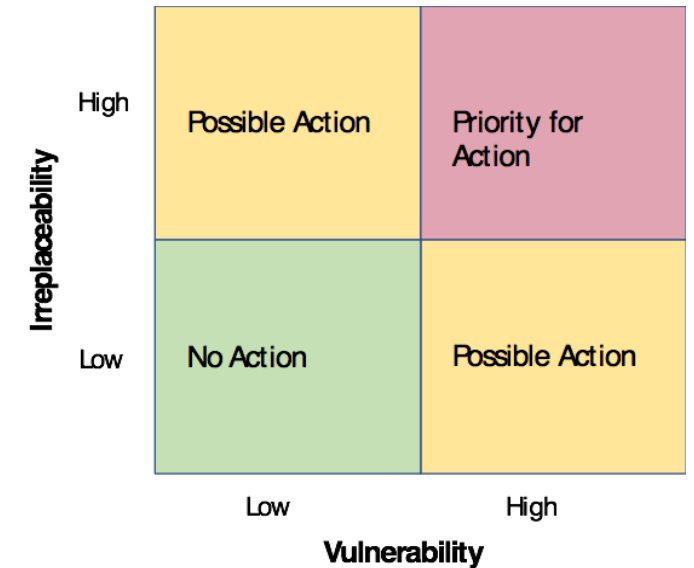
Strategy 1. Influence Zoning and Planning

- Provide input on Zoning Ordinance
- Work with Planning Board to ensure Amherst's natural resources are fully addressed in the town's Master Plan
- Advise Planning Board on conditional use permit applications for project impacting wetlands and water resources
- Review permit applications to NHDES for impacts to wetlands under Section 404 of Clean Water Act



Strategy 2. Acquisitions

- Acquire properties or development rights for the purpose of conserving priority lands in town
- Conservation Fund used for acquisitions – revenue from 100% of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) and 100% of profits from town forests
- Prioritization scheme developed. ACC does *not* endorse generic % land target



Strategy 3. Manage Town Forests

- ACC manages town forests. These include 10 areas, totaling 1566 acres
- Prepare updated Forest Management plan
- Management has 3 objectives:
 - a) forest health and biodiversity conservation
 - b) public recreation
 - c) revenue generation
- Significant shift to custom GIS planning application



Strategy 4. Manage Grasslands

- ACC serves as the manager of various grasslands. These include 14 areas, totaling 250 acres
- ACC has developed a management plan for each of its actively managed properties. Management addresses conservation needs set forth in NH State Wildlife Action Plan



Strategy 5. Control Invasive Species

- ACC will seek to control invasive *plant* species throughout Amherst
 - Direct control of invasive species on ACC managed public lands
 - Collaborative control with DPW
 - Encourage private landowners to control invasives



Strategy 6. Low-impact Outdoor Recreation

- ACC promotes low-impact outdoor recreation on the lands that it manages
 - >25 miles of trails
 - Hiking, biking & X-country skiing
 - Hunting
- Major contributions of labor and materials from Amherst residents, Eagle Scout projects, and regional trails organizations (e.g. NEMBA)



Strategy 7. Public Education & Outreach

- Developed a PE&O Plan
- Includes three major objectives
 - Outreach & Engagement
 - Partnerships & Collaboratives
 - Communications & Media
- Strengthens the ACC's mission and relationships with Amherst residents



Financial Strategy

Town Budget

- Annual costs that directly affect citizen enjoyment and/or participation.
 - Infrastructure (bridges, kiosks, signage, etc)
 - Trail development and upkeep
 - Educational outreach (workshops, etc)
 - Professional development (commissioner education)
 - Administrative support
 - Invasives control planning & management

Conservation Fund

- Costs affecting flora and fauna habitat
 - Property Acquisitions
 - Surveys, Legal costs for potential acquisitions
 - Habitat improvement (planning efforts, timber harvests, mowing, etc)
 - Capital purchases (machinery, tools, etc)
 - As directed by town warrant

ACC Budget Comparisons			
	'19 Actuals	'20 Budget	'21 Proposed
Wages	2,413.67	1,225.00	2,900.00
Social Security	149.64	71.00	179.79
Medicare	34.99	16.00	42.04
Educ. Training Prof Dev	250.00	3,000.00	750.00
Surveying	375	0.00	0.00
Land Management	3,085.00	0.00	0.00
Meadow Management	1,072.50	0.00	0.00
Water Cross Repair & Maint.	3,213.48	6,000.00	3,000.00
Invasives Mitigation	5,600.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Signage	1,788.09	0.00	1,500.00
Kiosk	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dues & Subscriptions	700.00	800.00	1,200.00
Educational Outreach	351.40	0.00	2,250.00
Postage	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	19,033.77	14,112.00	14,821.83