

Nature's Network

Lands and waters sustaining wildlife and people



Finding common ground to address shared priorities

From the Canada lynx living deep in Maine's spruce-fir forests to the freshwater mussels found in the Tennessee River Basin in Virginia, thousands of species have found their niche in the Northeastern United States. Some are common, some are on the brink of extinction, but all depend on regional habitats to survive.

The resources sustaining these species also provide essential benefits like clean water to the tens of millions of people who make their home in the Northeast. It is the most densely populated region in the country, yet it is a place where people and nature have long coexisted. The Northeast is a mosaic of communities, working lands, open spaces and protected habitats, and a place where our history has been shaped by our

relationship to the land. But climate change, development, and other changing conditions are threatening the landscape that defines us, the resources we depend upon, and the wild things and places we care about. To support this living landscape into the future, we need to work together.

Laying the groundwork for unified action

In response to these threats, the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) and the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) coordinated a team of partners from 13 states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nongovernmental organizations, and universities, who worked together for more than a year to develop a regional conservation design that lays the groundwork for unified conservation action across the entire region.

Called *Nature's Network*, the design is a collaborative effort to identify a network of places that should be considered the highest conservation priorities to sustain natural resources and benefits for future generations.

- It reflects scientific consensus from experts across the 13-state conservation community.
- It represents a shared vision for the future of the landscape.
- It offers a practical set of tools that empower people working at different scales to contribute to regional conservation goals while more effectively meeting the goals of their individual organizations.

Nature's Network identifies the highest conservation priorities for sustaining natural resources for wildlife and people from Maine to Virginia.



Tools that empower different users

More than a map, *Nature's Network* offers a suite of decision-support tools representing five conservation approaches. Used together, or individually, these tools offer voluntary guidance to:

Protect the irreplaceable – The best places to start for strategic conservation are intact and resilient places that encompass a diversity of lands and waters, and important habitat for key species. These are the places we cannot afford to lose to ensure a sustainable future for human and natural communities in the Northeast.

Look ahead to make better decisions today – With guidance that reflects predictions about how development and environmental change will affect the landscape in the future, we ensure that today's investments in conservation will pay off over time.

Maximize limited resources – Conservation agencies and organizations have limited time, money, and staff, yet threats from climate change and development make the work of conservation more important than ever. Science-based guidance for identifying the highest conservation priorities in the region equips states and other partners to use limited resources more effectively.

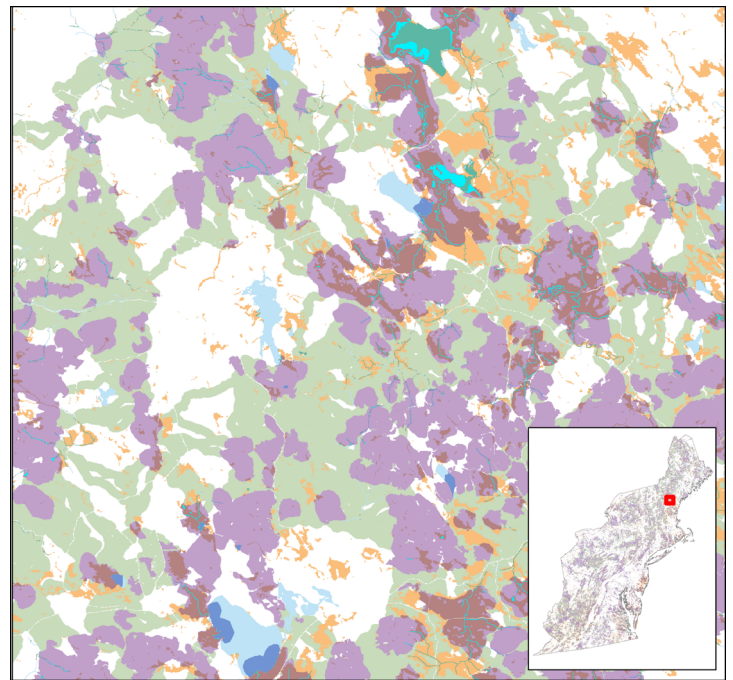
Reinforce local priorities with regional perspective – Looking at how local conservation efforts fit into the bigger landscape picture can help boost priorities by demonstrating their significance on a regional scale. Zooming out can help local practitioners discover new potential priority areas that warrant a closer look.

Find opportunities to work together – Conserving fish, wildlife, and natural benefits in the face of increasing threats is beyond the scope of a single agency. With the benefit of shared regional data, partners can look across state borders for opportunities to work together at scales that matter for people and wildlife.

To see where you fit into *Nature's Network* visit:
www.naturesnetwork.org

For more information:

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Partners can look at the big picture with the interactive *Nature's Network* map, which combines four different datasets to highlight conservation priority areas across the region, or can dig into individual datasets and tools representing different conservation approaches.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Nature's Network incorporates habitat needs for hundreds of species of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Wildlife Action Plans, like wood turtle and Delmarva fox squirrel.