



New Hampshire: Drinking Water Improvement

The Partners

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Forest Service (FS) partners include: New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NH Department of Environmental Services, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, Granite State Rural Water Association, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, The Nature Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited.



The Project

New Hampshire has the fastest growing population in New England today and is second in the country in the percentage of population served by private wells. Three of the top four watersheds in the country projected to experience the most change in water quality as a result of increasing housing density on private forest lands are found in New Hampshire. Many private wells have water quality issues related to land use, forestry activities, agriculture, and pollution that will be exacerbated by climate change and increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme events such as hurricanes like Irene and Sandy.

NRCS and FS will work to provide access to conservation efforts for private agricultural and forest landowners and reduce sedimentation and improve resiliency in headwater streams on adjacent public lands. This project will promote healthy, working forests and agricultural lands, while protecting the community-based drinking water supply. It will also aim to improve wildlife habitat in the project areas.

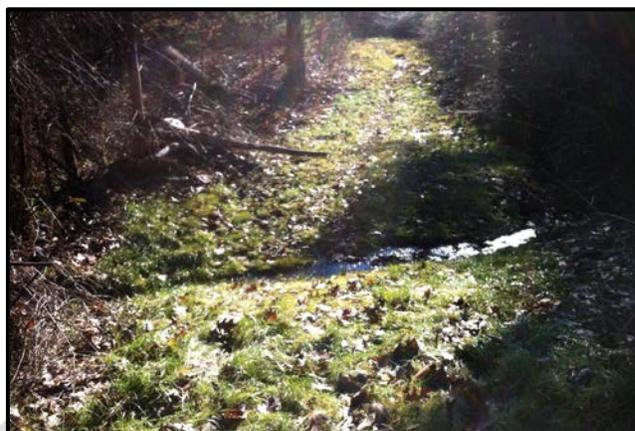


The Benefits of Additional Resources

Additional financial resources will allow NH NRCS and our conservation partners to focus on the planning and installation of BMPs which support drinking water quality improvements, improved wildlife habitat and water quality, and accelerate land protection efforts in the small watersheds with large numbers of drinking water withdrawal sites identified. Through this project, it is estimated that over three years an additional 1,000 acre each of cropland and hayland could be treated to improve water quality and an additional 10,000 acres of forest management plans could be developed.

Additional funding for public lands on the White Mountain National Forest will increase the pace of restoration from the impacts of poorly sited and improperly installed infrastructure (culverts, bridges, dams, trails and roads), make improvements related to storm damage from recent extreme weather events, reduce the impacts of non-native and invasive species and improve the hydrologic and biological function of streams and wetlands in headwaters above public drinking water sites.

The project will have a direct impact on drinking water quality for eight New Hampshire communities. It is also expected to increase community support for private and public lands conservation and improve the economy for healthy and productive working lands in both the forest and agricultural sectors.



The Measure of Success

A successful partnership and project will be based on improvements in water quality as documented through water testing of drinking water supplies, reductions in sedimentation, improved hydrologic function in streams, wildlife habitat improvements, and increases in working lands conservation.