

NH State Technical Committee

October 17, 2012

New Hampshire 2012 Resource Concerns



Priority 1 – Water Quality – Nutrients on Farmstead, Cropland and Pasture

Summary: Reduction of non-point source nutrient pollution from livestock operations is the top priority for EQIP. Excess nutrients (N and P) from manure and compost contribute to water quality degradation in several NH watersheds listed as EPA 303D impaired for nutrients. The majority of the funds will be used for expensive practices on the headquarters area, but more acres will be treated on cropland and pasture.

Practices: CNMP, Nutrient Management, Waste Storage Facility, Compost Facility, Roof Runoff Structure, Heavy Use Area Protection, Waste Treatment

Program: EQIP



Priority 2 – Plant condition – Structure/Composition and Pest Management on Forestland

Summary: The predominant land-cover type in NH is forest, much of it in small to medium-sized lots that have not been well managed and are infested with non-native invasive species. Educational efforts by several conservation partners (UNHCE, The Nature Conservancy, The Society for Protection of NH Forests, NH Fish and Game, and NH Natural Heritage Bureau, among others) have made significant contributions to NRCS efforts to address this resource concern.

Practices: Forest Management Plans (CAPs), Forest Stand Improvement, Brush Management, Herbaceous Weed Control, Tree/Shrub Site Prep

Programs: EQIP, WHIP, CStP



Priority 3 – Water Quality – Sediment; Soil Erosion and Soil Health on Cropland

Summary: Conservation practices implemented to address soil erosion on cropland also offer significant benefits to water quality (sediment and nutrients) as well as soil quality by increasing soil organic matter. In recent years we have developed a new emphasis (Green Start, UNH CE) on soil health/quality and the interest from producers has been strong and continues to increase. NH's Seasonal High Tunnel pilot program is also included in this priority. Conservation easements are of great interest to our constituents in NH and we work with strong partnerships throughout the state.

Practices: Cover Crops, Conservation Cover, Riparian Forest Buffer, Residue Management (No Till), Filter Strip, Forage and Biomass Planting, Seasonal High Tunnels

Programs: EQIP, CStP, FRPP



Priority 4 – Wildlife Habitat Development and Management – Forest (all land uses)

Summary: There is great interest in developing and maintaining wildlife habitat throughout NH. Key emphasis areas include wetland restoration, developing early successional wildlife habitat for declining species (including the New England Cottontail), improving aquatic organism passage and native brook trout habitat as well as oyster habitat restoration in Great Bay. Educational and implementation efforts by several conservation partners (including UNHCE, WMI, TU, Tin Mountain Conservation Center, NHF&G) have made significant contributions to address this resource concern. Conservation Easement funding for long-term resource protection is requested from WRP.

Practices: Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plans (CAPs), Fish Passage, Early Successional Habitat Development/Management, Stream Habitat Improvement, Restoration & Management of Declining Habitats.

Programs: WHIP, EQIP, WRP, CStP



Priority 5 – Plant productivity, Soil erosion and Soil Health, Water Quality – Sediment on Pasture

Summary: There is growing interest by ag producers and NH consumers in locally raised grass-fed meats and livestock products. NH NRCS has partnered with Granite State Graziers, UNH Cooperative Extension, NHDAMF and NHACD (and individual districts) to promote sustainable grazing and pasture management through educational events, and demonstration projects. Poorly managed pastures and grazing systems cause significant erosion, water quality impairments (sediment, nutrients and pathogens), decreased plant productivity (quality and quantity) as well as increased plant pest infestations. In addition, we are requesting funds for GRP to aid in long-term protection of key grassland areas through conservation easements.

Practices: Grazing Management Plans (CAPs), Prescribed Grazing, Forage and Biomass Planting, Animal Trails and Walkways, Riparian Forest Buffer, Watering Facility, Fence

Programs: EQIP, CStP, GRP



Priority 6 – Water Quality – Sediment, Soil Erosion and Flooding on Farmstead

Summary: Reduction of non-point source sediment pollution, primarily stemming from livestock operations, is a top priority for EQIP. Excess water increases erosion and causes sedimentation in nearby surface waters and wetlands contributing to water quality degradation in several NH watersheds listed as EPA 303D impaired for sediment. The majority of the funds will be used for expensive practices on the headquarters area. We have been working in partnership with UNHCE - Ag for preliminary site visits, demonstration sites and training for our staff and producers related to planning and implementation on livestock headquarters areas.

Practices: Riparian Forest Buffer, Heavy Use Area, roof runoff, access road, stream crossing, fence, and critical area plantings

Programs: EQIP



Priority 7 – Water Quality – Sediment and Soil erosion on Forestland

Summary: The predominant land-cover type in NH is forest; much of it in small to medium sized lots that have not been well managed and many of the existing roads, trails & landings and stream crossing are eroding at a significant rate causing impairments to surface waters and wetlands. We are working in partnership with US EPA, USFS, and NHDES, among others to protect 3 forested watersheds (Salmon Falls/Great Bay, Contoocook and Merrimack) at-risk for degradation due to significant development pressure. Conservation easements and applicable conservation practices are needed to address this resource concern.

Practices: Riparian Forest Buffer, Critical Area Planting, Access Control, Stream Crossing, Forest Trails and Landings

Programs: EQIP, WHIP, WRP



Priority 8 – Plant pest pressure on Cropland, Pasture and Farmstead

Summary: Controlling cropland and pasture pests including non-native invasive plant species has become a major challenge for agriculture producers in NH. Helping NH growers reduce pesticide use through IPM techniques has been a goal for NRCS, working in partnership with NHDAMF, UNHCE and others. Use of IPM techniques including cover crops, crop rotations, avoidance (access control, seasonal high tunnels) and better pesticide handling (agrichemical handling facilities) in addition to plans which avoid the most sensitive areas (wetlands, highly permeable soils and shallow water tables) offer improved management of pest species while reducing water quality impairments. Key priorities for these funds are to combat bedstraw and yellow rattle infestations in hayland and pastures, as well as non-native invasives on cropland, pasture and HQ areas.

Practices: Integrated Pest Management, Conservation Crop Rotation, Brush Management, Herbaceous Weed Control, Forage and Biomass Planting, Cover Crops

Programs: EQIP, AMA



Priority 9 – Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation (Irrigation) – Farmstead and Cropland

Summary: Improving energy efficiency on agricultural operations (including livestock HQ, greenhouses, cropland, and maple syrup production) also conserves water and improves air quality. NH produces a significant amount of maple syrup and there is growing interest in practices to save energy and reduce combustion emission. NH has experienced several dry periods during the past few growing seasons and there is increased interest in irrigation and improved irrigation efficiency.

Practices: Ag Energy Management Plan (CAP), Irrigation Water Management Plans, On-farm energy efficiency improvements (Reverse Osmosis, Pan pre-heaters, Greenhouse Energy Screens & Fans), Micro-irrigation

Programs: EQIP, AMA

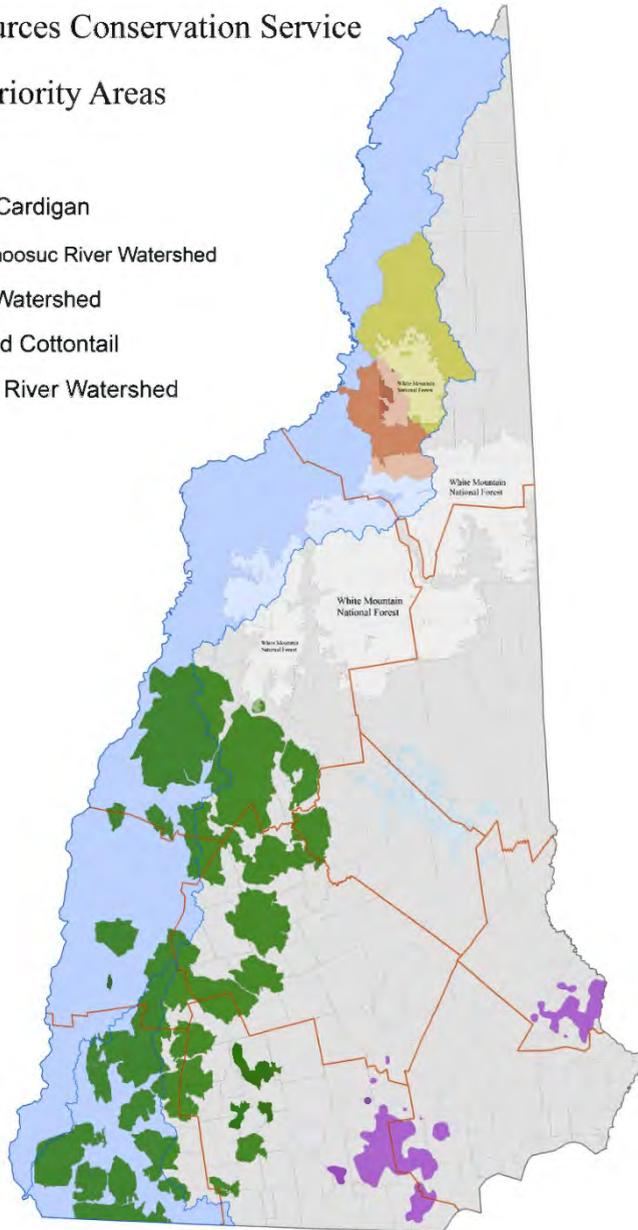
2012 Program Allocation Review

- EQIP - \$5,346,836
- WHIP - \$466,500
- FRPP - \$1,856,987
- WRP - \$11,997,226
- CSP/CStP - \$491,168
- AMA - \$32,407

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

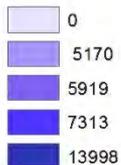
Partnership Priority Areas

- Quabbin to Cardigan
- Upper Ammonoosuc River Watershed
- Israel River Watershed
- New England Cottontail
- Connecticut River Watershed

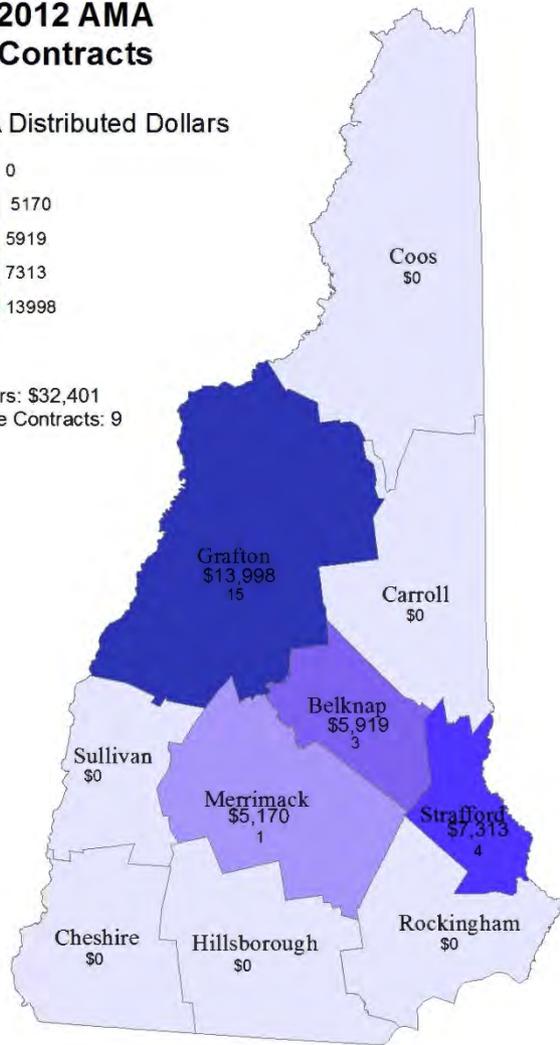


2012 AMA Contracts

AMA Distributed Dollars



Total Dollars: \$32,401
Total Active Contracts: 9



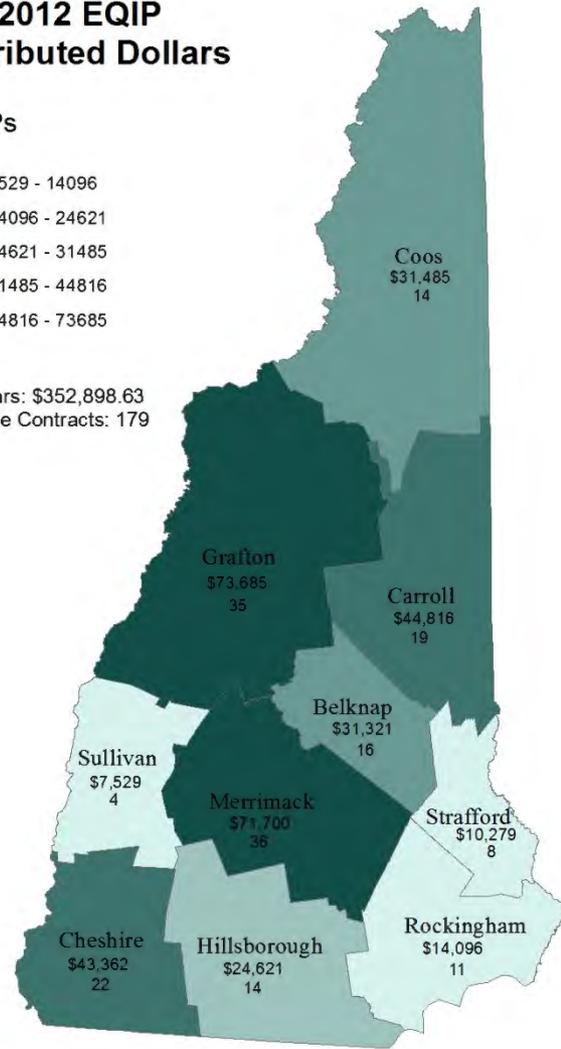
Richard P. Ellsmore, State Conservationist

2012 EQIP Distributed Dollars

CAPs



Total Dollars: \$352,898.63
Total Active Contracts: 179



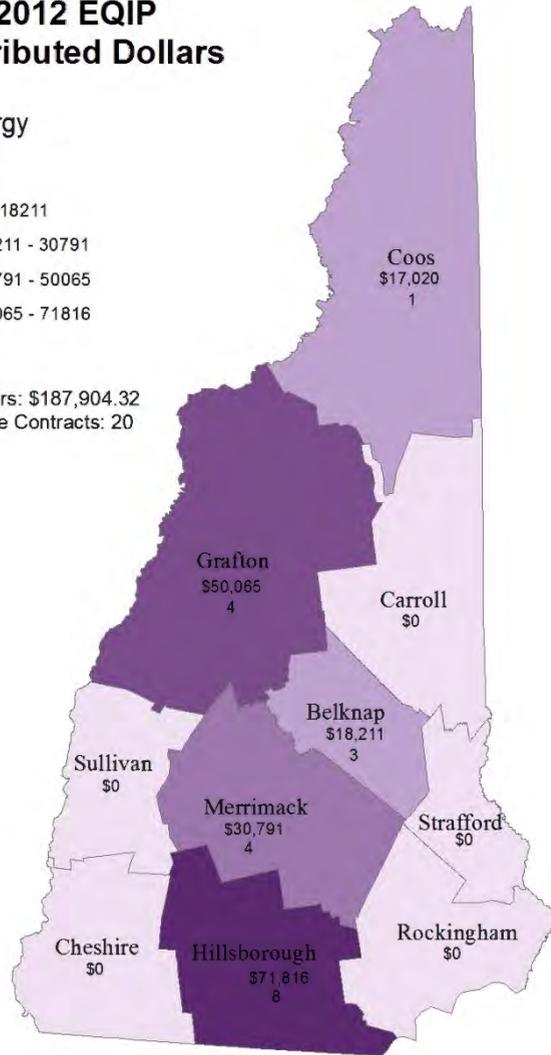
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2012 EQIP Distributed Dollars

Energy



Total Dollars: \$187,904.32
Total Active Contracts: 20

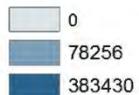


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2012 WHIP Contracts

Working Lands for Wildlife

New England
Cottontail Dollars



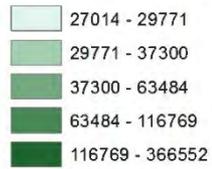
Total Dollars: \$461,686
Total Active Contracts: 12



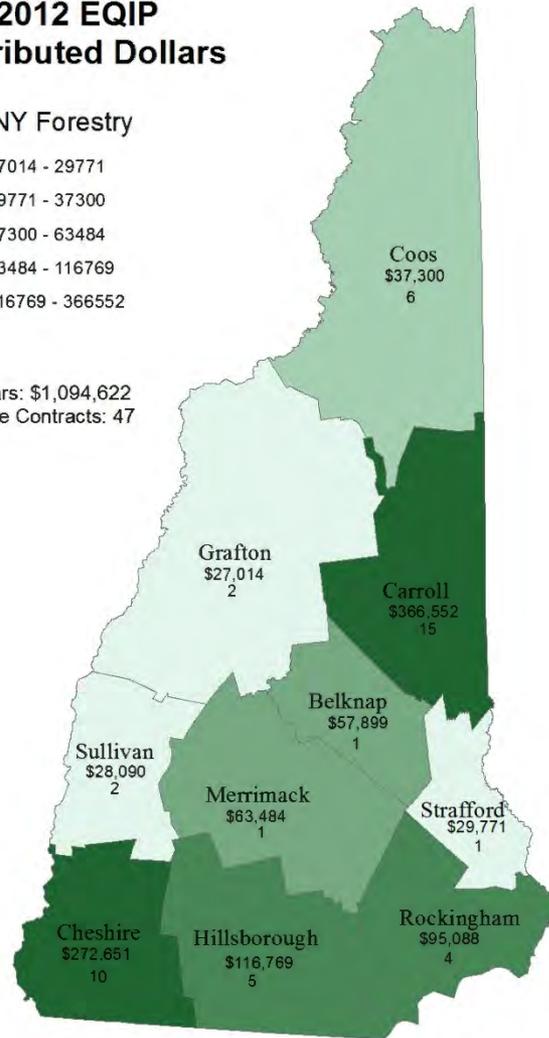
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2012 EQIP Distributed Dollars

NE/NY Forestry



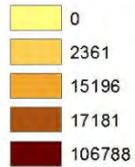
Total Dollars: \$1,094,622
Total Active Contracts: 47



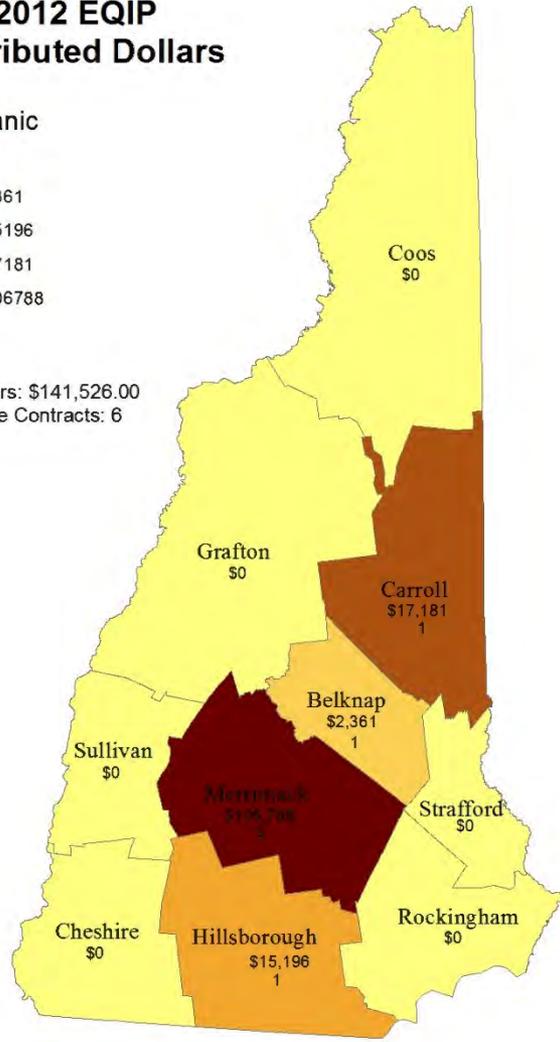
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2012 EQIP Distributed Dollars

Organic



Total Dollars: \$141,526.00
Total Active Contracts: 6



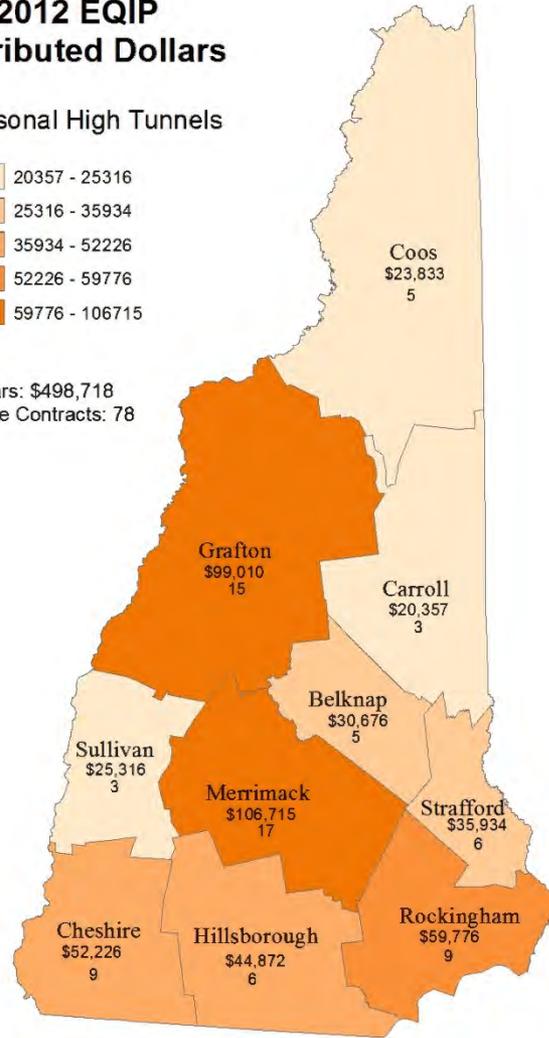
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2012 EQIP Distributed Dollars

Seasonal High Tunnels



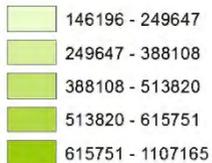
Total Dollars: \$498,718
Total Active Contracts: 78



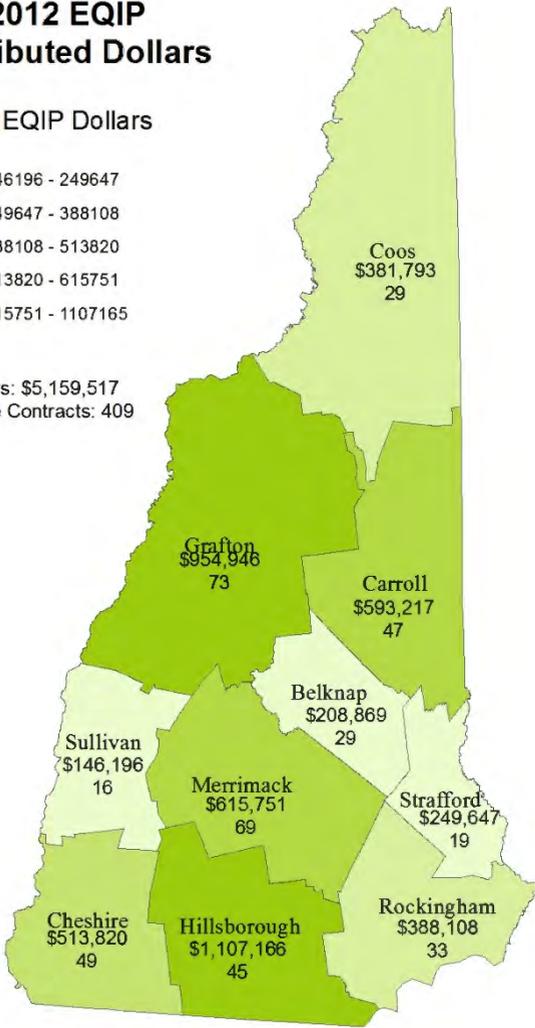
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2012 EQIP Distributed Dollars

Total EQIP Dollars

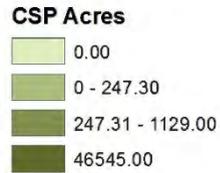


Total Dollars: \$5,159,517
Total Active Contracts: 409

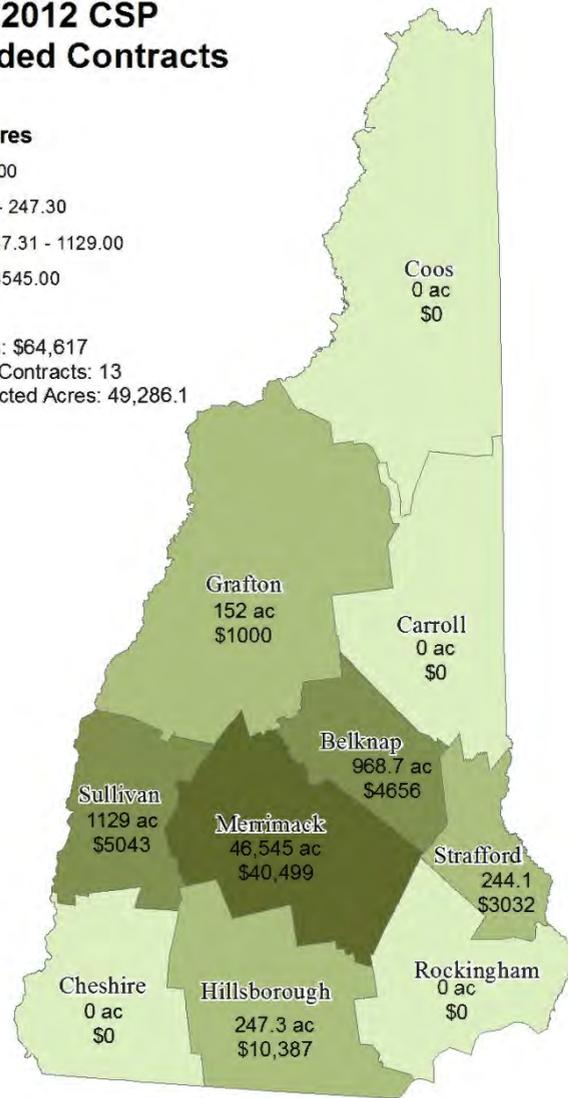


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2012 CSP Funded Contracts



Total Dollars: \$64,617
Total Active Contracts: 13
Total Contracted Acres: 49,286.1



Richard P. Ellsmore, State Conservationist

Easements Subcommittee

- July 18 – [GRP, FRPP, and WRP](#) 2012 ranking sheets, and GARCs (along with proposed 2013 methodologies) were sent to the general partnership list. This list includes members of the STC, their representatives, and many who do not actively sit on the STC. Constructive comments and suggestions were requested in writing by 8/17.
- August 17 – [Comments](#) were received from SELT, SPNHF, NH Fish and Game, and the Monadnock Conservancy.
- August 30 - [Comments were summarized](#) and sent back out to the general partnership, along with the results of the 2013 WRP Market Analysis. An email was also sent to Don and Kim for their input on the easement program ranking sheets and WRP field assessment worksheet.
- The easement staff has been meeting regularly to determine which recommendations current policy will allow us to incorporate into the [2013 ranking sheets](#), and which we cannot.
- I have been corresponding with [John Long](#) in Maine regarding their GRP and WRP [GARCs](#). I will prepare a summary of the 2013 NH easement activities for Deb to share with the other ASTCs for Programs. There hasn't been much easement program activity in Mass or Vermont and I don't anticipate any significant changes to their 2013 programs.
- September 7 - The [final WRP and GRP GARCs](#) will be completed for your signature and approval. If you have no additional questions or suggestions, they will be uploaded to the easement share point site and sent to the general partnership. They will be posted on our webpage as soon as they are approved by the national office.
- The [ranking sheets do not need NHQ approval and will be sent to the general partnership](#) as soon as we have finished incorporating their comments, but prior to the start of the new fiscal year so as not to delay the [2013 easement program rollout](#). I will include the reasons why their comments were or were not incorporated when the email is sent.

Fish & Wildlife Subcommittee

- Limit Delayed Mowing to > 10 acre openings
- Brush Hog wildlife openings < 10 acres every 3-4 years
- Continuing to develop guidelines for Non-Commercial Forest Stand Improvement
- Proposed new regional practice for “marking”

Agricultural Subcommittee

- Helped clarify policy relating to **water well** as it relates to irrigation and livestock watering
 - Only approved to address a documented water quality resource concern where installation of a well will improve the water quality
 - Alternative livestock water if currently accessing surface water and wetlands
 - Facilitate prescribed grazing system only if prescribed grazing will improve water quality (shifting from corn to sod based system near surface water/wetlands)
 - Water wells for irrigation need to improve water quality – not just water quantity.
 - Rainwater catchment systems for high tunnels were highly recommended.
- Supported the **addition of the CNMP Waiver worksheet** for small animal feeding operations (<40 AUE's)
- Made recommendations and provided feedback for the new **nutrient management (590) standard**
 - Allow for different soil test extractions to be used in order to better utilize regional recommendations and promote regional consistency
 - Did not choose to identify conditions where nitrogen and phosphorus risk assessments did not need to be completed (meaning always complete both assessments)
 - Supported manure and fertilizer spreading setbacks from surface water, wetlands and other sensitive areas:
 - 35 ft if healthy vegetative barrier with no channelized flow
 - 100 ft for unvegetated barrier
 - Surface spreading manure or fertilizer on frozen, snow-covered, or saturated soils is not allowed. Committee did not identify any exceptions to this rule in NH.
 - Updated spreading setbacks for water wells based on NH-DES criteria updated Sept 2012.
- UNH Extension and others agreed to **help improve assistance with IPM (595)** in coming year.
- Supported addition of new practice, **Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548) for FY13**. Practice involves using an aerator or other state approved implement to break up surface compaction. Aerator will improve water infiltration, decrease nutrient runoff, and improve grass/legume establishment when reseeding/overseeding (pic at end of attached presentation).
- **No changes to state level ranking questions** were recommended

