

Land Protection Planning for Floodplain Forests in CT River Watershed, Massachusetts



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Conservation Technical Assistance grant

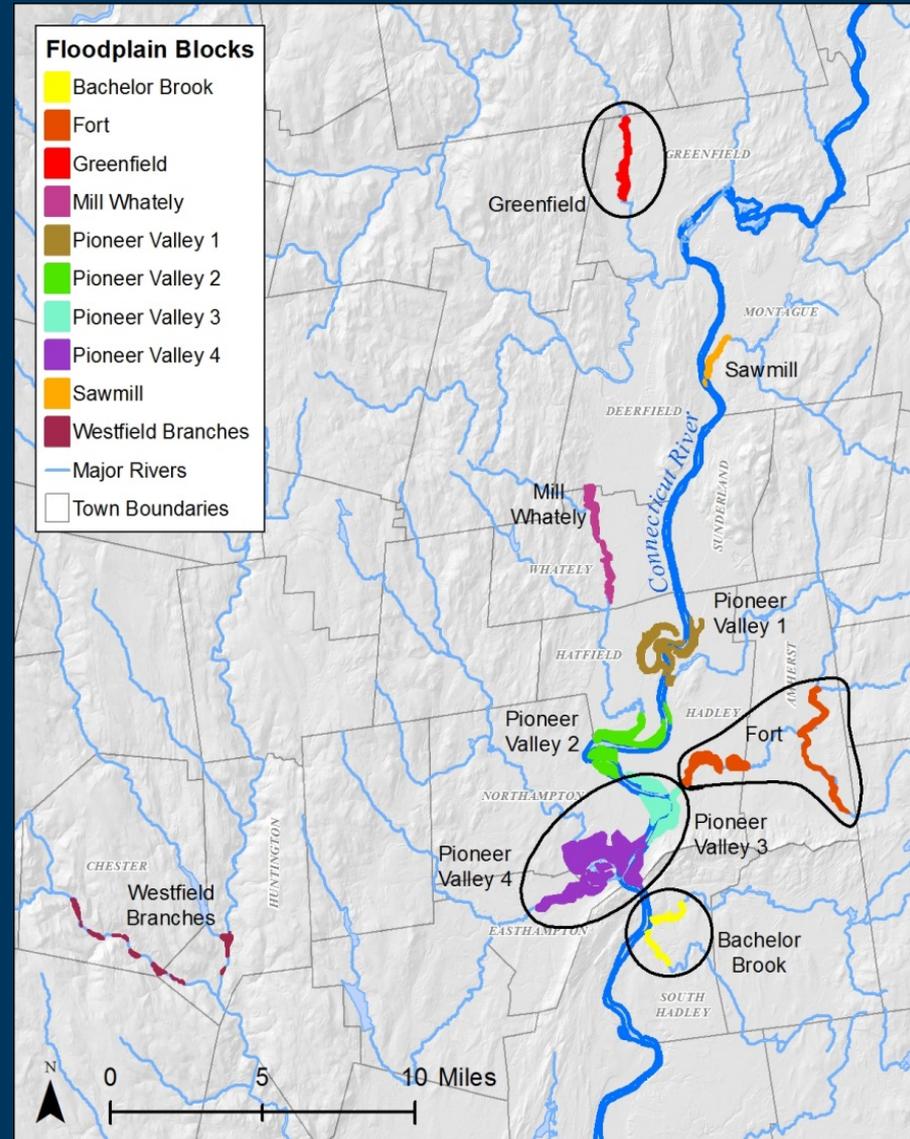
Concurrent with similar work in CT, also under NRCS CTA grant



US Army Corps flood control dam on Ottauquechee River, VT, © Christian O. Marks

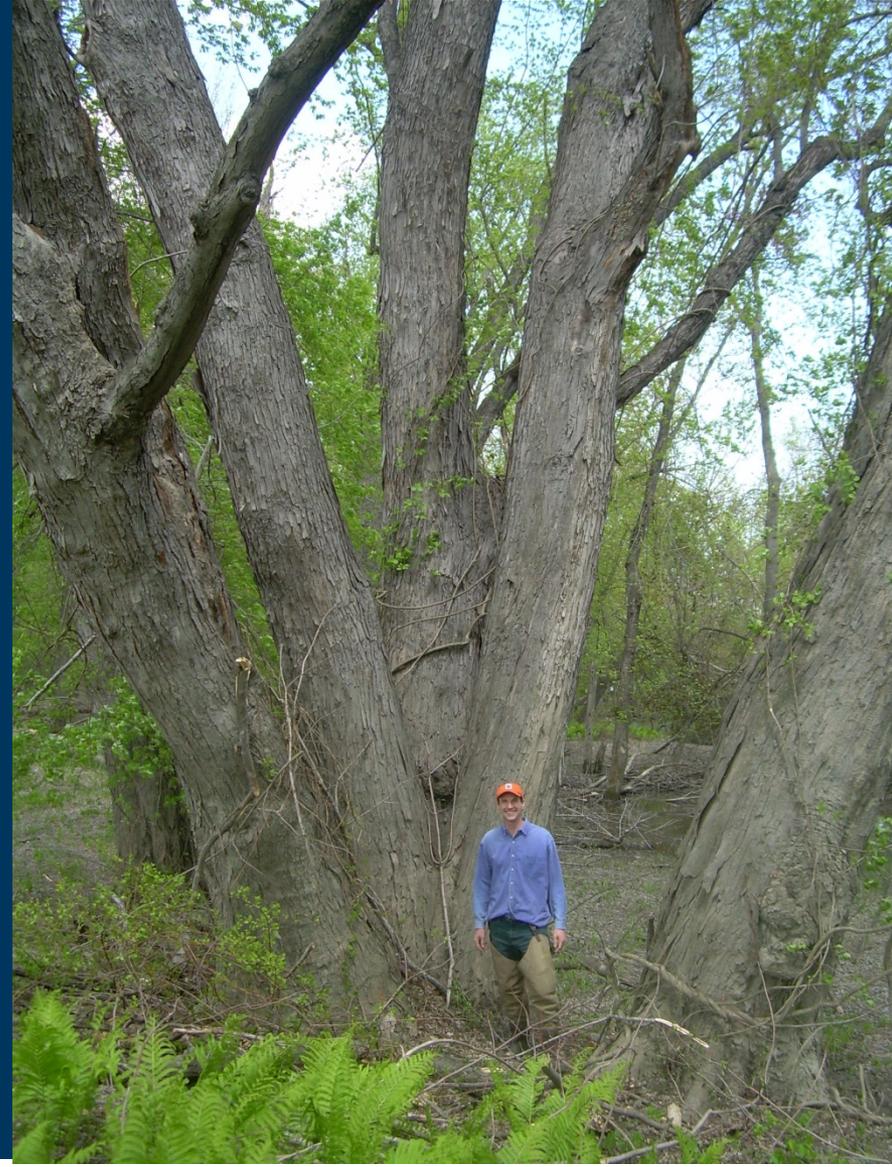
4 (of 10) Tier 1 Floodplain Blocks identified as having highest feasibility of land protection success:

1. Greenfield (High gradient, rich terrace)
2. Fort (Small river)
3. Pioneer Valley Group (Blocks 3 and 4) (Large river)
4. Bachelor Brook (Small river)



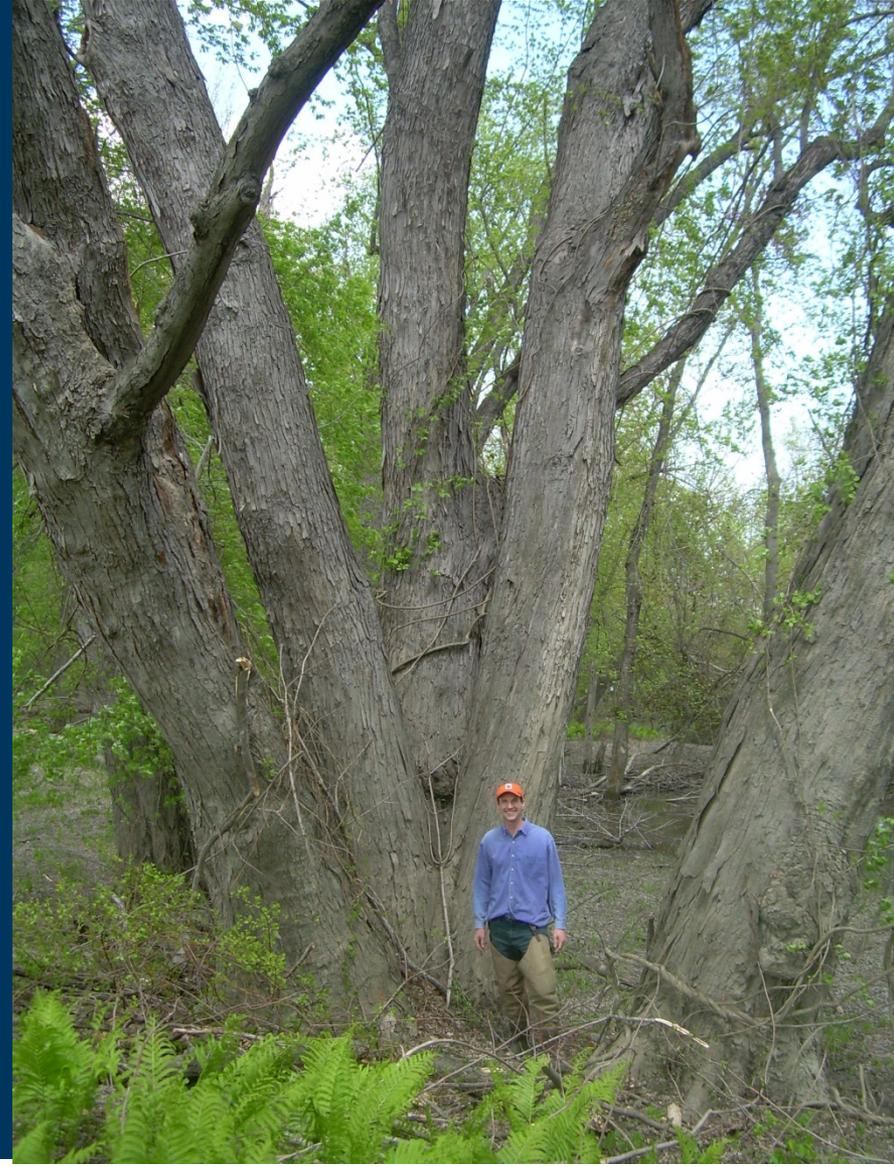
Criteria *considered* for prioritization:

- Parcel size
- Proportion of parcel that lies within the Priority Floodplains
- Adjacency to Protected lands
- Current Land Use
- NRCS program eligibility



Criteria *selected* for prioritization:

- Parcel size *within a Priority Floodplain area*
- Adjacency to Protected lands



Land Protection Priorities – Summary

Priority 1: ≥10 acres in the floodplain and is adjacent to Protected Open Space

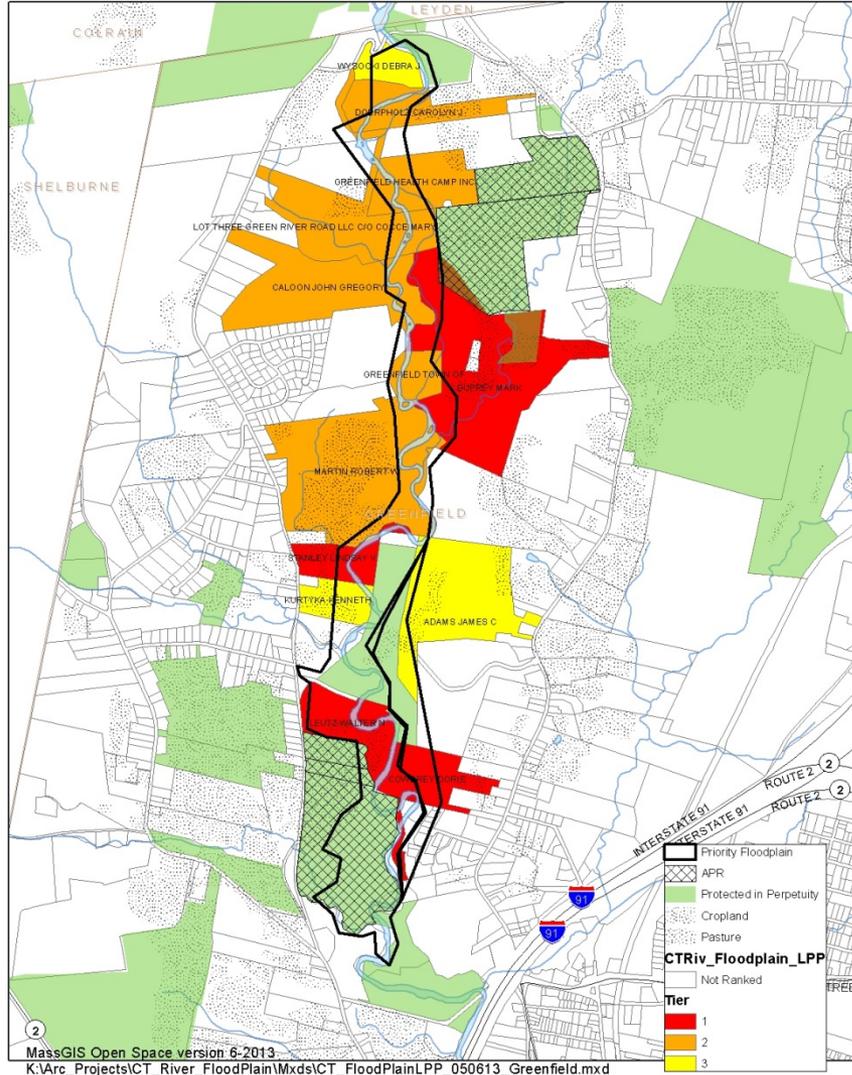
Priority 2: ≥10 acres in the floodplain

Priority 3: 5 to 10 acres in the floodplain

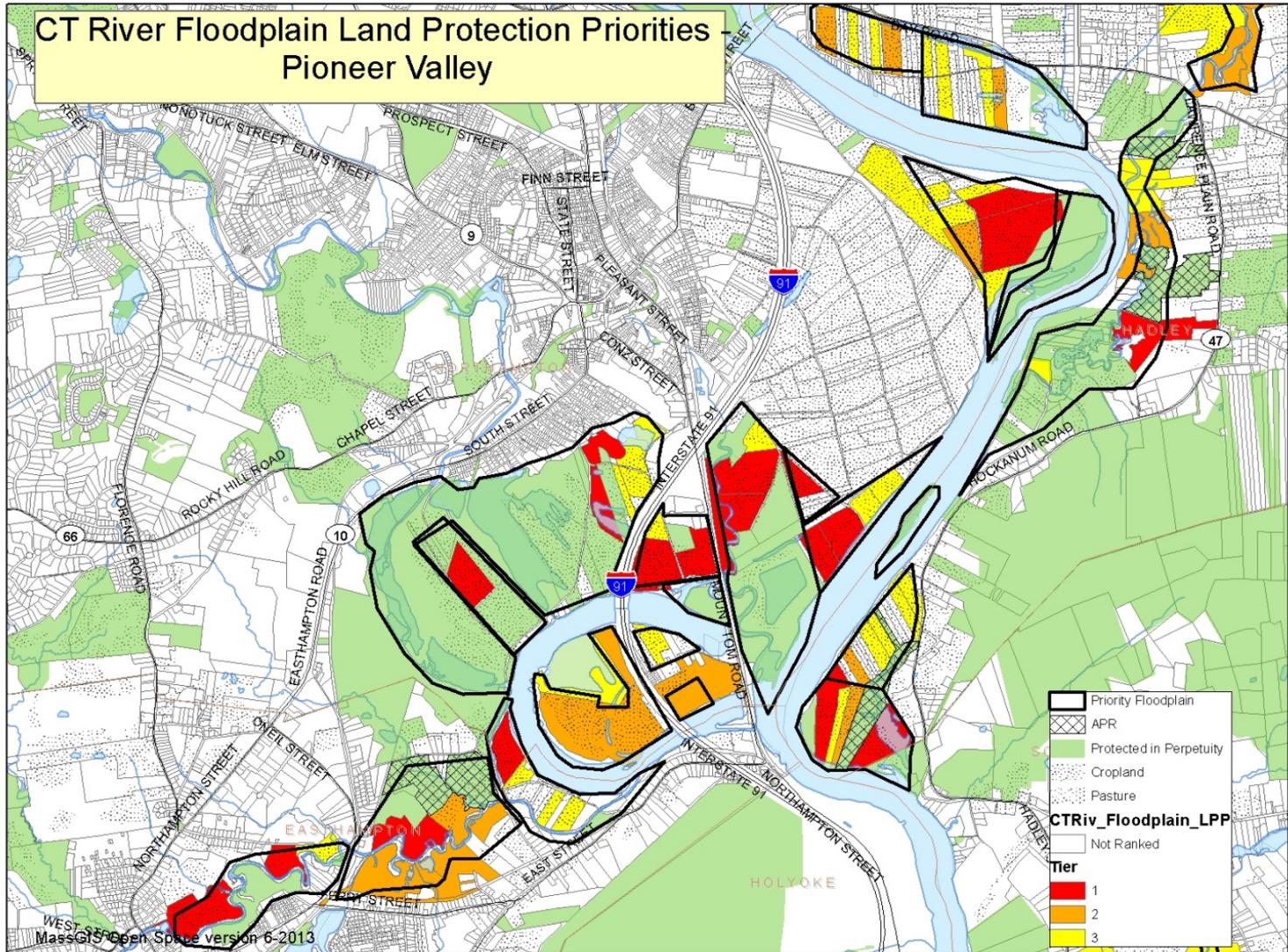
	Priority 1 Parcels	Priority 2 Parcels	Priority 3 Parcels	Total Parcels
Bachelor Brook	1	1	4	6
Fort	3	10	10	23
Greenfield	4	6	3	13
Pioneer Valley Group	19	13	34	66
Grand Total	27	30	51	108

Floodplain Land Protection Priorities Greenfield

CT River Floodplain Land Protection Priorities - Greenfield

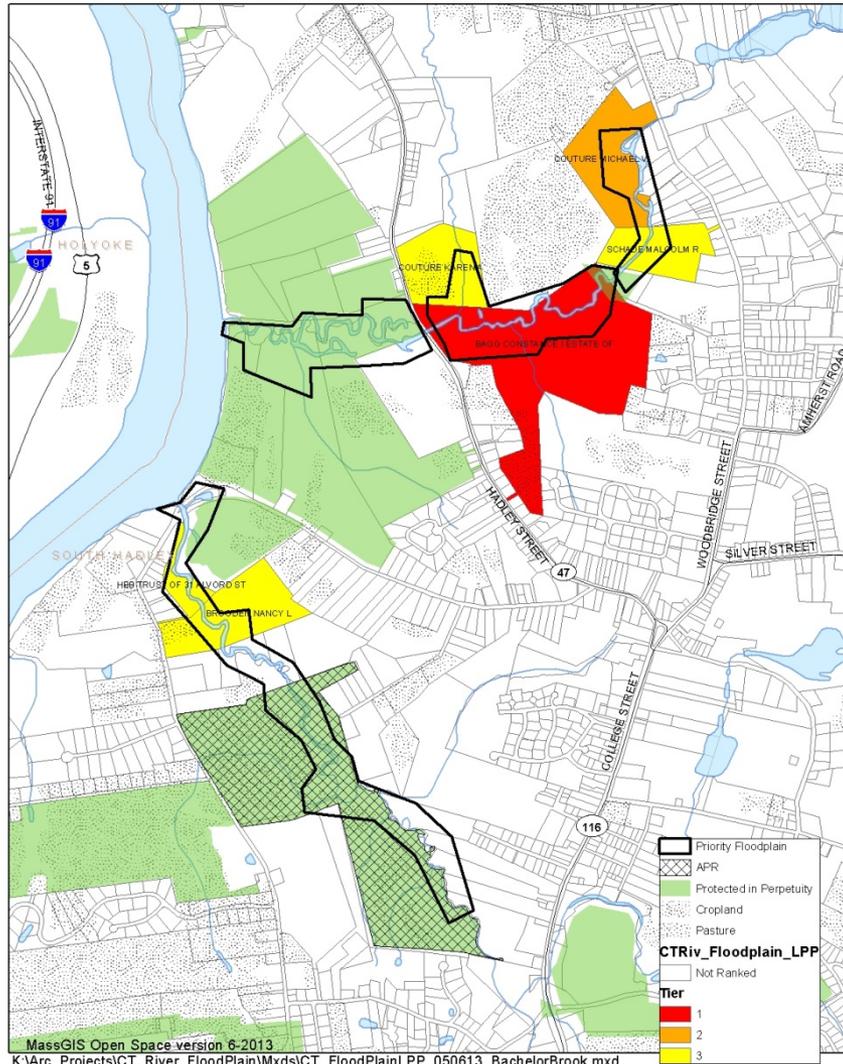


Floodplain Land Protection Priorities Pioneer Valley



Floodplain Land Protection Priorities Bachelor Brook

CT River Floodplain Land Protection Priorities - Bachelor Brook



Selected 30 priority landowners to receive floodplain letter

Considerations:

- Current land use
- Focus on individual and commercial/institutional landowners
- Some landowner knowledge provided by partners



The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts
136 West Street, Suite 5
Northampton, MA 01060

tel (413) 584-2532
nature.org/massachusetts

September 26, 2013

Dear _____,

I am writing on behalf of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a private non-profit conservation organization that works to protect important natural areas. We have conducted research on the value of conservation of the wetlands associated with the Connecticut River and are reaching out to landowners who own and manage property in Connecticut River floodplains to see if they may be interested in learning more about the importance of these wetland systems.

Each year, snow melt and spring rains – and most recently Tropical Storm Irene - cause the Connecticut River and its tributaries to overflow their banks, inundating farm fields and low-lying forests. These areas that are adjacent to and influenced by the river are known as floodplains, with the forested areas called floodplain forests. Floodplain forests are rare and getting rarer, which is a problem both for wildlife that make their homes here, and the human communities that rely on these forests to help ease the impact of floods by holding high water. As the name implies, these forests need periodic flooding.

The Nature Conservancy is studying floodplain forests throughout the entire Connecticut River watershed, looking at ways to protect them that will yield multiple benefits to natural areas and the cities and towns that these places buffer from flooding. These protection strategies include working with willing landowners on a voluntary basis to conserve, restore, or enhance wetlands on their property. Protecting and restoring these systems will enhance their ability to provide water filtration, flood control, and migration corridors for animals.

If you own land in a floodplain and are interested in learning more about the benefits of these important areas, as well as the options that might be available to you to protect or restore your land, *we would welcome the opportunity to talk with you.* Please find my contact information below. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

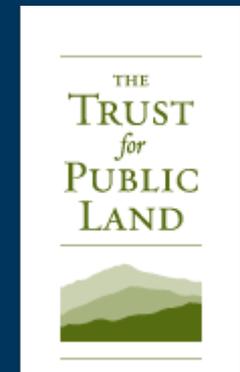
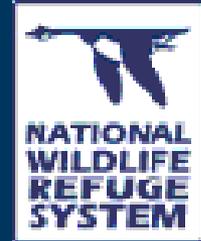
Sincerely,

Markelle Smith
The Nature Conservancy
136 West Street, Suite 5
Northampton, MA 01060
Tel: 413-584-2532
Email: markelle_smith@tnc.org

Partner outreach

Partner Meetings to:

1. Ask about their experiences
2. Share our land protection planning
3. Ask if they might consider using this information in their planning and project work



Results:

- Enhanced communication and coordination
- Data Sharing
- Conversations about conflicts and methods



Project Team

- Rob Warren, MA Dir. Of Protection & Policy
- Markelle Smith, Land Protection Specialist
- Jessica Dyson, GIS Manager

