



Foundation Document

New England National Scenic Trail

Massachusetts, Connecticut

May 2025





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Mission of the National Trails System

The national trails system is the network of scenic, historic, and recreation trails created by the National Trails System Act of 1968 as amended. This act, as amended over time, authorized four types of trails: national scenic trails, national historic trails, national recreation trails, and connecting or side trails (also known as “Section 6” trails). National trails provide for outdoor recreation needs; promote the enjoyment, appreciation, and preservation of open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources; and encourage public access and citizen involvement. Specifically, national scenic trails are intended to showcase our country’s spectacular natural resources and beauty. These routes are primarily nonmotorized continuous trails that extend for 100 miles or more. National scenic trails traverse beautiful terrain and connect communities, significant landmarks, and public lands. Currently, there are 21 national historic trails and 11 national scenic trails in the national trails system.

The National Trails System Act authorizes the administrators of a national trail to work with states or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals to operate, develop, and maintain any portion of such trail either within or outside a federally administered area. These partnerships may include provisions for limited financial assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, operation, development, or maintenance of such trails. Partnerships may also include providing Volunteers-In-Parks status to individuals, private organizations, or landowners participating in these sorts of activities.



Mission of the National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

National Park Service Director's Order 45: *National Trails System* outlines NPS policies and procedures for national scenic and historic trails to ensure that congressionally designated trails are recognized and operated on a consistent basis to ensure protection of the characteristics and values of the trails and their use and enjoyment by future generations.

The NPS core values are a framework in which the National Park Service accomplishes its mission. They express the manner in which, both individually and collectively, the National Park Service pursues its mission. The NPS core values are:

- **Integrity:** We deal honestly, ethically, and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Stewardship:** We provide and inspire exceptional care of the places entrusted to us by the American people.
- **Respect:** We embrace our differences and treat each person with dignity.
- **Engagement:** We each participate fully, extend genuine invitations, and remove barriers to inclusion.
- **Collaboration:** We succeed by engaging beyond our silos, tapping new ideas, and expanding our community.
- **Accountability:** We earn the public's trust each day by competently and transparently fulfilling our responsibilities.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous national park system units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The national park system continues to grow and comprises more than 428 park units covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.



The arrowhead was authorized as the official National Park Service emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. The sequoia tree and bison represent vegetation and wildlife, the mountains and water represent scenic and recreational values, and the arrowhead represents historical and archeological values.

Collaborative Management of the New England National Scenic Trail

A unique cornerstone of the national trails system is collaborative management between the mosaic of public and private interests and the recognition of valuable contributions made by volunteers and private, nonprofit organizations who plan, develop, manage, and maintain the nation's trails. The National Park Service is the federal trail administrator for the New England National Scenic Trail, working collaboratively with many nonprofit partners, as well as the local, state, federal, and Tribal governments with land management responsibilities. The Appalachian Mountain Club and Connecticut Forest & Park Association are the lead nonprofit partners that work with land managers to maintain and manage the trail in Massachusetts and Connecticut, respectively, with the purpose of preserving, promoting, and protecting the trail experience for all people to enjoy for generations to come.

While “New England National Scenic Trail” is the formal, legislated name of the trail, it is more commonly referred to as the New England Trail (NET) by the numerous partners and volunteers and other organizations who work to ensure its preservation. “New England Trail” is therefore used throughout this document except in contexts where it is more technically accurate to use its formal, legislated name.

Fulfilling the vision of a continuous New England Trail—which provides for the maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities—requires a steady commitment of collaborative management across boundaries at a landscape scale. Embracing this culture of shared stewardship and collaborative management is vital to creating and maintaining a relevant, well-located, and well-cared for trail. The National Park Service is committed to working across jurisdictional, cultural, and other boundaries to maximize diverse skillsets and generate innovative approaches to the work. Partnerships with academia, research institutions, and volunteer scientists ensure that decisions on managing the trail are made based on the best available science.

Thriving partnerships that build a community of stewardship are essential to accomplish the mission of the New England Trail. Successful collaboration includes developing and continuously refining a shared vision of the work to be accomplished. Nurturing relationships, while developing and focusing on mutual goals, is vital to the success of these partnerships. Robust partnerships demonstrate a culture of full engagement that leads to collective enthusiasm and achievement of results.

This foundation document was developed through such a partnership. It outlines the nature and purpose of the New England Trail and articulates the significance of the trail across jurisdictional, geographical, and cultural boundaries. The future of the New England Trail and the conservation of the fundamental resources and values the trail provides depends on the continued refinement of an inclusive shared vision of the trail. Teamwork between diverse stakeholders, trail communities, and managing partners is vital to ensure that future generations have an opportunity to journey along the New England Trail.



Introduction

A foundation document serves as the underlying guidance for administration, management, and planning decisions for units of the national park system as well as components of the national trails system. It describes the core mission of the trail by identifying the trail's nature and purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes. The foundation document also includes special mandates and administrative commitments, an assessment of planning and data needs that identifies planning issues, planning products to be developed, and the associated studies and data required for trail planning. Along with the core components, the assessment provides a focus for trail planning activities and establishes a baseline from which planning documents are developed.

A primary benefit of developing a foundation document is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the trail. The process of developing a foundation document begins with gathering and integrating information about the trail. Next, this information is refined and focused to determine the most important attributes of the trail. The process of preparing a foundation document aids trail administrators, managers, Tribal Nations, stakeholders, staff, and the public in identifying and clearly stating in one document the essential information that is necessary for trail administration and management to consider when determining future planning efforts, outlining key planning issues, and protecting resources and values that are integral to trail purpose and identity.

Maps of the trail are available on the NPS website at <http://www.nps.gov/nees/planyourvisit/maps.htm>.



Part 1: Core Components

The core components of this foundation document include a brief description of the trail, trail nature and purpose, significance statements, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes. These components are core because they typically do not change over time. Core components are expected to be used in future planning, administration, and management efforts.

Brief Description of the Trail

The New England Trail was established as a component of the national trails system in March 2009 and subsequently designated as a unit of the national park system in November 2023. Approximately 235 miles long, the trail traverses southern New England from the Long Island Sound in Connecticut to the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border. The trail consists of trails previously known as the Metacomet-Monadnock, Metacomet, and Mattabesett (MMM) trail system in central Connecticut and west-central Massachusetts. The MMM trail system has continuously existed for over half a century, with the Connecticut sections in place for almost 75 years. The 2006 *Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment* (“feasibility study”) process suggested unifying the MMM trail system under a new name to recognize designation as a national scenic trail. The New England National Scenic Trail was codified in legislation as proposed in the feasibility study.

The 2009 amendment to the National Trails Systems Act also introduced permission for the National Park Service to acquire land from willing sellers. The National Park Service now can acquire tracts of land needed for establishing and permanently protecting segments of the trail. This protection may preserve a scenic view or an important resource that is fundamental to the nature and purpose of the trail, whether it be flora or fauna or geologic, historical, archeological, or cultural in nature. The New England Trail completed its first federal land acquisition in July 2023 in Southwick, Massachusetts. Through an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, that parcel is under the management of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. A significant length of the New England Trail passes through or is adjacent to various units of the refuge.

The trail traverses an outstanding variety of New England landscapes, offering trail users a unique recreational opportunity, crossing mountain summits, forested glades, vernal pools, lakes, streams, and waterfalls, including some of the most rugged, picturesque, and diverse landscapes of southern New England. Along its route are many diverse ecosystems, natural resources, and culturally significant features. The New England Trail features long vistas of rural towns, agrarian lands, extensive unfragmented forests, and large river valleys, as well as pathways through important Native American and colonial landmarks showcasing some of the best examples of classic New England landscapes that are unique in the nation.



At numerous points along the trail, the New England Trail intersects or travels near several points of national or regional environmental, historical, or cultural importance, such as the Long Island Sound (which in 1985, Congress recognized as an Estuary of National Significance), the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the Connecticut River (more than 95% of the New England Trail is located in the Connecticut River watershed, which is designated as the nation's first and only national blueway in 2012 and is the longest river in New England), the Metacomet and Mount Holyoke Mountain Ranges (towers of columnar basalt, called trap rock, create the precipitous, west-facing cliffs characteristic of the Metacomet Range), many national historic landmarks, national historic sites, national historical parks, state-registered historic districts and properties, and Connecticut and Massachusetts state forests and parks.

In fulfilling its mission to take visitors to the diversity of scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources along its route, the New England Trail incorporates many existing trails traversing these resources and nearby communities. While the New England Trail is managed primarily as a footpath, some of the trail segments permit other nonmotorized uses, as determined by the managing authorities of those segments. Of primary importance is protecting the trail experience; providing outstanding opportunities for recreation, education, inspiration, solitude, and enjoyment; and ensuring visitor safety and resource protection.

At present, the New England Trail passes through more than 40 communities, and over 2 million people live within 10 miles of the trail. The trail traverses various types of land ownership and interests, including federal, state, municipal, land trust, water authority, private, corporate, individual, and nonprofit.

The official trail marker (or logo) for the New England Trail was designed and adopted in 2010. The logo was published in the *Federal Register* on June 28, 2021, as a federal insignia. As with the logos of other national trails, its form is a distinctive reuleaux triangle (or rounded triangle) shape with the trail name surrounding a hiker on a trap rock ridge overlook in the center.



Trail Nature and Purpose

The nature and purpose statement identifies the specific reasons for the establishment of a particular national trail and its predominant characteristics. The nature and purpose statement for the New England Trail was drafted through a careful analysis of the National Trails System Act, the 2006 feasibility study titled *The Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment*, and the 2023 New England National Scenic Trail Land Protection Plan. The nature and purpose statement lays the foundation for understanding what is most important about the trail.

The National Trails System Act, originally enacted on October 2, 1968, created a system of national trails “to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation.” The act was amended on March 1, 2009, to congressionally designate the New England National Scenic Trail as a new component of the national trails system. The amendment established it as a continuous trail from the border of New Hampshire in the town of Royalston, Massachusetts, to Long Island Sound in the town of Guilford, Connecticut, and directed that it be administered with consideration towards the recommendations found in the NPS report, *Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment*. On November 16, 2023, the director of the National Park Service issued a decision memorandum that designated the New England National Scenic Trail as a unit of the national park system.

The nature and purpose of the New England National Scenic Trail is as follows:

The NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL preserves a network of trails running continuously from the Long Island Sound along the Connecticut River Valley through a mosaic of environments, including hardwood forests of dark green hemlock and towering oak and along craggy, reddish trap rock ridges, landscapes that are home to rare and endangered flora and fauna and that transform through the seasons and the years. It links numerous local trails and open spaces, inviting recreators from around the region and the world to connect to vibrant New England communities and each other through a nonmotorized respite within easy reach of local villages and cities, immersed in a tapestry of natural and historical landscapes, experiencing scenic vistas, challenging activities, contemplative moments, and artistic inspiration.

Trail Significance

Significance statements express why the trail's resources and values are important enough to merit designation as a component of the national trail system and a unit of the national park system. These statements are linked to the nature and purpose of the New England Trail, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Statements of significance describe the distinctive nature of the trail and why the trail is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. They help to define the fundamental resources and values to be considered in planning, protection, and development of the designated route.

The following significance statements have been identified for the New England National Scenic Trail. (Please note that the sequence of statements does not reflect the level of significance.)

1. The New England Trail is the backbone of a network of trails that touch a number of local communities, traversing an outstanding variety of New England landscapes and offering trail users unique vantages along trap rock ridges, a variety of hiking and camping opportunities, connections to historic villages that have inspired regionally renowned art and architecture, birding and wildlife viewing hotspots, world-renowned fall foliage, and proximity to diverse populations of over two million people.
2. The New England Trail features unique paleontological resources and globally rare habitats and is one of the best places in the world to view a broad array of well-preserved volcanic and sedimentary features. The trail protects a rich variety of rare and endangered flora and fauna that thrive in its diversity of critical habitats, from the coastal environments of the Long Island Sound to vulnerable wetlands known as vernal pools to the distinctive trap rock ridges of the Metacomet Range.
3. Visitors to the New England Trail traverse a rich cultural landscape connecting an array of historic places and sites, where Indigenous placenames evoke the first peoples who shaped and were shaped by the land and who continue to live there, where densely populated cities give way to views of rural New England villages that retain their 18th- and 19th-century traditions of community organization on the landscape, where goods and ideas have been transported and exchanged since time immemorial from the Long Island Sound up the Connecticut River Valley, and where artistic and philosophical movements blossomed.
4. The New England Trail is a model of a successful grassroots effort to protect a traditional, volunteer-developed, and unifying thread of natural, historical, and community resources that visitors can easily access from urban areas along the trail corridor, promoting further connections to new places, people, and environments.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values (FRVs) are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning, administration, and management processes because they are essential to achieving the nature and purpose of the trail and maintaining its significance. Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a trail's legislative purpose and are more specific than significance statements.

Fundamental resources and values help focus planning and management efforts on what is truly significant about the trail. One of the most important responsibilities of NPS managers is to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of those qualities that are essential (fundamental) to achieving the purpose of the trail and maintaining its significance. If fundamental resources and values are allowed to deteriorate, the trail purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for the New England National Scenic Trail:

- The Trail Itself.** The New England Trail is a continuous trail that unifies the preexisting Metacomet, Metacomet-Monadnock, Mattabesett, and other associated trails, traveling through quintessentially New England communities. The constructed trail and supporting infrastructure are fundamental to the trail experience and are sustainably built for short- and long-distance use. The trail is sited predominantly off-road and runs from the Long Island Sound in Connecticut to the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border, providing access to important long-distance vistas, agrarian expanses, and trap rock ridges. The trail's undulating terrain includes numerous climbs and descents from sea level to over 1,600 feet.
- The Trail Experience, Including Viewsheds.** Trail users experience year-round recreational opportunities through mountain summits, forested glades, and waters, including some of the most rugged, picturesque, and diverse landscapes in New England. Visitors enjoy vistas of forested expanses, working farms, and New England villages with their unique architecture nestled in the landscape. Diverse environments from Long Island Sound coastal areas to spruce- and fir-lined mountain slopes, gorges, and waterfalls present memorable sights, smells, and sounds through the seasons as foliage changes hue, migrating birds come and go, and vernal pools drain and refill. The trail is easily accessed but still allows an escape from urban bustle to quieter, natural settings.



- **Biodiversity and Natural Communities.** The New England Trail's length, north-south orientation, extreme changes in elevation, and relative lack of development have fostered a variety of habitats, including two ranked as globally rare, that harbor an abundance of flora and fauna. These habitats can serve as safe havens for species reacting to a changing climate in a dynamic landscape. The trail passes through large portions of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, which is managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and has several special focus areas for preservation and conservation of rare habitats and species.
- **Geology.** The trail's course presents a glacial landscape carved by retreating glaciers, covered for 3,000 years by Lake Hitchcock, and then drained to form the Connecticut River Valley. It is rich in fossils, including dinosaur footprints and fish fossils, and the Metacomet Range is one of the best places in the world to view a broad array of well-preserved volcanic and sedimentary features, such as columnar basalt. Several Native American groups recognize unique geologic features as sacred landscapes and hold a rich historical relationship with the land.
- **Cultural Heritage and Historic Sites.** The trail represents a journey through cultural heritage, where layers of history are expressed through living traditions. Ethnographic landscapes at Mount Tom, the Miller River and Connecticut River confluence, and Chittenden Town Park remain important to Native Americans and are sites where traditional activities continue to this day. New England villages exhibit traditional spatial arrangements, including town commons and, in rare cases, the remnants of the open fields used for grazing and agriculture. The landscape all along the trail continues to inspire internal reflection and artistic expression. Historic sites, landmarks, and museums, such as Guilford Historic Town Center, Selectman Stones, Beehive Kilns, and Horse Caves, situated along the length of the trail, speak to this long and layered history.





- Collaborative Spirit of Partners and Stewardship Communities.** The New England Trail is founded on the grassroots, collaborative efforts of partnerships built over decades of committed trail building and stewardship efforts. Core partners—the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, the Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and the National Park Service—provide guidance for a dense and diverse collaborative of partners. These partners administer and manage this public trail resource that traverses through more than 40 communities and lies within 10 miles of over 2 million people. New England Trail contiguity depends on the generosity and commitment of landowners who voluntarily allow trail sections to cross their lands. Ongoing, intentional collaboration among committees, Tribal Nations, landowners, user groups, community officials, and trail stewards is essential to managing the trail for future generations.
- Volunteerism.** The New England Trail is built and maintained through the grassroots, collaborative efforts of volunteers who provide tens of thousands of service hours annually. In addition to ongoing trail maintenance, volunteers engage in a broad range of stewardship activities from outreach and recruiting new trail users to leading interpretation and education programs and promoting land protection and conservation. Sustaining the spirit of volunteerism is critical to ensuring sustainable recreational opportunities for years to come.

Other Important Resources and Values

The New England Trail has other resources and values that are not fundamental to the purpose of the trail and may be unrelated to its significance but are important to consider in planning processes. These are referred to as “other important resources and values” (OIRV). These resources and values have been selected because they are important in the operation, administration, and management of the trail and warrant special consideration in planning.

The following other important resources and values have been identified for the New England National Scenic Trail:

- Recreational Opportunities.** The New England Trail presents a diverse range of recreational opportunities, including, but not limited to, short- and long-distance hiking, overnight camping, trail-oriented community projects, contemplation and artistic endeavors, educational encounters with historic sites and natural wonders, and numerous other mental, physical, and soul-nurturing activities that connect users to the land, to themselves, and to each other.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a trail or engaging with interpretive media about the trail—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a component of the national trails system. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, trail nature and purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for trail staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all trail significance statements and fundamental resources and values.

Interpretive themes are an organizational tool that reveal and clarify meaning, concepts, contexts, and values represented by trail resources. Sound themes are accurate and reflect current scholarship and science. They encourage exploration of the context in which events or natural processes occurred and the effects of those events and processes. Interpretive themes go beyond a mere description of the event or process to foster multiple opportunities to experience and consider the trail and its resources. These themes help explain why a trail story is relevant to people who may otherwise be unaware of connections they have to an event, time, or place associated with the trail.

The following interpretive themes have been identified for the New England National Scenic Trail:

- **Glacial Landscape.** Traversing a series of knife-edged ridges and ranges, with towers of columnar basalt that create precipitous west-facing cliffs, the New England Trail offers a glimpse into the earth's past and is one of the best places in the world to view an array of volcanic, sedimentary, and glacial geology; dinosaur footprints; fish fossils; and other fossils left from ancient glacial activity.
- **Protects Living Things.** The geology of the New England Trail, from the coast of the Long Island Sound to the trap rock ridges of the Metacomet Range, creates rich natural habitats that nurture a rich variety of plants and animals, some of which are rare and endangered. The variety of natural habitats, from mountain peaks to rivers and wetlands, forms a protected north-south connected corridor for migrating flora and fauna.



- **Recreation: A Tradition of Trails and Citizen Stewardship.** Before it became the New England National Scenic Trail, the Metacomet-Monadnock, Metacomet, and Mattabesett trail system was built by volunteers and trail-maintaining organizations who remain the foundation of trail stewardship activities today. Their grassroots, community-oriented efforts produced a trail close to people in the towns and suburbs of major cities in New England: a welcoming, nearby wilderness adventure accessible to hikers from young to old, beginners to masters, and characterized by challenging yet achievable elevations.
- **Human Settlement and Use.** For thousands of years, the region of the trail has been an abundant homeland for Indigenous peoples. This area encompasses layers of history, including some of the earliest contact between Indigenous people and European colonists in British North America; early American industry, including precision manufacturing powered by and transported along the Connecticut River and its corridor; early conservation efforts; and distinctive community-based settlement patterns that are recognizable today as the iconic, nostalgic New England town.

Part 2: Dynamic Components

The dynamic components of a foundation document include special mandates and commitments and an assessment of planning and data needs. These components are dynamic because they will change over time. New special mandates can be established, and new administrative commitments made. As conditions and trends of fundamental and other important resources and values change over time, the analysis of planning and data needs will need to be revisited and revised, along with key issues. Therefore, this part of the foundation document will be updated accordingly.

Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

Administration of a national scenic trail may be directed or influenced by special mandates and administrative commitments with other federal, state, Tribal, regional, and local agencies and other organizations. Special mandates are requirements specific to a trail that must be fulfilled. Mandates can be expressed in enabling legislation, in separate legislation following the establishment of the trail, or through a judicial process. They may expand on the trail's nature and purpose or introduce elements unrelated to the nature and purpose of the trail. Administrative commitments have generally been reached through formal, documented processes, often through various types of agreements. Examples include general agreements with nonfederal landowners. Special mandates and administrative commitments can support, in many cases, a network of partnerships that help fulfill the objectives of the trail and facilitate working relationships with other organizations. They are an essential component of administering, managing, and planning for the New England National Scenic Trail.

The special mandates are defined by its congressional designation as a national scenic trail through the provisions of the National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.). By the act's provisions, "The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local agencies, and other organizations, shall administer the trail after considering the recommendations of the report titled the 'Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesset [sic] Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment,' prepared by the National Park Service, and dated Spring 2006." The Appalachian Mountain Club and Connecticut Forest & Park Association are the lead nonprofit partners that work collaboratively with land managers to maintain and manage the trail in Massachusetts and Connecticut respectively, with the purpose of preserving, promoting, and protecting the trail experience for all people to enjoy for generations to come. In addition, the National Park Service (or another federal agency) shall not acquire for the trail any land or interest in land without the consent of the owner.

Per subsection 5(28)(b) of the act, "Additional or more detailed plans for administration, management, protection, access, maintenance, or development of the trail may be developed consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint, and as approved by the Secretary." The Blueprint for Management was updated in 2021 and commits trail partners and communities, including the National Park Service, to a shared stewardship framework embodied in the Trail Stewardship Council.

Subsection 5(28)(c) of the act authorizes the secretary "to enter into cooperative agreements with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (and its political subdivisions), the State of Connecticut (and its political subdivisions), and other regional, local, and private organizations deemed necessary and desirable to accomplish cooperative trail administrative, management, and protection objectives consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint."

There are no other special mandates or administrative commitments for the trail.



Assessment of Planning and Data Needs

The assessment of planning and data needs section presents planning issues, the planning projects that will address these issues, and the associated information requirements for planning, such as resource inventories and data collection, including GIS data.

There are three sections in the assessment of planning and data needs:

1. analysis of fundamental resources and values and other important resources and values
2. identification of key issues and associated planning and data needs
3. identification of planning needs and data needs (including spatial mapping activities or GIS maps)

The analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values and the identification of key trail issues leads up to and supports the identification of data collection and planning needs.

Analysis of Fundamental Resources and Values

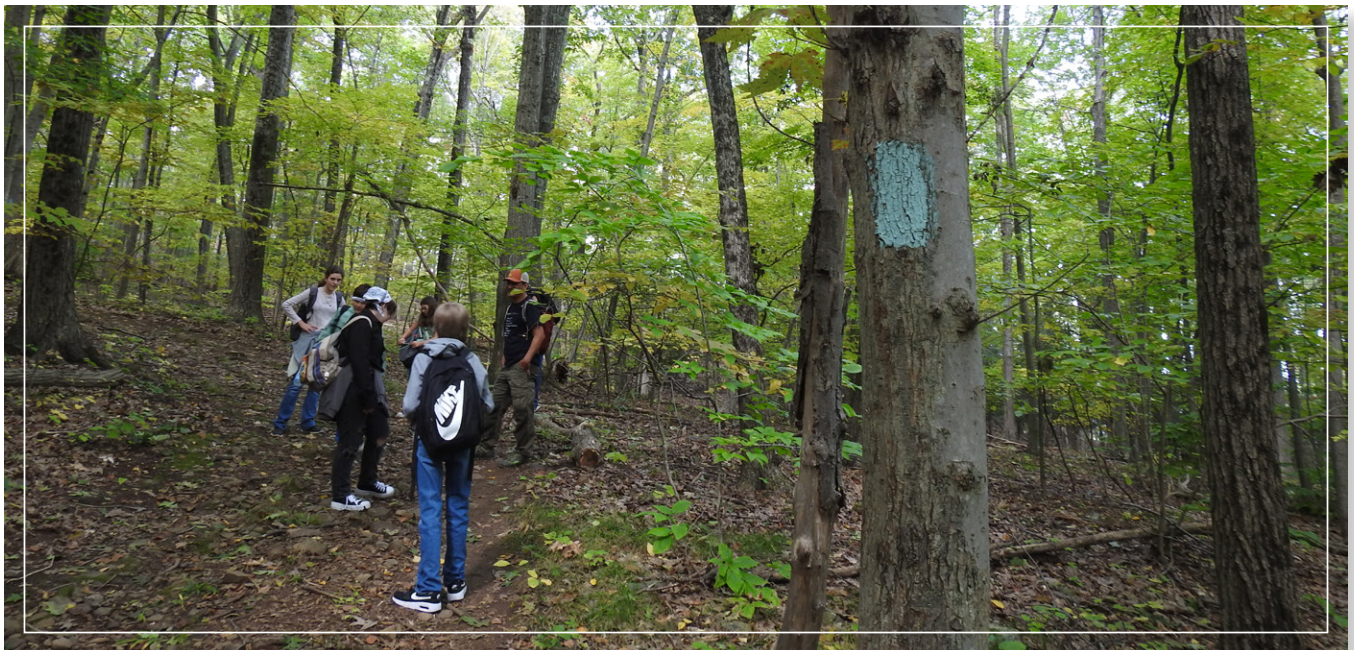
The fundamental resources or values analysis tables include current conditions, potential threats and opportunities, planning and data needs, and selected laws and NPS policies related to management of the identified resource or value.



Fundamental Resource or Value	The Trail Itself
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 1
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • The trail currently has several long road walks. • In Massachusetts, about 50% of the trail is on unprotected land and 50% is on protected lands. • In Connecticut, about 40% of the trail is on unprotected land and 60% is on protected lands. (Note: "Unprotected" lands are defined as a parcel of land containing a trail segment without a formal protection agreement or easement. For a full list of trail corridor protection strategies, see <i>NPS Reference Manual 45</i>, "Appendix L The Pros and Cons for Different Trail Corridor Protection Strategies.") • Overnight facilities with amenities (e.g., water, toilets, tent platforms) are limited, which limits longer backpacking trips and through-hiker use. • As a long-distance recreational trail that traverses natural terrain, much of the trail is not accessible to people with limited mobility. • Private landowners are allowed to use motorized vehicles where the trail crosses their property. • Illegal use of the trail is occurring (e.g., all-terrain vehicles, mountain biking use of sections of trail where they are not permitted). • Inconsistent rules based on land ownership patterns create challenges for providing visitors with accurate information and create enforcement challenges. • Hunting is allowed in portions of the trail corridor. • Cell phone coverage is available along the trail in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. • Currently, the treadway condition is adequately maintained and meets technical standards. • A number of active and inactive quarries exist on ridges along the trail. • Timber is harvested from some areas of the trail corridor. • There are active volunteer groups that help maintain the trail. Trends • Visitor use and associated impacts on the trail are increasing. • Maintenance needs are increasing. • An increasing number of conservation groups and landowners have made trail conservation efforts a priority.

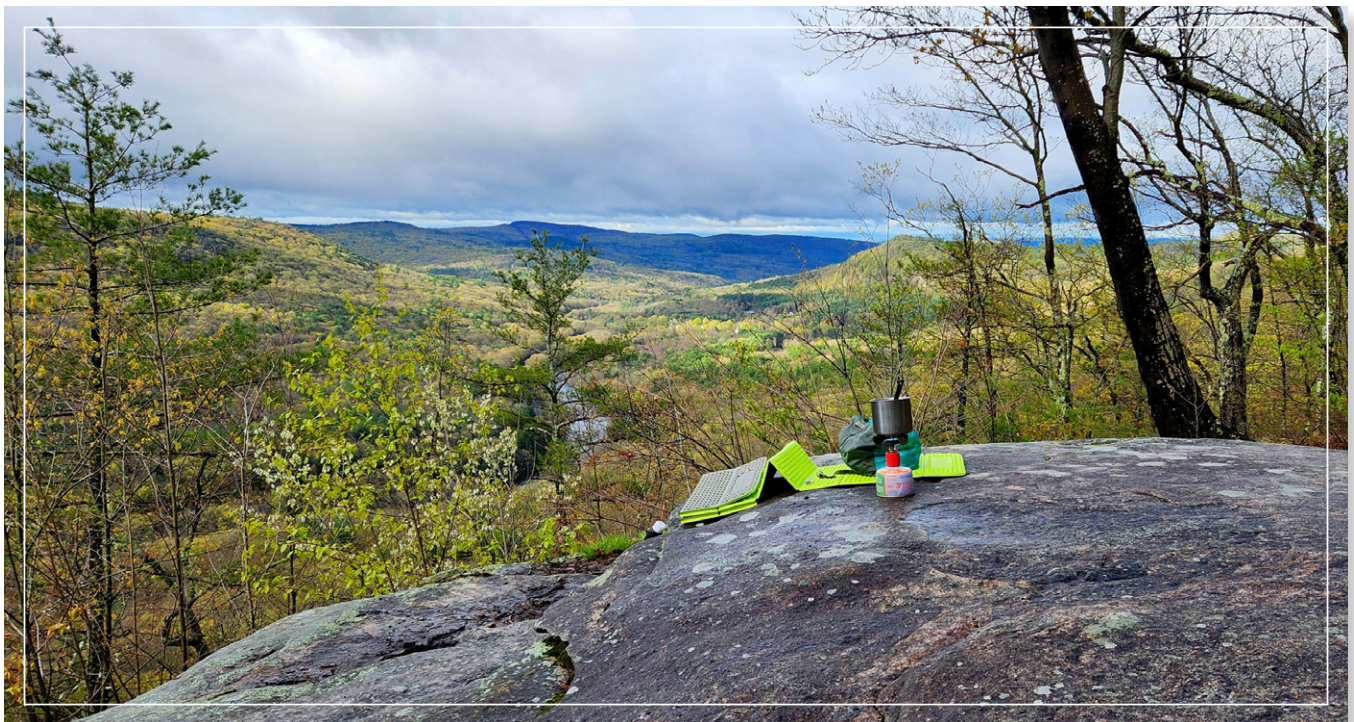
Fundamental Resource or Value	The Trail Itself
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • Climate change negatively impacts trail condition and increases maintenance needs (e.g., more erosion, flooding, fire impacting trail facilities). • Changes in land ownership may change the connectedness and nature of the trail. • Future development would degrade the trail experience and could potentially close sections of the trail. • Road-walk trail sections negatively impact wildlife movement and connectivity. • Green energy and utilities development and the expansion of easements and rights-of-way and quarry mining threaten the connectedness of the trail in certain areas. • Unsustainable and improper forestry and timber harvesting practices negatively impact the trail experience, resources, and facilities, increasing significant erosion and runoff. • The federal hydropower relicensing process may threaten the trail location and protection in some segments. Opportunities • The potential exists to reduce road-walk section lengths by researching new trail alignments. • Signage can be improved to better inform users with planning their hikes in line with their skills and interests. • Explore opportunities to work with partners, landowners, collaborators, and communities to expand the trail system. • Coordinate with units of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge to understand how the management of NPS and USFWS units should be coordinated along the trail corridor. • The potential exists to increase overnight facilities (e.g., campsites) along the trail. • Create universal access trail segments and promote existing sections of the trail that have universal access. • Develop strategies that would help trail hikers cross the Connecticut River. • Increase trash and sanitation services and facilities. • Create and implement a compliance program development strategy.
Data and/or GIS Needs	• Conduct a condition assessment for facilities. • Update the asset inventory. • Analyze side trails and connecting trails. • Conduct a visitor use data/visitor use study. • Implement a system to collect data on visitor use and maintenance needs along the trail. • Coordinate directly with USFWS unit managers to understand their current management plans and future management planning activities for the units of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge through which the trail passes.
Planning Needs	• Optimal location review for identified sections to support the work identified in the land protection plan • Comprehensive plan • Communication strategy • Visitor use management plan • Accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan (or appropriate accessibility plan) • Wayfinding and signage plan • Trail-marking plan to formalize and standardize existing practices for trail marking and related maintenance activities at trailheads, parking lots, and along the trail

Fundamental Resource or Value	The Trail Itself
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) • NPS Organic Act • The Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.) • Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 • Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 • Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards 2006 • Rehabilitation Act of 1973 NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders) • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§9.2.2.7) "National Trails" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.4) "Park Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§3.1) "General" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.7) "Air Resource Management" • NPS Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77 • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 7) "Interpretation and Education" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 8) "Use of the Parks" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 9) "Park Facilities" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§9.2) "Transportation Systems and Alternate Transportation" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 10) "Commercial Visitor Services" • Director's Order 6: <i>Interpretation and Education</i> • Director's Order 42: <i>Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in NPS Programs, Facilities, and Services</i> • Director's Order 48A: <i>Concession Management</i> • Director's Order 48B: <i>Commercial Use Authorizations</i>



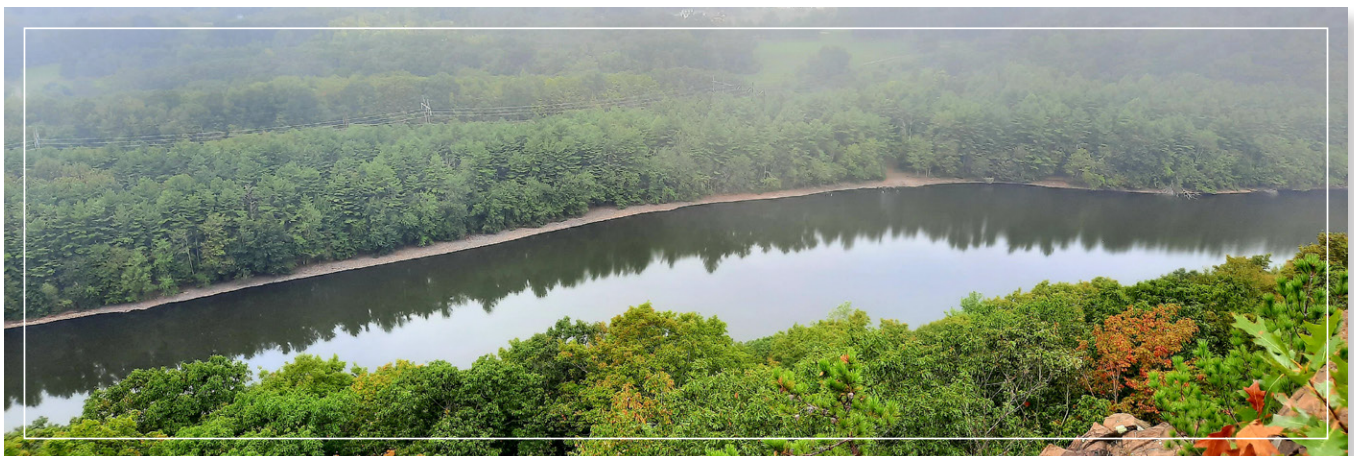
Fundamental Resource or Value	The Trail Experience, Including Viewsheds
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 1
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions - Documented vandalism exists along the trail, such as the trap rock ridge in an old quarry, east of the trail in section 2 in Massachusetts, (see interpretive map: https://newenglandtrail.org/interactive-map/) that is impacted by partying, graffiti, trash, and other factors. - Long road walks are not an ideal trail experience. - Dogs are allowed on the trail unless posted otherwise, which varies by property owner. Trends - Increased user activity often negatively affects the quality of the visitor experience.
Threats and Opportunities	Threats - Climate change threatens the visitor experience in various ways, such as the loss of the scenic view qualities due to smoke and degraded air quality. - Unauthorized motorized use threatens the natural sound quality and otherwise peaceful nature of the trail in many sections. - Off-leash dogs can disturb trail users' experiences, irritate private landowners, and disrupt wildlife connectivity. - Increasing urban development negatively impacts scenic views, rural character, and pastoral settings. - Quarry mining activities negatively impact natural sounds. - The improper disposal of trash and human waste negatively impacts visitor experience. Opportunities - Develop new access points to improve residential connectivity to the trail. - Create scheduled programming to engage and inspire diverse users in activities beyond hiking (e.g., arts, conservation and stewardship, astronomy walks, citizen science). - Increase appropriate trail accommodations to improve the experience for trail users and overnight use. - Coordinate with units of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge to understand how the management of NPS and USFWS units should be coordinated along the trail corridor.
Data and/or GIS Needs	- Conduct a visitor use data/visitor use study. - Identify and document GIS locations of key viewshed locations. - Map and analyze public transportation. - Analyze side trails and connecting trails. - Coordinate directly with USFWS unit managers to understand their current management plans and future management planning activities for the units of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge through which the trail passes.
Planning Needs	- Visual resource inventory - Optimal location review for identified sections to support the work identified in the land protection plan - Comprehensive plan - Accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan (or appropriate accessibility plan) - Wayfinding and signage plan - Public transportation and multimodal access plan/strategy

Fundamental Resource or Value	The Trail Experience, Including Viewsheds
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) • NPS Organic Act • The Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.) • Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 • Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 • Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards 2006 • Rehabilitation Act of 1973 NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders) • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.4) "Park Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§3.1) "General" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.7) "Air Resource Management" • NPS Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77 • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 7) "Interpretation and Education" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 8) "Use of the Parks" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 9) "Park Facilities" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 10) "Commercial Visitor Services" • Director's Order 6: <i>Interpretation and Education</i> • Director's Order 42: <i>Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in NPS Programs, Facilities, and Services</i> • Director's Order 48A: <i>Concession Management</i> • Director's Order 48B: <i>Commercial Use Authorizations</i> • NPS Transportation Planning Guidebook



Fundamental Resource or Value	Biodiversity and Natural Communities
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 2
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • NPS trail administrators continue to work with the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) and the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) to identify natural resource management needs and identify partners and fund sources who can support these efforts. • Trail managers can access maps of biological communities, rare species, and rare habitats in different seasons (year-round vs. migrant). NPS staff and partners also have an internal parcel-level GIS mapping tool with various layers that show these areas. • NPS staff support an active Scientist in the Parks program, managed by the AMC, that developed a citizen scientist program with trail users to provide phenology data to monitor seasonal trends of natural resources. • The AMC has a staff biologist, while the CFPA does not have a staff biologist at this time. Staff biologists may manage data and oversee data collection through partners and citizen scientists. • The NPS Invasive Plant Management Team does not have sufficient data to prioritize invasive species treatments along the trail (e.g., locations of the most sensitive native species, locations of invasive species). • Social trails that access popular climbing areas off designated trails (e.g., Farley Ledges in Irving) degrade natural resources. • In northern Connecticut, where the trail crosses wild and scenic rivers, visitor use can degrade water quality and increase erosion. • Deer overbrowsing has made certain forest areas more vulnerable to invasive species infestations and other external impacts. • Increasing urbanization fragments wildlife habitat. • During specific times of the year at particular trail locations (e.g., trail crossings), snakes, salamanders, and other species are trampled by trail users. Trends • Forest pests, such as hemlock woolly adelgid, are present and expanding along sections of the trail. • Human-wildlife interactions (e.g., human-bear) are increasing due to urbanization and climate change.
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • Phenology data needs to be collected over a long period to be meaningful, and trail managers are concerned the citizen science program could be discontinued before sufficient data is obtained. • Forest pests may significantly alter the native landscape. • Increased camping opportunities may increase natural resource degradation if tent pad sites are not chosen carefully. Opportunities • Citizen scientist programs are important for data collection and also provide opportunities to connect users with the trail in a deeper and more personal way. • Human-wildlife issues, including those at crossings, can be mitigated through development of wildlife-friendly crossings.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Biodiversity and Natural Communities
Data and/or GIS Needs	• Gather natural resource inventory and monitoring data. • Conduct climate change vulnerability assessment(s). • Analyze side trails and connecting trails. • Conduct a visitor use data/visitor use study. • Note that the US Fish and Wildlife Service may be a source for filling data needs related to natural resources.
Planning Needs	• Optimal location review for identified sections to support the work identified in the land protection plan • Comprehensive plan
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC USC 1241 et seq.) • NPS Organic Act • Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended • National Invasive Species Act • Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703-712) • Eagle Protection Act (16 USC 668) • The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 USC 4321) • Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended • The Clean Water Act; 42 (USC 7401 et seq.) • Executive Order 13112, "Invasive Species" NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> and Director's Orders) • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.1) "General Management Concepts" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.4.1) "General Principles for Managing Biological Resources" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.7.2) "Weather and Climate" • NPS Director's Order 18: <i>Wildland Fire Management</i> • NPS <i>Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77</i> • NPS <i>Wildland Fire Management Reference Manual 18</i> • Secretarial Order 3289, "Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources"



Fundamental Resource or Value	Geology
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 2
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • More popular overlooks are getting overused, which increases erosion around rock faces and incidences of vandalism and graffiti, which defaces features. • Trail managers rely on partners to monitor sensitive geological sites through public trail reports. • Some popular climbing areas (e.g., Farley Ledges in Irving) have the potential to be degraded by intensive climbing activities and heavy visitor use. • Certain aspects of the trail's geology and paleontology are already well understood through geological research, and there is strong interest from local colleges and universities to study these resources. Trends • Since 2021, there has been an increase of trail usage, documented through parking lot and trailhead monitoring activities. Whether increased use is due to the pandemic is unclear or whether it represents new trends in visitor use.
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • Increased visitor use of popular overlooks and climbing areas can cause negative impacts to geologic resources. • Increased precipitation or severe rain events due to climate change could increase erosion and flood river valleys, which could present safety issues and threaten unstable segments of the trail. Opportunities • Work with the climbing community to develop and encourage sustainable rock climbing practices. • Work with partners to encourage more research on paleontological and geological resources along the trail.
Data and/or GIS Needs	• Gather natural resource inventory and monitoring data. • Conduct climate change vulnerability assessment(s). • Analyze side trails and connecting trails. • Conduct a visitor use data/visitor use study.
Planning Needs	• Optimal location review for identified sections to support the work identified in the land protection plan • Comprehensive plan
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) • NPS Organic Act • The Clean Water Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.) • The Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.) • Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Chapter 1, Part 2, Resource Protection, Public Use and Recreation • Executive Order 11514, "Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality" NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders) • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.8) "Geologic Resource Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§5.3.5.5) "Museum Collections" • NPS Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77

Fundamental Resource or Value	Cultural Heritage and Historic Sites
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 3
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • Some historic sites and museums along the trail lack interpretive messaging. • The connecting trail between Hill-Stead Museum and the New England Scenic Trail is in poor condition and lacks signage. • The condition of historic sites and landscape features (including Civilian Conservation Corps structures) along the trail are deteriorating in places (e.g., Mount Tom). • NPS staff work with communities and partners on a variety of cultural resource management issues. • In general, partners who own and maintain historic sites along the trail are underfunded. Implementing adequate preservation practices can be challenging in some cases. • NPS staff and core partners do not have strong lines of communication with Tribal partners to involve Tribes in decisions that impact the trail. • A survey was recently completed to document Indigenous sites along the trail to increase baseline information. • Relationship building between trail managers and landowners of cultural sites are in early stages. • The conversion of forest land to green energy facilities (e.g., wind energy turbines and solar arrays) provides environmental benefits but negatively impacts historic views and cultural landscapes. Trends • Public interest is increasing to improve knowledge of Native American history along the trail. • Private development and urban encroachment in some areas threatens historic views of cultural landscapes in their traditional settings (e.g., Amherst, Massachusetts).
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • The potential exists to lose access to historic sites on private lands. • Climate change (extreme storm events, higher tides, sea-level rise) potentially impacts all cultural resources, especially the Guilford coastal community and its associated ethnographic landscape. • Changes in the intent of partners/landowners who manage historic sites to preserve these sites (e.g., change in capacity, funding) could lead to deterioration of these sites. Sites located on municipal properties may be threatened if funds for maintenance activities decline. • Public interest is increasing to learn about Native American history, which could increase interest in finding Native American sites and may result in unintentional or intentional harm. • Modern alterations or modifications to historic elements of built environments (e.g., historic New England villages) can negatively impact historic buildings and cultural landscapes.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Cultural Heritage and Historic Sites
Threats and Opportunities	Opportunities • Explore ways to collaborate with Tribes to protect and interpret ethnographic sites based on outcomes of the recently completed Indigenous site survey and future ethnographic overview and assessment. • Work collaboratively with partners and neighboring communities to preserve the historic settings and cultural landscapes surrounding the trail by advising these communities of opportunities to apply for National Register of Historic Places registration and preservation funding. • Leverage NPS staff outreach to partners and communities to alert partners of preservation efforts that support inventories or maintenance activities on cultural landscapes and historic sites. • Create a sustained artist in residence program on the trail.
Data and/or GIS Needs	• Develop a list of cultural and historic sites along the trail. • Create a cultural landscape inventory, including for potential ethnographic landscapes. • Create a historic structure inventory. • Create an archeological survey and inventory. • Conduct climate change vulnerability assessment(s). • Conduct a visitor use data/visitor use study.
Planning Needs	• Optimal location review for identified sections to support the work identified in the land protection plan • Comprehensive plan
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) • NPS Organic Act • The Antiquities Act of 1906 • Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act of 1935 • National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470) • Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 • American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 • Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 • Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 • Museum Act (16 USC 18f through 18f-3) • Executive Order 11593, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment" • Executive Order 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites" • "Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Archeological Collections" (36 CFR 79) • "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR 800) NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders) • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 5) "Cultural Resource Management" • Director's Order 24: <i>NPS Museum Collections</i> • Director's Order 28: <i>Cultural Resource Management (1998)</i> • Director's Order 28A: <i>Archeology (2004)</i> • NPS <i>Museum Handbook</i>, parts I, II, and III • <i>The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation</i>



Fundamental Resource or Value	Collaborative Spirit of Partners and Stewardship Communities
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 4
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • Active volunteer trail committees and stewardship councils in Massachusetts and Connecticut guide maintenance and management decisions on the trail. • Partner with land trusts to protect land parcels and work with the trail stewardship councils in Massachusetts and Connecticut to maintain and manage larger sections of the trail have been particularly effective. • Volunteer trail committees meet monthly to discuss the recruitment of trail adopters and training opportunities and to continue to build a strong volunteer base. • The stewardship council meets annually to provide progress updates and feedback on trail management initiatives. • On private lands, the current (2023) number of unprotected parcels in Massachusetts is 105 private or corporate properties and in Connecticut, 229 private or corporate properties. (See the definition for unprotected lands in the analysis table for the FRV “The Trail Itself” and in the note under the “Key Issues” section of this document.) • Many private landowners are aging and selling properties with no inclusion of trail easements. Trends • Continue to consolidate land trusts to share resources and stewardship responsibilities more effectively. • The National Park Service conducted a trail acquisition in 2023 and partners hope NPS acquisitions will increase. • Private lands are increasingly subdivided to maximize the number of residential lots that can be developed in a property sale.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Collaborative Spirit of Partners and Stewardship Communities
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • Volunteers are aging—especially longtime volunteers—and there is a general decline in volunteer numbers. • Municipal partners are aging, and board members are leaving leadership positions, which can hinder municipal partnership continuity when those members leave. • An overall loss of institutional knowledge is occurring related to trail stewardship. Opportunities • At the local level, attend open space committee and conservation commissions and increase awareness of trail management needs with town government boards. • Continue to build relationships with town officials, land trust staffs, board members, and volunteers and encourage local person-to-person connections to build support and awareness for trail stewardship and management priorities. • Work with willing private landowners to formalize trail access and protection. • Document institutional knowledge from aging and longtime volunteers. • Leverage Land and Water Conservation Fund financial resources to support trail needs.
Data and/or GIS Needs	• Gather volunteer data, including an intake survey.
Planning Needs	• Sustainable volunteer plan and communication strategy • Strategic plan • Comprehensive plan
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> and Director's Orders) • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§9.2.2.7) "National Trails" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.1.4) "Partnerships" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries"

Fundamental Resource or Value	Volunteerism
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 4
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • In Massachusetts and Connecticut, volunteers are primarily responsible for conducting trail maintenance tasks. • State parks have the capacity to conduct maintenance work on certain sections of the trail. • The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is underfunded but supports important trail volunteer efforts and communication support with landowners when staff capacity allows. • Trail infrastructure is not built to withstand impacts of severe storms, flooding, and blowdown events. • AMC/CFPA staff (and other partners) provide trail clearing and related maintenance support after blowdown events. • Trailwide standards have been developed and are implemented for maintenance practices. See workshops, skills college, and guidelines based on AMC standards at https://cdn.outdoors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/29123822/Trail-Adopter-Handbook-2019.pdf. • Volunteer interpersonal connections (e.g., word of mouth) are the primary method for recruiting volunteers. Trends • Mobilizing the volunteer base to complete unified, trailwide stewardship objectives is challenging for partners to sustain. • Volunteers are aging—especially longtime volunteers—and there is a general decline in volunteer numbers. • Expanding the number and diversity of the volunteer base remains a trailwide challenge. • An increasing number of severe storms and blowdown events makes it difficult for volunteers to maintain trail sections to desired conditions.
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • Interpersonal conflict, miscommunication, and challenges to effectively mobilize volunteers can hinder trail stewardship efforts. • Volunteers are aging—especially longtime volunteers—and there is a general decline in volunteer numbers. • Rogue volunteers (e.g., those who falsely identify with partner organizations) can spread misinformation, which detracts from cohesive stewardship. • Chainsaw and wilderness first aid opportunities are being consolidated into weekend-long events. If volunteers don't have the means or access to training, they may seek out alternatives. • There is occasionally friction and competing interests between trail volunteers and professional trail crews. Opportunities • Volunteers are needed for non-maintenance efforts, such as leading hikes, bike rides, climbs, and other appropriate, responsible recreation activities along the trail. • Highly technical projects could include volunteers and should be organized and lead by professional crews and used as an opportunity to train volunteers.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Volunteerism
Threats and Opportunities	Opportunities (continued) - Numerous programs engage volunteers—including young volunteers—through AmeriCorps, the Community Volunteer Ambassador Program (a program of Conservation Legacy), the Mosaics in Science internship (coordinated by the National Park Service and Environment for the Americas), the Student Conservation Association, the Public Land Corps, and through building connections with Tribal conservation partners. - Partner with the Department of the Interior Experienced Services Program to use the talents of older workers (ages 55 and over) to support nonroutine conservation efforts and mentor other volunteers. - Improve the NPS New England Scenic Trail website “Get Involved” section to engage volunteers in current and ongoing trail projects. - Recruit volunteers to collect data on maintenance needs for specific areas along the trail (similar to Recreation Impact Monitoring System used by the Colorado Mountain Club). - Engage citizen science volunteers in monitoring efforts using tools such as iNaturalist to support climate change models and document changes to the natural environment along the trail corridor. - Establish a volunteer recognition program to show appreciation for volunteer efforts, enhance morale, and encourage volunteerism. - Improve community outreach efforts to diversify the volunteer base and advance “group,” as well as “corporate” volunteerism objectives. - Work with higher education institutions to craft clear strategies and specific messaging for partners to share at volunteer fairs and trail events to expand opportunities for college students, college outdoor clubs, and other groups.
Data and/or GIS Needs	- Gather volunteer data, including an intake survey. - Obtain demographics and group affiliation data for the trail’s volunteer base to increase diversity in recruiting initiatives and support onboarding processes for new volunteers. - Conduct an analysis of volunteer events (e.g., provide an intake survey for volunteers to gather data about what volunteers want, how they would like to volunteer, how often, and how they heard about a particular trail-related event). - Implement a system to collect data on visitor use and maintenance needs along the trail.
Planning Needs	- Sustainable volunteer plan and communication strategy - Trail-marking plan (to standardize maintenance and trail marking where possible)
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV - National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 and Director’s Orders) - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (§1.4) “Park Management” - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (§1.6) “Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries” - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (§3.1) “General” - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (§4.7) “Air Resource Management” - NPS <i>Natural Resource Management Reference Manual</i> 77 - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (chapter 7) “Interpretation and Education” - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (chapter 8) “Use of the Parks” - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (chapter 9) “Park Facilities” - NPS <i>Management Policies</i> 2006 (chapter 10) “Commercial Visitor Services” - Director’s Order 6: <i>Interpretation and Education</i> - Director’s Order 42: <i>Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in NPS Programs, Facilities, and Services</i>

Other Important Resource or Value

Other Important Resource or Value	Recreational Opportunities
Related Significance Statements	Related to significance statement 1
Current Conditions and Trends	Conditions • Long road walks are not an ideal trail experience. • Volunteers continue to lead activities, including hikes, bike rides, climbs, and other appropriate, responsible recreation activities along the trail. • Trail infrastructure is not built to withstand impacts of severe storms, flooding, and blowdown events. • Volunteers and state parks staff conduct trail maintenance work (including trail clearing support after blowdown events) on certain sections of the trail to provide access for recreational uses. • Overnight facilities with amenities (e.g., water, toilets, tent platforms) are limited, which limits longer backpacking trips and through-hiker use. • Inconsistent rules based on land ownership patterns creates challenges for providing trail users with accurate information and creates enforcement challenges. • As a long-distance recreational trail that traverses natural terrain, much of the trail is not accessible to people with limited mobility, which limits recreational opportunities for some people. • Some popular climbing areas (e.g., Farley Ledges in Irving) has the potential to be degraded by intensive climbing activities and heavy visitor use at these sites. Trends • Recreational use and related impacts from more trail users are increasing. Since 2021 trail usage has increased, as documented by parking lot and trailhead monitoring. • Increased user activity often negatively affects the quality of the visitor experience. • Maintenance needs are increasing—severe storms and blowdown events makes it difficult for volunteers to maintain trail sections to desired conditions for most recreational activities.
Threats and Opportunities	Threats • Future development may limit or eliminate recreational opportunities along trail sections that could potentially be closed (e.g., utilities development and expansion of easements and rights-of-way and quarry mining threaten the connectedness of the trail in certain areas). • The improper disposal of trash and human waste negatively impacts visitor experience. • Interpersonal conflict, miscommunication, and challenges to effectively mobilize volunteers can hinder trail stewardship efforts. Opportunities • The potential exists to reduce road-walk section lengths by researching new trail alignments. • Signage can be improved to better inform users with planning their hikes in line with their skills and interests. • Explore opportunities to work with partners, landowners, collaborators, and communities to expand the trail system (including developing new access points to improve residential connectivity along the trail). • The potential exists to increase overnight facilities (e.g., campsites) along the trail. • Create universal access trail segments, and promote existing sections of the trail that have universal access.

Other Important Resource or Value	Recreational Opportunities
Threats and Opportunities	Opportunities (continued) • Create scheduled programming to engage and inspire diverse users in activities beyond hiking (e.g., arts, conservation and stewardship, astronomy walks, citizen science). • Develop concepts that would help trail hikers cross the Connecticut River. • Increase trash and sanitation services and facilities to improve recreational experiences. • Improve the NPS New England Scenic Trail website “Get Involved” section to engage volunteers in current and ongoing recreational leadership efforts. • Recruit volunteers to collect data on maintenance needs for recreational uses along the trail (similar to Recreation Impact Monitoring System used by the Colorado Mountain Club). • Improve community outreach efforts to encourage responsible trail uses and advance inclusive recreation opportunities. • Work with higher education institutions to craft clear strategies and specific messaging for partners to share at volunteer fairs and trail events to expand opportunities for outdoor clubs and other groups.
Data and/or GIS Needs	• Conduct a visitor use data/visitor use study. • Map and analyze public transportation. • Conduct climate change vulnerability assessment(s). • Analyze side trails and connecting trails. • Implement a system to collect data on visitor use and maintenance needs along the trail.
Planning Needs	• Sustainable volunteer strategy • Visitor use management plan • Comprehensive plan • Trail-marking plan (to standardize maintenance and trail marking where possible) • Accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan (or appropriate accessibility plan)
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the OIRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the OIRV • National Trails System Act (16 USC 1241 et seq.) NPS Policy-Level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director’s Orders) • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§9.2.2.7) “National Trails” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§1.4) “Park Management” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§1.6) “Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§3.1) “General” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.7) “Air Resource Management” • NPS <i>Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77</i> • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 7) “Interpretation and Education” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 8) “Use of the Parks” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 9) “Park Facilities” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§9.2) “Transportation Systems and Alternate Transportation” • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 10) “Commercial Visitor Services” • Director’s Order 6: <i>Interpretation and Education</i> • Director’s Order 42: <i>Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in NPS Programs, Facilities, and Services</i>

Identification of Key Issues and Associated Data and Planning Needs

This section considers key issues to be addressed in planning, administration, and management and, therefore, takes a broader view over the primary focus of part 1. A key issue focuses on a question that is important for a trail. Key issues often raise questions regarding trail nature and purposes and significance and fundamental resources and values. For example, a key issue may pertain to the potential for a fundamental resource or value on a trail to be detrimentally affected by discretionary management decisions. A key issue may also address crucial questions that are not directly related to nature and purposes and significance, but which still affect them indirectly. Usually, a key issue is one that a future planning effort or data collection needs to address and requires a decision by NPS trail administrators.

The following are key issues for the New England National Scenic Trail and the associated planning and data needs to address them:

- **Protection of the Trail Corridor.** While the trail is a continuous and beloved public resource, nearly 50% of the trail route is unprotected in Connecticut and approximately 30% remains unprotected in Massachusetts.¹ Although the trail crosses municipal properties, which may be relatively more protected from development—including key scenic and historic viewsheds—changes in land ownership may change the connectedness and nature of the trail.
 - *Associated data needs:* None identified
 - *Associated planning needs:* Optimal location review for identified sections to support the work identified in the land protection plan
- **Insufficient Baseline Data to Inform Management on Resource Condition, Visitor Use, and Climate Change.** The trail lacks consistent surveys of its different types of resources (e.g., natural, cultural, visual) and, therefore, lacks baseline resource knowledge throughout the corridor and what resource management efforts to prioritize (e.g., invasive species management, ethnographically sensitive focal areas). Trail managers need a climate change vulnerability assessment to understand impacts on visitor use and fundamental resources.
 - *Associated data needs:* Climate change vulnerability assessment(s); cultural resource inventories; natural resource inventory and monitoring data; visitor use data; visual resource inventory
 - *Associated planning needs:* Comprehensive plan; visitor use management plan; ethnographic overview and assessment; visual resource management plans where applicable
- **Mixed Ownership along the Trail Complicates Management.** As noted, mixed public and private ownership throughout the trail corridor requires consistent and vigorous communication and collaboration to unify various managers, partners, collaborators, and landowners in comprehensive management and use practices. These organizational and administrative approaches may change and evolve across ownership boundaries. To the extent possible, partners would adopt and maintain consistent management practices, throughout the trail corridor.
 - *Associated data needs:* None identified
 - *Associated planning needs:* Communication strategy; comprehensive plan

¹ In this document, “unprotected” lands refer to parcels of land containing a trail segment without a formal protection agreement or easement. For a full list of trail corridor protection strategies, see *Reference Manual 45*, Appendix L “The Pros and Cons for Different Trail Corridor Protection Strategies.”

- **Administrative Jurisdiction Complicates Trail Management.** A general lack of awareness exists among trail partners regarding special status and administrative requirements of trails within the National Park Service, which complicates partner efforts to meet overall trail management needs. While the New England Scenic Trail operates as a single administrative unit, it requires management partners in each state to adopt a standard management structure that encompasses efficiencies to increase operational effectiveness.
 - *Associated data needs:* None identified
 - *Associated planning needs:* Communication strategy
- **Visitor Access and Visitor Use Infrastructure Need to Be Improved.** Trailheads often developed organically, and many no longer support the volume of visitors that the trail is currently experiencing. Congested parking lots with overflow parking may complicate relationships with local communities. There are also clear gaps along the trail where no overnight use sites are available. Access mostly relies on vehicle use rather than other modes of access. Trail managers should explore options for more equitable access.
 - *Associated data needs:* Visitor use study; condition assessment for facilities; asset inventory update; GIS infrastructure mapping update, GIS side trails and connecting trails mapping
 - *Associated planning needs:* Mapping and analysis of public transportation; wayfinding and signage plan; comprehensive plan; analysis of side trails and connecting trails; public transportation and multimodal access plan/strategy; accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan (or appropriate accessibility plan)

Data and Planning Needs

To maintain a connection to the core elements of the foundation and the importance of these core foundation elements, the planning and data needs listed here are directly related to protecting fundamental resources and values, trail significance, and trail nature and purpose, as well as addressing key issues. To successfully undertake a planning effort, information from sources such as inventories, studies, research activities, and analyses may be required to provide adequate knowledge of trail resources and visitor information. Such information sources have been identified as data needs. Geospatial mapping tasks and products are included in data needs.

Items considered of the utmost importance were identified as high priority, and other items identified, but not rising to the level of high priority, were listed as either medium- or low-priority needs. These priorities inform trail administration efforts to secure funding and support for planning projects.

There is no guarantee that identified planning and data needs will be funded. Budget restrictions and competing priorities may prevent the funding of some needs. The National Park Service and its management partners will continue to seek creative and diverse funding opportunities. Additionally, the scope and applicability of identified plans and data collection efforts may vary based on land ownership, since the trail passes through a patchwork of state, federal, and private lands.

Data Needs – Where Information Is Needed before Decisions Can Be Made			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Data and GIS Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
Key Issue, FRV	Visual resource inventory	H	A visual resource inventory maps and analyzes views as they are experienced in the landscape. A visual resource inventory would establish baseline condition and scenic quality of selected views. This provides useful data for planning, administration, and management and could be used to support working with neighbors on scenic conservation.
Key Issue, FRV	Identify and document GIS locations of key viewshed locations	H	Prior to the development of a visual resource inventory, it is envisioned that NPS staff and partners with existing knowledge of the trail would identify and document views along the trail through GIS. This process could include the identification of high-value views and viewsheds that potentially should be preserved. This data would precede and help to inform the scope of a visual resource inventory.
Key Issue, FRV	Visitor use data/ visitor use study	M	The trail needs more precise visitor use data to inform a variety of administrative decisions and, if needed, a visitor use management plan. Specifically, trail staff would like to better understand how many people are using the trail (including visitor count data at parking lots), where they are accessing it, and how they are using it (e.g., through hiking, day hiking, other recreational uses including gun clubs, hunting).
Key Issue	Facilities condition assessments	M	Trail staff need condition assessments of facilities on state lands in order to better support visitor use and safety.
Key Issue	Updated asset inventory	M	Update the 2021 asset inventory to prepare for integration into the Facility Management Software System where possible.
Key Issue, FRV	Transportation and transit data	M	A need exists to gather and analyze information about transportation in and around the communities through which the trail leads. In particular, the National Park Service wishes to gain a better understanding for how people currently access the trail—whether by private automobile, public transportation, or other means—and potential opportunities for improving multimodal access. This data would support the development of a public transportation and multimodal access plan/strategy.

Data Needs – Where Information Is Needed before Decisions Can Be Made			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Data and GIS Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
Key Issue, FRV	Archeological survey and inventory	L	This survey and inventory would inform trail managers of areas with a high potential for national register-eligible sites. It would identify areas vulnerable to visitor use, development pressure, climate change, and other stressors. Recommendations that follow the survey may need to be reflected in future planning needs.
Key Issue, FRV	Cultural landscape inventory	L	With assistance from the regional historical landscape architect, trail staff would identify potential cultural landscapes along the trail and complete cultural landscape inventories that document the contributing features of a landscape and assess its historical significance, including its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
Key Issue, FRV	Historic structure inventory	L	With assistance from the regional historical architect, trail staff would identify potential historic structures along the trail and complete historic structure inventories that document the character-defining features of each structure and assess its historical significance, including its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
Key Issue, FRV	Natural resource inventory and monitoring data	L	Inventory and monitoring data for rare vegetation, unique natural features, biodiversity, and areas of invasive species infestations are needed to inform trail managers natural resources condition. Data can help trail managers develop measures to mitigate impacts from visitor uses, climate change, vandalism, and other factors and would assist the development of monitoring protocols, as well as volunteer and training opportunities for trail stewardship.
Key Issue, FRV	Climate change vulnerability assessment(s)	L	This study would assess the vulnerability of species, ecosystems, and other fundamental resources along the trail to climate change. The assessment would inform potential adaptation strategies that could be included in future planning efforts.
Key Issue	Analysis of side trails and connecting trails	L	Trail managers need an analysis of side trails and connecting trails to understand which are conflicting with trail administration, such as conflicting with the wishes of private owners who are important trail partners.

Data Needs – Where Information Is Needed before Decisions Can Be Made			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Data and GIS Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
FRV	Volunteer data, including intake survey	L	Trail managers need better data about its existing volunteer base, including demographics and group affiliation (if applicable), that could inform and support recruiting initiatives and onboarding of new volunteers. This will help trail staff respond to the concern of volunteers “aging out” and support increased diversity. It would also be valuable to understand how various volunteers find information and communicate, such as which social media platforms they use. This data may be gathered through a volunteer intake survey, which could also gather data on volunteer event opportunities (does the trail have more volunteers than projects or vice versa), what volunteers are interested in, how often they would like to volunteer, and other questions.
FRV	List of cultural and historic sites along the trail	L	In addition to NPS baseline inventories of archeological resources, historic structures, and cultural landscapes as required under federal law (each captured in this table as a data need), trail managers would work with key partners to compile a list of sites along the trail that are of historical or cultural interest, for example, sites currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places or museums with collections relevant to the trail’s significance. This will provide a starting point for resource management, as well as inform visitor use planning.



Planning Needs – Where a Decision-Making Process Is Needed			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Planning Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
Key Issue	Optimal location review	H	This review would determine optimal locations where the trail should run in an ideal world. The review would support work identified in the 2023 land protection plan.
Key Issue	Comprehensive plan or applicable portfolio	H	The National Trails System Act (16 USC 1244) requires that all national scenic trails have a comprehensive plan. Within the National Park Service, this requirement has traditionally been met through a comprehensive plan. The act describes this plan type as a "comprehensive plan for the acquisition, management, development, and use of the trail." Section e of the act identifies requirements for comprehensive plans specific to national scenic trails. A comprehensive plan or applicable portfolio would provide high-level, coordinating guidance for NPS staff, other federal agencies, states, municipalities, partners, and volunteers about resource management and visitor use management (including guidance on trailheads, parking areas, and overnight use) and to formally establish desired appropriate usage of the trail corridor.
Key Issue	Wayfinding and signage plan	M	Trail managers need a plan to help ensure consistency in wayfinding and safety signage along the trail. Alternatively, this information could be included in a comprehensive interpretive plan or comprehensive plan.
Key Issue, FRV	Public transportation and multimodal access plan/strategy	M	This plan would improve connections between communities and the New England Trail by increasing opportunities for multimodal access (e.g., public transportation, hiking, biking). The plan would identify strategies to increase options for people to access trailheads and greenways without relying on private vehicles. The plan is needed, in part, to expand access for people who don't drive automobiles, thus improving equity and inclusivity and supporting the needs of the trail's diverse users.
FRV	Strategic plan	M	NPS staff, the Trail Stewardship Councils, and management partners will set the trail's priorities at the organizational level for 3–5 years. The plan will include a targeted strategy with goals, objectives, and key actions to direct resource investments.

Planning Needs – Where a Decision-Making Process Is Needed			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Planning Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
Key Issue	Visitor use management plan	L	Trail managers should first acquire visitor use data and then determine whether a formal plan is necessary to inform management.
Key issue, FRV	Communication strategy(ies)	L	One or more communication strategies are needed to meet a diverse set of goals. An external strategy is needed for engaging with various partners and encouraging alignment with a comprehensive plan, once completed. A data-driven strategy is also needed to reach and recruit a more diverse and sustainable volunteer base. An external strategy may also help trail staff better communicate which segments are already accessible for users with mobility impairments. An internal strategy is also needed to communicate consistently and effectively with other NPS office staff who may not understand the unique needs and challenges of administering a national scenic trail. This may be collaborated upon with other national scenic trails.
Key Issue, FRV	Analysis of side trails and connecting trails	L	Trail managers need an analysis of side trails and connecting trails to understand which are conflicting with New England National Scenic Trail administration, such as conflicting with the wishes of private owners who are important trail partners.
Key Issue, FRV	Accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan or other appropriate accessibility plan	L	Trail managers need an analysis to identify additional sections of trail that may be made accessible and a strategy for achieving Architectural Barriers Act compliance on those sections. This analysis does not apply to private property, as it is not subject to the Architectural Barriers Act.
FRV	Sustainable volunteer strategy	L	Trail managers need a strategy to enhance recruitment and sustainable volunteerism, including recruiting from new and diverse demographics.
FRV	Trail-marking plan	L	This plan would mostly formalize and standardize existing practices around trail marking and related maintenance activities at trailheads, parking lots, and along the trail. The plan would guide, for example, the ongoing process of removing old MMM trail system signage and installing New England National Scenic Trail signage.

Part 3: Contributors

New England National Scenic Trail/Springfield Armory National Historic Site/Coltsville National Historical Park

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Enabling Legislation for New England National Scenic Trail

THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT

P.L. 90-543, as amended through P.L. 116-9, March 12, 2019
as found in United States Code, Vol. 16, Sections 1241-1251

An abbreviated version of this act is shown below. A complete version can be found online at:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/upload/National-Trails-System-Act-Amended-2019.pdf>

AN ACT

To establish a national trails system, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. [16USC1241] This Act may be cited as the “National Trails System Act”.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

SEC. 2. [16USC1241] (a) In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation, trails should be established (i) primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation, and (ii) secondarily, within scenic areas and along historic travel routes of the Nation which are often more remotely located.

(b) The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining these objectives by instituting a national system of recreation, scenic and historic trails, by designating the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system.

(c) The Congress recognizes the valuable contributions that volunteers and private, nonprofit trail groups have made to the development and maintenance of the Nation’s trails. In recognition of these contributions, it is further the purpose of this Act to encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate, of trails.

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

SEC. 3. [16USC1242] (a) The national system of trails shall be composed of the following:

(1) National recreation trails, established as provided in section 4 of this Act, which will provide a variety of outdoor recreation uses in or reasonably accessible to urban areas.

(2) National scenic trails, established as provided in section 5 of this Act, which will be extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass. National scenic trails may

be located so as to represent desert, marsh, grassland, mountain, canyon, river, forest, and other areas, as well as landforms which exhibit significant characteristics of the physiographic regions of the Nation.

(3) National historic trails, established as provided in section 5 of this Act, which will be extended trails which follow as closely as possible and practicable the original trails or routes of travel of national historic significance. Designation of such trails or routes shall be continuous, but the established or developed trail, and the acquisition thereof, need not be continuous onsite. National historic trails shall have as their purpose the identification and protection of the historic route and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment. Only those selected land and water based components of a historic trail which are on federally owned lands and which meet the national historic trail criteria established in this Act are included as Federal protection components of a national historic trail. The appropriate Secretary may certify other lands as protected segments of an historic trail upon application from State or local governmental agencies or private interests involved if such segments meet the national historic trail criteria established in this Act and such criteria supplementary thereto as the appropriate Secretary may prescribe, and are administered by such agencies or interests without expense to the United States.

(4) Connecting or side trails, established as provided in section 6 of this Act, which will provide additional points of public access to national recreation, national scenic or national historic trails or which will provide connections between such trails.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with appropriate governmental agencies and public and private organizations, shall establish a uniform marker for the national trails system.

(b) For purposes of this section, the term “extended trails” means trails or trail segments which total at least one hundred miles in length, except that historic trails of less than one hundred miles may be designated as extended trails. While it is desirable that extended trails be continuous, studies of such trails may conclude that it is feasible to propose one or more trail segments which, in the aggregate, constitute at least one hundred miles in length.

NATIONAL SCENIC AND NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

SEC. 5. [16USC1244] (a) National scenic and national historic trails shall be authorized and designated only by Act of Congress. There are hereby established the following National Scenic and National Historic Trails:

Note: This section is abbreviated to highlight the New England National Scenic Trail description, below. For descriptions of the other authorized and designated trails included in the National Trail System Act, please refer to the act, which can be found online at:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/upload/National-Trails-System-Act-Amended-2019.pdf>

(28) NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL- The New England National Scenic Trail, a continuous trail extending approximately 220 miles from the border of New Hampshire in the town of Royalston, Massachusetts to Long Island Sound in the town of Guilford, Connecticut, as generally depicted on the map titled ‘New England National Scenic Trail Proposed Route’, numbered T06/80,000, and dated October 2007. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service. The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local agencies, and other organizations, shall administer the trail after considering the recommendations of the report titled the ‘Metacomet Monadnock Matabesset Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment’, prepared by the National Park Service, and dated Spring 2006. The United States shall not acquire for the trail any land or interest in land without the consent of the owner.

(b) Management- The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the ‘Secretary’) shall consider the actions outlined in the Trail Management Blueprint described in the report titled the ‘Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment’, prepared by the National Park Service, and dated Spring 2006, as the framework for management and administration of the New England National Scenic Trail. Additional or more detailed plans for administration, management, protection, access, maintenance, or development of the trail may be developed consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint, and as approved by the Secretary.

(c) Cooperative Agreements- The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (and its political subdivisions), the State of Connecticut (and its political subdivisions), and other regional, local, and private organizations deemed necessary and desirable to accomplish cooperative trail administrative, management, and protection objectives consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint. An agreement under this subsection may include provisions for limited financial assistance to encourage participation in the planning, acquisition, protection, operation, development, or maintenance of the trail.

(d) Additional Trail Segments- Pursuant to section 6 of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1245), the Secretary is encouraged to work with the State of New Hampshire and appropriate local and private organizations to include that portion of the Metacomet Monadnock Trail in New Hampshire (which lies between Royalston, Massachusetts and Jaffrey, New Hampshire) as a component of the New England National Scenic Trail. Inclusion of this segment, as well as other potential side or connecting trails, is contingent upon written application to the Secretary by appropriate State and local jurisdictions and a finding by the Secretary that trail management and administration is consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint.

CONNECTING AND SIDE TRAILS

SEC. 6. [16USC1245] Connecting or side trails within park, forest, and other recreation areas administered by the Secretary of the Interior or Secretary of Agriculture may be established, designated, and marked by the appropriate Secretary as components of a national recreation, national scenic or national historic trail. When no Federal land acquisition is involved, connecting or side trails may be located across lands administered by interstate, State, or local governmental agencies with their consent, or, where the appropriate Secretary deems necessary or desirable, on privately owned lands with the consent of the landowners. Applications for approval and designation of connecting and side trails on non-Federal lands shall be submitted to the appropriate Secretary.

ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

SEC. 7. [16USC1246] (a) (1) (A) The Secretary charged with the overall administration of a trail pursuant to section 5(a) shall, in administering and managing the trail, consult with the heads of all other affected State and Federal agencies. Nothing contained in this Act shall be deemed to transfer among Federal agencies any management responsibilities established under any other law for federally administered lands which are components of the National Trails System. Any transfer of management responsibilities may be carried out between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture only as provided under subparagraph (B).

(B) The Secretary charged with the overall administration of any trail pursuant to section 5(a) may transfer management of any specified trail segment of such trail to the other appropriate Secretary pursuant to a joint memorandum of agreement containing such terms and conditions as the Secretaries consider most appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this Act. During any period in which management responsibilities for any trail segment are transferred under such an agreement, the management of any such segment shall be subject to the laws, rules, and regulations of the Secretary provided with the management authority under the agreement except to such extent as the agreement may otherwise expressly provide.

(2) Pursuant to section 5(a), the appropriate Secretary shall select the rights-of-way for national scenic and national historic trails and shall publish notice thereof of the availability of appropriate maps or descriptions in the Federal Register; *Provided*, That in selecting the rights-of-way full consideration shall be given to minimizing the adverse effects upon the adjacent landowner or user and his operation. Development and management of each segment of the National Trails System shall be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for the specific area in order to insure continued maximum benefits from the land. The location and width of such rights-of-way across Federal lands under the jurisdiction of another Federal agency shall be by agreement between the head of that agency and the appropriate Secretary. In selecting rights-of-way for trail purposes, the Secretary shall obtain the advice and assistance of the States, local governments, private organizations, and landowners and land users concerned.

(b) (After publication of notice of the availability of appropriate maps or descriptions in the Federal Register, the Secretary charged with the administration of a national scenic or national historic trail may relocate segments of a national scenic or national historic trail right-of-way with the concurrence of the head of the Federal agency having jurisdiction over the lands involved, upon a determination that: (I) Such a relocation is necessary to preserve the purposes for which the trail was established, or (ii) the relocation is necessary to promote a sound land management program in accordance with established multiple-use principles: *Provided*, That a substantial relocation of the rights-of-way for such trail shall be by Act of Congress.

(c) National scenic or national historic trails may contain campsites, shelters, and related-public-use facilities. Other uses along the trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, may be permitted by the Secretary charged with the administration of the trail. Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide sufficient access opportunities to such trails and, to the extent practicable, efforts shall be made to avoid activities incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established. The use of motorized vehicles by the general public along any national scenic trail shall be prohibited and nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing the use of motorized vehicles within the natural and historical areas of the national park system, the national wildlife refuge system, the national wilderness preservation system where they are presently prohibited or on other Federal lands where trails are designated as being closed to such use by the appropriate Secretary: *Provided*, That the Secretary charged with the administration of such trail shall establish regulations which shall authorize the use of motorized vehicles when, in his judgment, such vehicles are necessary to meet emergencies or to enable adjacent landowners or land users to have reasonable access to their lands or timber rights: *Provided further*, That private lands included in the national recreation, national scenic, or national historic trails by cooperative agreement of a landowner shall not preclude such owner from using motorized vehicles on or across such trails or adjacent lands from time to time in accordance with regulations to be established by the appropriate Secretary. Where a national historic trail follows existing public roads, developed rights-of-way or waterways, and similar features of man's nonhistorically related development, approximating the original location of a historic route, such segments may be marked to facilitate retracement of the historic route, and where a national historic trail parallels an existing public road, such road may be marked to commemorate the historic route. Other uses along the historic trails and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, and which, at the time of designation, are allowed by administrative regulations, including the use of motorized vehicles, shall be permitted by the Secretary charged with administration of the trail. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with appropriate governmental agencies and public and private organizations, shall establish a uniform marker, including thereon an appropriate and distinctive symbol for each national recreation, national scenic, and national historic trail. Where the trails cross lands administered by Federal agencies such markers shall be erected at appropriate points along the trails and maintained by the Federal agency administering the trail in accordance with standards established by the appropriate Secretary and where the trails cross non-Federal lands, in accordance with written cooperative agreements, the appropriate Secretary shall provide such uniform markers to cooperating agencies and shall require such agencies to erect and maintain them in accordance

with the standards established. The appropriate Secretary may also provide for trail interpretation sites, which shall be located at historic sites along the route of any national scenic or national historic trail, in order to present information to the public about the trail, at the lowest possible cost, with emphasis on the portion of the trail passing through the State in which the site is located. Wherever possible, the sites shall be maintained by a State agency under a cooperative agreement between the appropriate Secretary and the State agency.

(d) Within the exterior boundaries of areas under their administration that are included in the right-of-way selected for a national recreation, national scenic, or national historic trail, the heads of Federal agencies may use lands for trail purposes and may acquire lands or interests in lands by written cooperative agreement, donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds or exchange.

(e) Where the lands included in a national scenic or national historic trail right-of-way are outside of the exterior boundaries of federally administered areas, the Secretary charged with the administration of such trail shall encourage the States or local governments involved (1) to enter into written cooperative agreements with landowners, private organizations, and individuals to provide the necessary trail right-of-way, or (2) to acquire such lands or interests therein to be utilized as segments of the national scenic or national historic trail: *Provided*, That if the State or local governments fail to enter into such written cooperative agreements or to acquire such lands or interests therein after notice of the selection of the right-of-way is published, the appropriate Secretary, may (i) enter into such agreements with landowners, States, local governments, private organizations, and individuals for the use of lands for trail purposes, or (ii) acquire private lands or interests therein by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds or exchange in accordance with the provisions of subsection (f) of this section: *Provided further*, That the appropriate Secretary may acquire lands or interests therein from local governments or governmental corporations with the consent of such entities. The lands involved in such rights-of-way should be acquired in fee, if other methods of public control are not sufficient to assure their use for the purpose for which they are acquired: *Provided*, That if the Secretary charged with the administration of such trail permanently relocates the right-of-way and disposes of all title or interest in the land, the original owner, or his heirs or assigns, shall be offered, by notice given at the former owner's last known address, the right of first refusal at the fair market price.

(f) (1) The Secretary of the Interior, in the exercise of his exchange authority, may accept title to any non-Federal property within the right-of-way and in exchange therefor he may convey to the grantor of such property any federally owned property under his jurisdiction which is located in the State wherein such property is located and which he classifies as suitable for exchange or other disposal. The values of the properties so exchanged either shall be approximately equal, or if they are not approximately equal the values shall be equalized by the payment of cash to the grantor or to the Secretary as the circumstances require. The Secretary of Agriculture, in the exercise of his exchange authority, may utilize authorities and procedures available to him in connection with exchanges of national forest lands.

(2) In acquiring lands or interests therein for a National Scenic or Historic Trail, the appropriate Secretary may, with consent of a landowner, acquire whole tracts notwithstanding that parts of such tracts may lie outside the area of trail acquisition. In furtherance of the purposes of this act, lands so acquired outside the area of trail acquisition may be exchanged for any non-Federal lands or interests therein within the trail right-of-way, or disposed of in accordance with such procedures or regulations as the appropriate Secretary shall prescribe, including: (i) provisions for conveyance of such acquired lands or interests therein at not less than fair market value to the highest bidder, and (ii) provisions for allowing the last owners of record a right to purchase said acquired lands or interests therein upon payment or agreement to pay an amount equal to the highest bid price. For lands designated for exchange or disposal, the appropriate Secretary may convey these lands with any reservations or covenants deemed desirable to further the purposes of this Act. The proceeds from any disposal shall be credited to the appropriation bearing the costs of land acquisition for the affected trail.

(g) The appropriate Secretary may utilize condemnation proceedings without the consent of the owner to acquire private lands or interests, therein pursuant to this section only in cases where, in his judgment, all reasonable efforts to acquire such lands or interest therein by negotiation have failed, and in such cases he shall acquire only such title as, in his judgment, is reasonably necessary to provide passage across such lands: *Provided*, That condemnation proceedings may not be utilized to acquire fee title or lesser interests to more than an average of one hundred and twenty-five acres per mile. Money appropriated for Federal purposes from the land and water conservation fund shall, without prejudice to appropriations from other sources, be available to Federal departments for the acquisition of lands or interests in lands for the purposes of this Act. For national historic trails, direct Federal acquisition for trail purposes shall be limited to those areas indicated by the study report or by the comprehensive plan as high potential route segments or high potential historic sites. Except for designated protected components of the trail, no land or site located along a designated national historic trail or along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail shall be subject to the provisions of section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 1653(f)) unless such land or site is deemed to be of historical significance under appropriate historical site criteria such as those for the National Register of Historic Places.

(h) (1) The Secretary charged with the administration of a national recreation, national scenic, or national historic trail shall provide for the development and maintenance of such trails within federally administered areas, and shall cooperate with and encourage the States to operate, develop, and maintain portions of such trails which are located outside the boundaries of federally administered areas. When deemed to be in the public interest, such Secretary may enter written cooperative agreements with the States or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals to operate, develop, and maintain any portion of such a trail either within or outside a federally administered area. Such agreements may include provisions for limited financial assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, operation, development, or maintenance of such trails, provisions providing volunteer in the park or volunteer in the forest status (in accordance with the Volunteers in the Parks Act of 1969 and the Volunteers in the Forests Act of 1972) to individuals, private organizations, or landowners participating in such activities, or provisions of both types. The appropriate Secretary shall also initiate consultations with affected States and their political subdivisions to encourage –

(A) the development and implementation by such entities of appropriate measures to protect private landowners from trespass resulting from trail use and from unreasonable personal liability and property damage caused by trail use, and

(B) the development and implementation by such entities of provisions for land practices compatible with the purposes of this Act, for property within or adjacent to trail rights-of-way. After consulting with States and their political subdivisions under the preceding sentence, the Secretary may provide assistance to such entities under appropriate cooperative agreements in the manner provided by this subsection.

(2) Whenever the Secretary of the Interior makes any conveyance of land under any of the public land laws, he may reserve a right-of-way for trails to the extent he deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(i) The appropriate Secretary, with the concurrence of the heads of any other Federal agencies administering lands through which a national recreation, national scenic, or national historic trail passes, and after consultation with the States, local governments, and organizations concerned, may issue regulations, which may be revised from time to time, governing the use, protection, management, development, and administration of trails of the national trails system.

In order to maintain good conduct on and along the trails located within federally administered areas and to provide for the proper government and protection of such trails, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall prescribe and publish such uniform regulations as they deem necessary and any person who violates such regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be punished by a fine of not more \$500 or by imprisonment not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment. The Secretary responsible for the administration of any segment of any component of the National Trails System (as determined in a manner consistent with subsection (a)(1) of this section) may also utilize authorities related to units of the national park system or the national forest system, as the case may be, in carrying out his administrative responsibilities for such component.

(j) Potential trail uses allowed on designated components of the national trails system may include, but are not limited to, the following: bicycling, cross-country skiing, day hiking, equestrian activities, jogging or similar fitness activities, trail biking, overnight and long-distance backpacking, snowmobiling, and surface water and underwater activities. Vehicles which may be permitted on certain trails may include, but need not be limited to, motorcycles, bicycles, four-wheel drive or all-terrain off-road vehicles. In addition, trail access for handicapped individuals may be provided. The provisions of this subsection shall not supersede any other provisions of this Act or other Federal laws, or any State or local laws.

(k) For the conservation purpose of preserving or enhancing the recreational, scenic, natural, or historical values of components of the national trails system, and environs thereof as determined by the appropriate Secretary, landowners are authorized to donate or otherwise convey qualified real property interests to qualified organizations consistent with section 170(h)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, including, but not limited to, right-of-way, open space, scenic, or conservation easements, without regard to any limitation on the nature of the estate or interest otherwise transferable within the jurisdiction where the land is located. The conveyance of any such interest in land in accordance with this subsection shall be deemed to further a Federal conservation policy and yield a significant public benefit for purposes of section 6 of Public Law 96-541.

STATE AND METROPOLITAN AREA TRAILS

SEC. 8. [16USC1247] (a) The Secretary of the Interior is directed to encourage States to consider, in their comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plans and proposals for financial assistance for State and local projects submitted pursuant to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, needs and opportunities for establishing park, forest, and other recreation and historic trails on lands owned or administered by States, and recreation and historic trails on lands in or near urban areas. The Secretary is also directed to encourage States to consider, in their comprehensive statewide historic preservation plans and proposals for financial assistance for State, local, and private projects submitted pursuant to the Act of October 15, 1966 (80 Stat. 915), as amended, needs and opportunities for establishing historic trails. He is further directed in accordance with the authority contained in the Act of May 28, 1963 (77 Stat. 49), to encourage States, political subdivisions, and private interests, including nonprofit organizations, to establish such trails.

(b) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is directed, in administering the program of comprehensive urban planning and assistance under section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, to encourage the planning of recreation trails in connection with the recreation and transportation planning for metropolitan and other urban areas. He is further directed, in administering the urban open space program under title VII of the Housing Act of 1961, to encourage such recreation trails.

(c) The Secretary of Agriculture is directed, in accordance with authority vested in him, to encourage States and local agencies and private interests to establish such trails.

(d) The Secretary of Transportation, the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Secretary of the Interior, in administering the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, shall encourage State and local agencies and private interests to establish appropriate trails using the provisions of such programs. Consistent with the purposes of that Act, and in furtherance of the national policy to preserve established railroad rights-of-way for future reactivation of rail service, to protect rail transportation corridors, and to encourage energy efficient transportation use, in the case of interim use of any established railroad rights-of-way pursuant to donation, transfer, lease, sale, or otherwise in a manner consistent with the National Trails System Act, if such interim use is subject to restoration or reconstruction for railroad purposes, such interim use shall not be treated, for purposes of any law or rule of law, as an abandonment of the use of such rights-of-way for railroad purposes. If a State, political subdivision, or qualified private organization is prepared to assume full responsibility for management of such rights-of-way and for any legal liability arising out of such transfer or use, and for the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed against such rights-of-way, then the Commission shall impose such terms and conditions as a requirement of any transfer or conveyance for interim use in a manner consistent with this Act, and shall not permit abandonment or discontinuance inconsistent or disruptive of such use.

(e) Such trails may be designated and suitably marked as parts of the nationwide system of trails by the States, their political subdivisions, or other appropriate administering agencies with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND OTHER PROPERTIES

SEC. 9. [16USC1248] (a) The Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture as the case may be, may grant easements and rights-of-way upon, over, under, across, or along any component of the national trails system in accordance with the laws applicable to the national park system and the national forest system, respectively: Provided, That any conditions contained in such easements and rights-of-way shall be related to the policy and purposes of this Act.

(b) The Department of Defense, the Department of Transportation, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Power Commission, and other Federal agencies having jurisdiction or control over or information concerning the use, abandonment, or disposition of roadways, utility rights-of-way, or other properties which may be suitable for the purpose of improving or expanding the national trails system shall cooperate with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture in order to assure, to the extent practicable, that any such properties having values suitable for trail purposes may be made available for such use.

(c) Commencing upon the date of enactment of this subsection, any and all right, title, interest, and estate of the United States in all rights-of-way of the type described in the Act of March 8, 1922 (43 U.S.C. 912), shall remain in the United States upon the abandonment or forfeiture of such rights-of-way, or portions thereof, except to the extent that any such right-of-way, or portion thereof, is embraced within a public highway no later than one year after a determination of abandonment or forfeiture, as provided under such Act.

(d) (1) All rights-of-way, or portions thereof, retained by the United States pursuant to subsection (c) which are located within the boundaries of a conservation system unit or a National Forest shall be added to and incorporated within such unit or National Forest and managed in accordance with applicable provisions of law, including this Act.

(2) All such retained rights-of-way, or portions thereof, which are located outside the boundaries of a conservation system unit or a National Forest but adjacent to or contiguous with any portion of the public lands shall be managed pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and other applicable law, including this section.

(3) All such retained rights-of-way, or portions thereof, which are located outside the boundaries of a conservation system unit or National Forest which the Secretary of the Interior determines suitable for use as a public recreational trail or other recreational purposes shall be managed by the Secretary for such uses, as well as for such other uses as the Secretary determines to be appropriate pursuant to applicable laws, as long as such uses do not preclude trail use.

(e) (1) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized where appropriate to release and quitclaim to a unit of government or to another entity meeting the requirements of this subsection any and all right, title, and interest in the surface estate of any portion of any right-of-way to the extent any such right, title, and interest was retained by the United States pursuant to subsection (c), if such portion is not located within the boundaries of any conservation system unit or National Forest. Such release and quitclaim shall be made only in response to an application therefor by a unit of State or local government or another entity which the Secretary of the Interior determines to be legally and financially qualified to manage the relevant portion for public recreational purposes. Upon receipt of such an application, the Secretary shall publish a notice concerning such application in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the relevant portion is located. Such release and quitclaim shall be on the following conditions:

(A) If such unit or entity attempts to sell, convey, or otherwise transfer such right, title, or interest or attempts to permit the use of any part of such portion for any purpose incompatible with its use for public recreation, then any and all right, title, and interest released and quitclaimed by the Secretary pursuant to this subsection shall revert to the United States.

(B) Such unit or entity shall assume full responsibility and hold the United States harmless for any legal liability which might arise with respect to the transfer, possession, use, release, or quitclaim of such right-of-way.

(C) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States shall be under no duty to inspect such portion prior to such release and quitclaim, and shall incur no legal liability with respect to any hazard or any unsafe condition existing on such portion at the time of such release and quitclaim.

(2) The Secretary is authorized to sell any portion of a right-of-way retained by the United States pursuant to subsection (c) located outside the boundaries of a conservation system unit or National Forest if any such portion is --

(A) not adjacent to or contiguous with any portion of the public lands; or

(B) determined by the Secretary, pursuant to the disposal criteria established by section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to be suitable for sale.

Prior to conducting any such sale, the Secretary shall take appropriate steps to afford a unit of State or local government or any other entity an opportunity to seek to obtain such portion pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) All proceeds from sales of such retained rights of way shall be deposited into the Treasury of the United States and credited to the Land and Water Conservation Fund as provided in section 2 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965.

(4) The Secretary of the Interior shall annually report to the Congress the total proceeds from sales under paragraph (2) during the preceding fiscal year. Such report shall be included in the President's annual budget submitted to the Congress.

(f) As used in this section --

(1) The term “conservation system unit” has the same meaning given such term in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (Public Law 96-487; 94 Stat. 2371 et seq.), except that such term shall also include units outside Alaska.

(2) The term “public lands” has the same meaning given such term in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 10. [16USC1249] (a) (1) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated for the acquisition of lands or interests in lands not more than \$5,000,000 for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and not more than \$500,000 for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. From the appropriations authorized for fiscal year 1979 and succeeding fiscal years pursuant to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (78 Stat. 897), as amended, not more than the following amounts may be expended for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands authorized to be acquired pursuant to the provisions of this Act: for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, not to exceed \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 1979, \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 1980, and \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 1981, except that the difference between the foregoing amounts and the actual appropriations in any one fiscal year shall be available for appropriation in subsequent fiscal years.

(2) It is the express intent of the Congress that the Secretary should substantially complete the land acquisition program necessary to insure the protection of the Appalachian Trail within three complete fiscal years following the date of enactment of this sentence.

(b) For the purposes of Public Law 95-42 (91 Stat. 211), the lands and interests therein acquired pursuant to this section shall be deemed to qualify for funding under the provisions of section 1, clause 2, of said Act.

(c) Authorization of Appropriations-

(1) IN GENERAL- Except as otherwise provided in this Act, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to implement the provisions of this Act relating to the trails designated by section 5(a).

(2) NATCHEZ TRACE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL-

(A) IN GENERAL- With respect to the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail (referred to in this paragraph as the ‘trail’) designated by section 5(a)(12)—

(i) not more than \$500,000 shall be appropriated for the acquisition of land or interests in land for the trail; and

(ii) not more than \$2,000,000 shall be appropriated for the development of the trail.

(B) PARTICIPATION BY VOLUNTEER TRAIL GROUPS- The administering agency for the trail shall encourage volunteer trail groups to participate in the development of the trail.

VOLUNTEER TRAILS ASSISTANCE

SEC. 11. [16USC1250] (a) (1) In addition to the cooperative agreement and other authorities contained in this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the head of any Federal agency administering Federal lands, are authorized to encourage volunteers and volunteer organizations to plan, develop, maintain, and manage, where appropriate, trails throughout the Nation.

(2) Wherever appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of this Act, the Secretaries are authorized and encouraged to utilize the Volunteers in the Parks Act of 1969, the Volunteers in the Forests Act of 1972, and section 6 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (relating to the development of Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans).

(b) Each Secretary or the head of any Federal land managing agency, may assist volunteers and volunteers organizations in planning, developing, maintaining, and managing trails. Volunteer work may include, but need not be limited to—

(1) planning, developing, maintaining, or managing (A) trails which are components of the national trails system, or (B) trails which, if so developed and maintained, could qualify for designation as components of the national trails system; or

(2) operating programs to organize and supervise volunteer trail building efforts with respect to the trails referred to in paragraph (1), conducting trail-related research projects, or providing education and training to volunteers on methods of trails planning, construction, and maintenance.

(c) The appropriate Secretary or the head of any Federal land managing agency may utilize and to make available Federal facilities, equipment, tools, and technical assistance to volunteers and volunteer organizations, subject to such limitations and restrictions as the appropriate Secretary or the head of any Federal land managing agency deems necessary or desirable.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 12. [16USC1251] As used in this Act:

(1) The term “high potential historic sites” means those historic sites related to the route, or sites in close proximity thereto, which provide opportunity to interpret the historic significance of the trail during the period of its major use. Criteria for consideration as high potential sites include historic significance, presence of visible historic remnants, scenic quality, and relative freedom from intrusion.

(2) The term “high potential route segments” means those segments of a trail which would afford high quality recreation experience in a portion of the route having greater than average scenic values or affording an opportunity to vicariously share the experience of the original users of a historic route.

(3) The term “State” means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States.

(4) The term “without expense to the United States” means that no funds may be expended by Federal agencies for the development of trail related facilities or for the acquisition of lands or interest in lands outside the exterior boundaries of Federal areas. For the purposes of the preceding sentence, amounts made available to any State or political subdivision under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 or any other provision of law shall not be treated as an expense to the United States.

END

OMNIBUS PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2009

Public Law 111-11, March 30, 2009

Subtitle C—Additions to the National Trails System, Section 5202

SEC. 5202. NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL.

(a) **AUTHORIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.**—Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)) (as amended by section 5201) is amended by adding at the end the following:

(28) **NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL.**—The New England National Scenic Trail, a continuous trail extending approximately 220 miles from the border of New Hampshire in the town of Royalston, Massachusetts to Long Island Sound in the town of Guilford, Connecticut, as generally depicted on the map titled ‘New England National Scenic Trail Proposed Route’, numbered T06/80,000, and dated October 2007. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service. The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local agencies, and other organizations, shall administer the trail after considering the recommendations of the report titled the ‘Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment’, prepared by the National Park Service, and dated Spring 2006. The United States shall not acquire for the trail any land or interest in land without the consent of the owner.”

(b) **MANAGEMENT.**—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall consider the actions outlined in the Trail Management Blueprint described in the report titled the “Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett Trail System National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment”, prepared by the National Park Service, and dated Spring 2006, as the framework for management and administration of the New England National Scenic Trail. Additional or more detailed plans for administration, management, protection, access, maintenance, or development of the trail may be developed consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint, and as approved by the Secretary.

(c) **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.**—The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (and its political subdivisions), the State of Connecticut (and its political subdivisions), and other regional, local, and private organizations deemed necessary and desirable to accomplish cooperative trail administrative, management, and protection objectives consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint. An agreement under this subsection may include provisions for limited financial assistance to encourage participation in the planning, acquisition, protection, operation, development, or maintenance of the trail.

(d) **ADDITIONAL TRAIL SEGMENTS.**—Pursuant to section 6 of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1245), the Secretary is encouraged to work with the State of New Hampshire and appropriate local and private organizations to include that portion of the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in New Hampshire (which lies between Royalston, Massachusetts and Jaffrey, New Hampshire) as a component of the New England National Scenic Trail. Inclusion of this segment, as well as other potential side or connecting trails, is contingent upon written application to the Secretary by appropriate State and local jurisdictions and a finding by the Secretary that trail management and administration is consistent with the Trail Management Blueprint.



Region 1 – North Atlantic-Appalachian Foundation Document Recommendation New England National Scenic Trail

May 2025

This Foundation Document has been prepared as a collaborative effort between trail and regional staff and is recommended for approval by the Regional Director.

KELLY FELLNER Digitally signed by KELLY FELLNER
Date: 2025.05.13 14:22:30 -04'00'

RECOMMENDED

Kelly Fellner, Superintendent, New England National Scenic Trail

Date

STEVEN SIMS Digitally signed by STEVEN SIMS
Date: 2025.05.22 15:41:41 -04'00'

APPROVED

Steven D. Sims, Acting Regional Director, Interior Region 1

Date



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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May 2025

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