

Notes on Conservation of Diverse Landscapes in Your RCP Session 1: Wildlands Conservation in Your RCP

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Putting the WILD in Wildlands and Woodlands: How wildlands conservation is relevant and feasible in the Northeast, Daryl Burnnett

- We need to rethink wilderness because it is not far away, but in the forests all around us.
- In this era of drastic change in New England’s forests, wildlands give people the chance to have a place and the time to try to understand nature.
- Wilderness benefits people in many ways: ecosystem services, recreation, and beauty.
- Wildlands are significant as scientific “control sites” in order to compare to areas of human activity and influence ([Howland Research Forest Carbon Transfer](#), for instance).
- We need to have the humility to take the long view – one of the most effective things that we can do is to ensure the protection of un-fragmented, undeveloped resilient forests. They do not necessarily have to be virgin or pristine, but the bigger the better—smaller can often be vulnerable over time, especially when we consider rare species.
- Wildlands can be future old growth, even if the forest was previously industrial forestland.
- We need to avoid “box thinking” in establishing boundaries—look at multiple properties and adjacency. It’s hard to know what we’re missing. The context of the landscape is very important, including buffers and connectivity.
- Even if a stand of trees is considered too small for resiliency, it doesn’t mean that it is not important.
- The “right size” concept relates to the type of habitat as well. Important to think about threats that may exist in the future as well as those that exist now. For instance, don’t only look at where the salt marsh is now, but where its source is—protect the specific site but look for future resiliency sites too.
- We want a connected network of wildlands embedded in the mosaic of conserved lands, even if they’re near people. We want to protect all kinds of habitats.
- It is important to become more strategic and creative, including partnership approaches with owners.



- Connectivity is really attractive to funders. Corporate ventures are compelling.
- It is important to save regular common forest tracts.
- We are missing opportunities to connect with landowners (and donors) who want wildlands. Most funding sources steer donors away unless they cut the trees and make it about the economics/culture of managed forests. Saving wildlands is seen as a threat to that management culture.
- Keep taking the long view, because property can eventually be kept wild.

Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership: Partners in Coastal Watershed Conservation, *Dea Brickner-Wood*

- Conservation terrific, but collaborative management really gets people excited. Share resources, volunteers, etc. Combine land conservation *and* stewardship goals
- Multiple ownership is a difficult effort to manage a true mix of land uses, including things like coastal protection and general resiliency to climate change
- It is important to look at conservation on an ecosystem basis. Large-scale challenges extend beyond simple property boundaries, making it harder to have coordinated effort to prevent human access to wildlands.
- One great possibility is rerouting public access into a single trail, away from sensitive areas. Manage for people *and* the wilderness area.

