

MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester

Boston

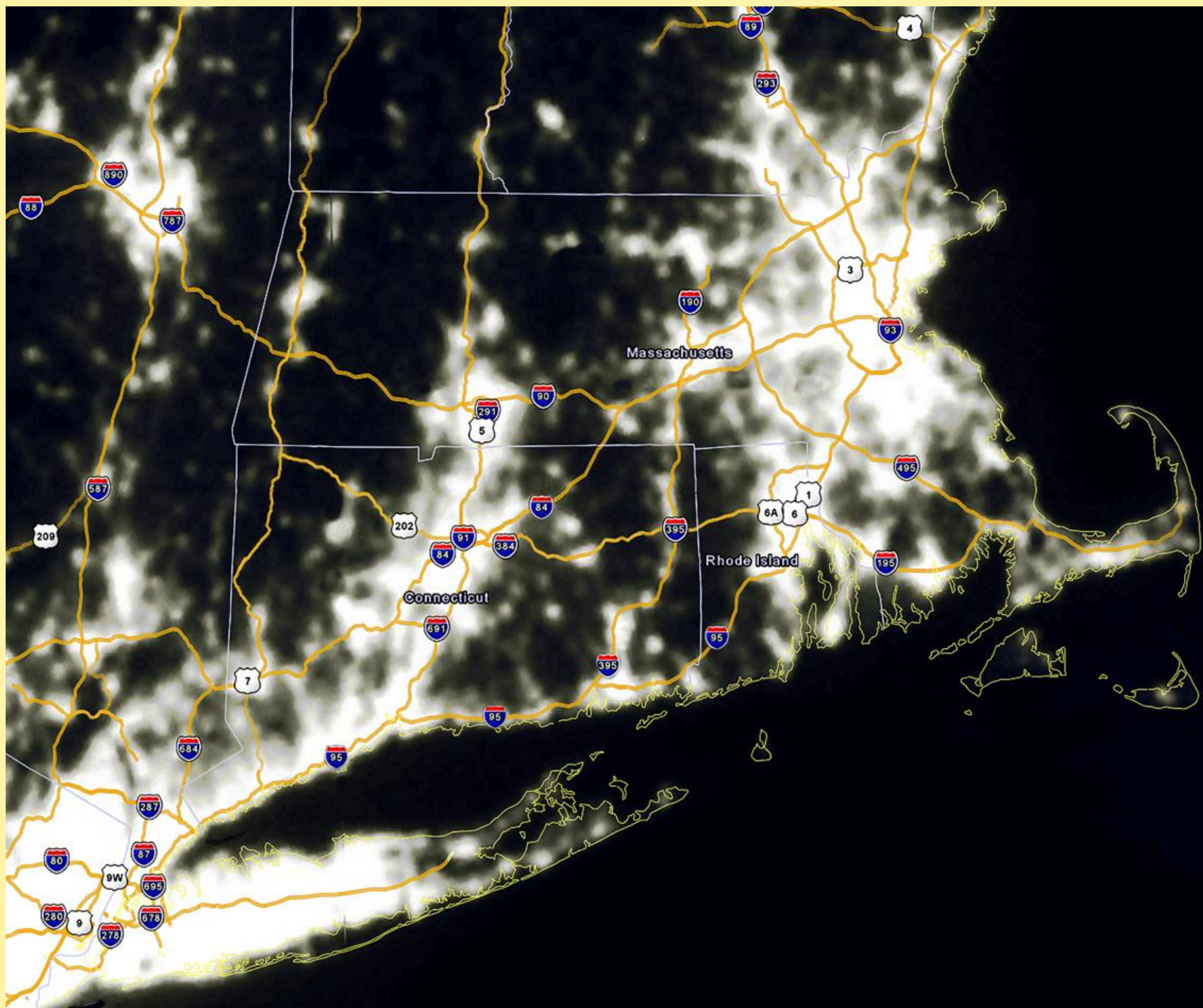
Providence

Hartford

CONNECTICUT

RHODE ISLAND

New London



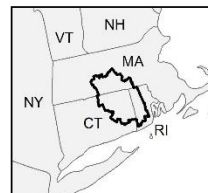
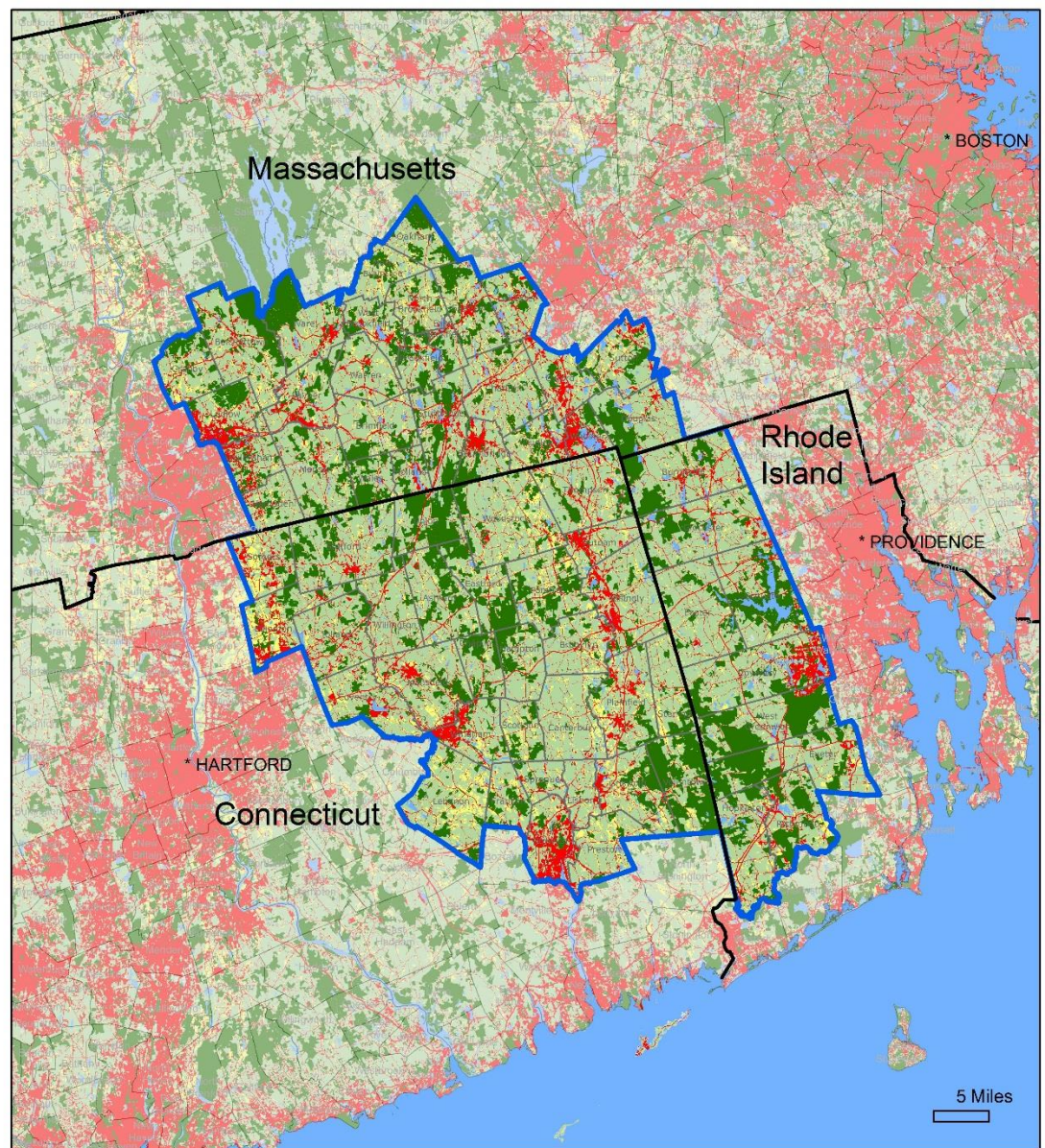
Southern New England Heritage Forest

Tri-state region

68 towns

1.49 million
acres

Still 76% forest



Protected Open Space

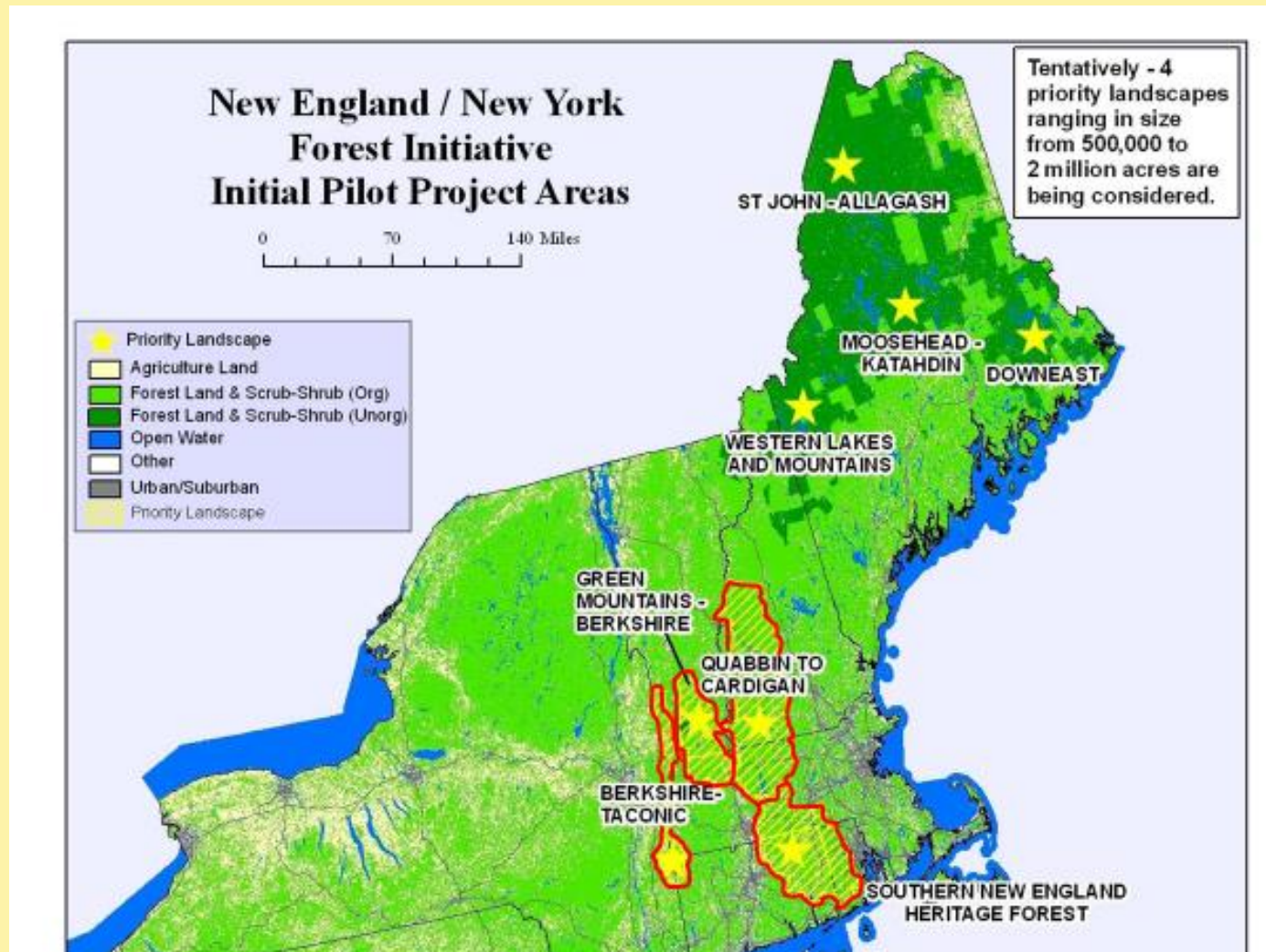
Land Cover (NLCD2011)

- Water or Wetland
- Grassland/Herbaceous
- Forest or Shrub/Scrub
- Developed
- Agriculture

A Priority Landscape:

Blue Ribbon Commission on Land Conservation

2010 Report to the Governors, New England Governors' Conference



Tri-State Pilot Program:

Recruit and train Woodland Ambassadors – people passionate about their woods

- **Woods Walk & Woods Forums**
- **Personal & Neighborhood Connections**

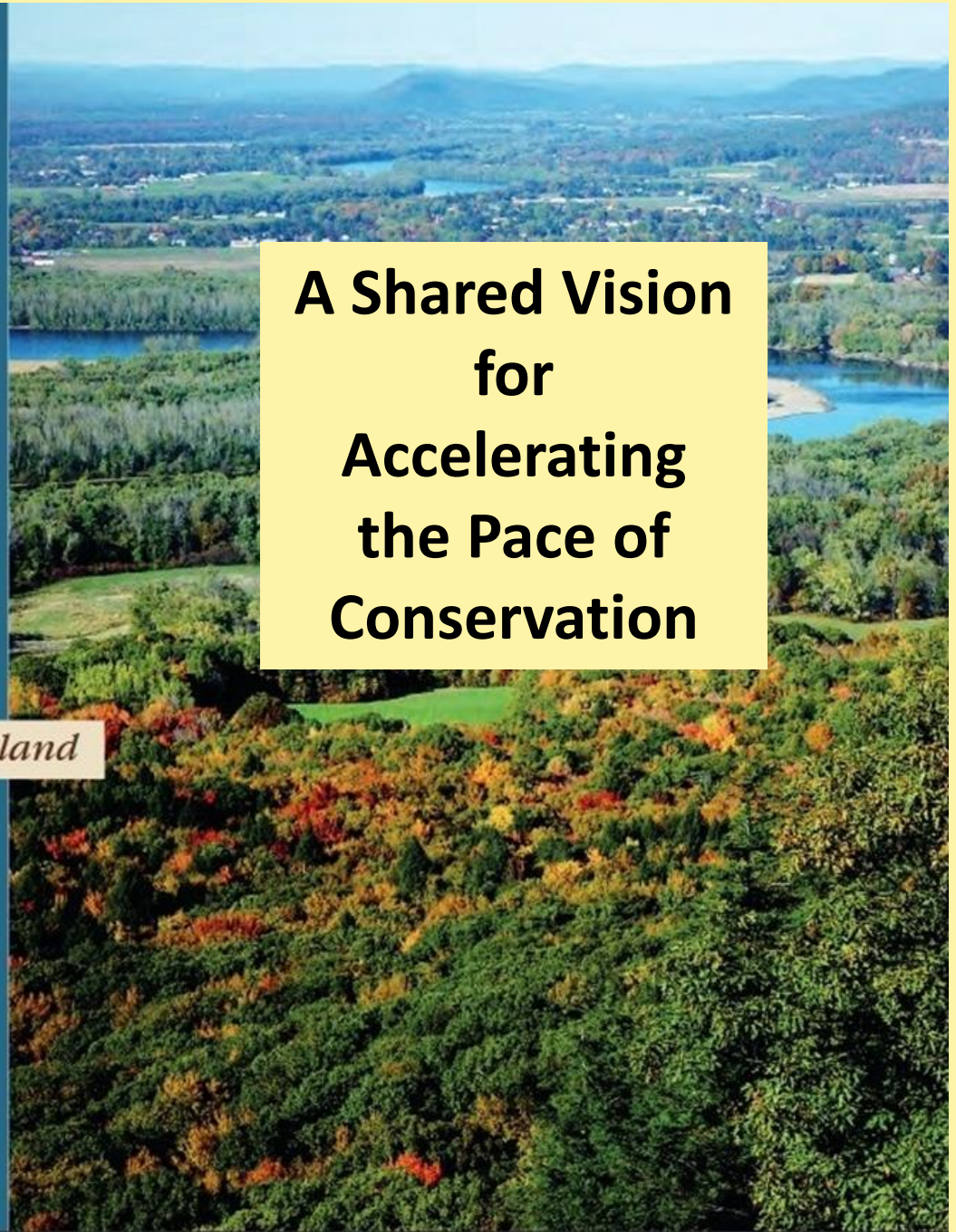


Wildlands and Woodlands



Farmlands and Communities

Broadening the Vision for New England



**A Shared Vision
for
Accelerating
the Pace of
Conservation**

Smarter Landowner Outreach & Engagement:

- The Sustaining Family Forests Initiative www.sffi.yale.edu
- Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively www.engaginglandowners.org

Beginning of a Strong Tri-State Collaboration:

- Thames River Basin Partnership
- RI Woodlands Partnership
- MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership

Introduction to the RCP Support Network

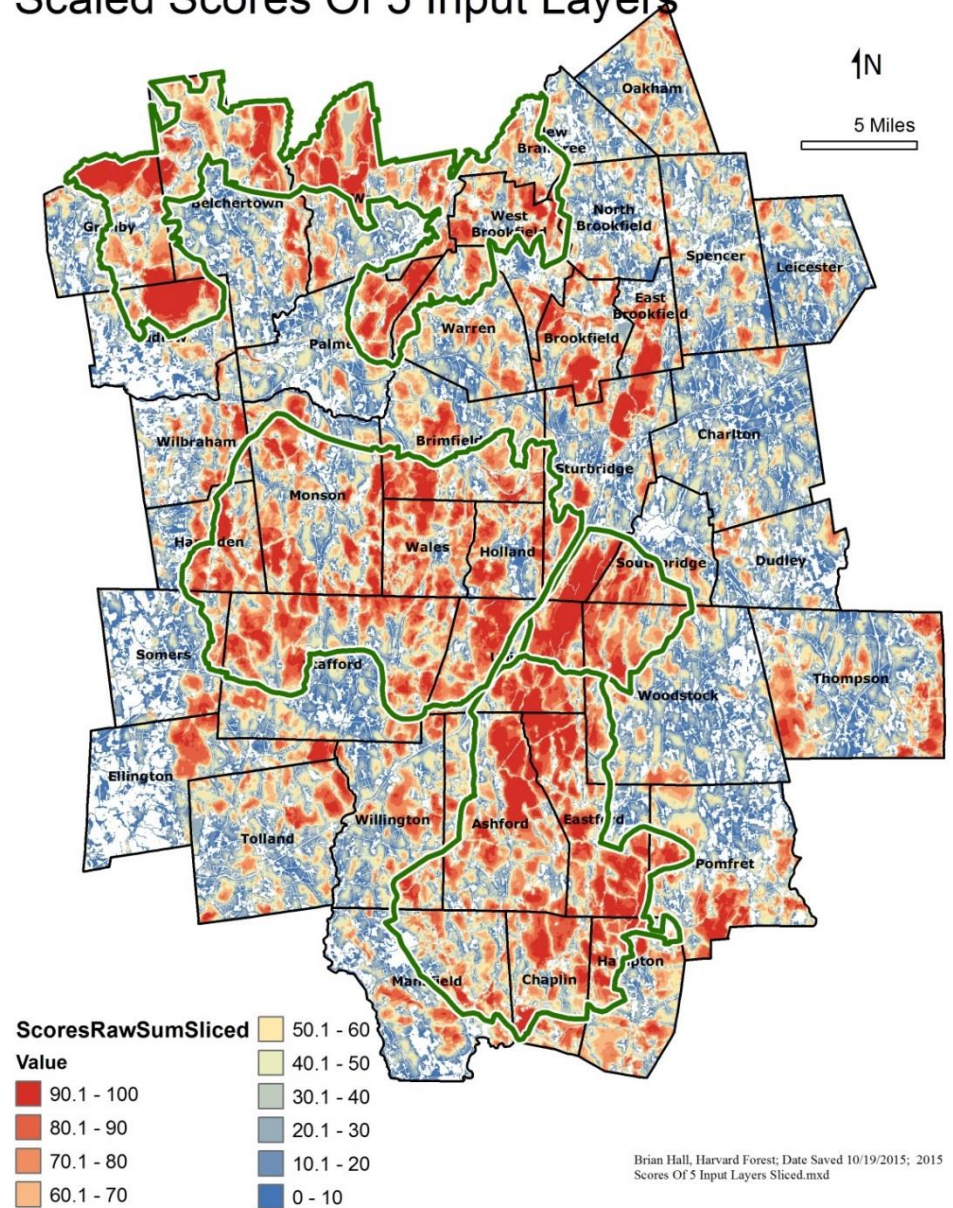



Shared Technology - Regional Mapping Tools:

MassConn Mapper

Local, state, regional
and federal data layers
plus weighting/scaling
features

Scaled Scores Of 5 Input Layers



- 
- ✓ **Priority Landscape**
 - ✓ **Shared Vision**
 - ✓ **Better Landowner Engagement Tools**
 - ✓ **Shared Technology - Mapping Tools**
 - ✓ **Stronger Collaboration**
 - ✓ **Support from RCP Network**

Southern New England Heritage Forest Partnership

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP)

**New Federal Program in the
2014 Farm Bill
Agriculture/Forestry
Working Lands**

**Tri-State Project = Competitive
National Pool**

Accelerating the Pace of Woodlands Conservation in The Southern New England Heritage Forest

\$6,144,000 in new federal funding over 5 years

from the
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS)

USDA



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER.

\$6,144,000 in Significant Contributions

Lead Partners

The Last Green Valley, Inc.

MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership/Opacum Land Trust

Northern RI Conservation District

Supporting Partners

MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Providence Water

Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

Hull Forest Products

Thames River Basin Partnership

New England Forestry Foundation

Eastern CT Conservation District

Norcross Wildlife Foundation


RI Division of Forest Management

RI Woodland Partnership

Harvard Forest

Yale Sustaining Family Forests Institute

**Audubon Connecticut, Mass Audubon,
and Audubon Society of RI**

An aerial photograph of a forest landscape during autumn. The trees are in various stages of color change, with some showing vibrant reds and oranges, while others remain green. A small, clear pond is visible in the lower-left quadrant of the image. The background shows rolling hills under a slightly overcast sky.

Project Goals (NRCS Goals):

- **Improve forest habitat for fish, wildlife, & invertebrate species of concern;**
- **Support the recovery of endangered or threatened species and improve biodiversity;**
- **Protect water quality and quantity;**
- **Foster resiliency and stand diversity; and**
- **Enhance air quality and carbon sequestration.**

Method of Delivery – Traditional NRCS Programs:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - \$1.5 million

New funding for landowners:

Forest Management Plans with Bird Habitat Assessments (6,000 acres)

Forestry Conservation Practices (1,480 acres)

Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) - \$4.6 million

New funding for landowners:

NRCS pays 75% easement value to permanently protect forest lands

(1,100 – 1,200 acres)

NRCS holds easement

NRCS performs due diligence and pays transaction & restoration costs

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are several green fields, possibly pastures or crop fields, interspersed with dense forests of trees showing vibrant autumn colors in shades of red, orange, and yellow. In the middle ground, a small cluster of white buildings, likely a farm or a small village, is visible. The background shows a vast expanse of similar landscape stretching towards the horizon under a clear sky.

What's in it for Land Trusts?

- **Land trust goals likely align with NRCS goals**
- **New source of federal funding from outside the region**
- **Good program for conservation-minded, land-rich, cash-poor landowners**
- **Can enhance existing land trust properties by protecting adjacent lands**
- **NRCS holds and monitors the easement**

RCPP Success

- **EQIP Forest Management Plans w/Bird Habitat Assessments - getting people into the conservation pipeline**
- **HFRP Easement Program - incredible potential for New England**
- **Mix of partners - conservation districts, water suppliers, private businesses, land trusts, higher education, non-profits**
- **Significant partner contributions - 1:1 match**
- **A partner who can speak “NRCS” really well – conservation districts**
- **A partner willing to commit substantial time and effort to project management - administration, outreach and education are not reimbursable**
- **Strong support from the NRCS State Conservationist**

For more information:

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