

Lyme Conservation Commission
Conservation Land Values



As a partner in land conservation projects in Lyme, the Conservation Commission understands that the value of a parcel of undeveloped land is difficult to express in monetary terms. More often than not, the total value is greater than the sum of its parts. Still, the Commission considers many attributes when identifying parcels that remain undeveloped in perpetuity. The list is not exhaustive and many other factors are considered as well, but some of the attributes considered are:

Surface Water

Surface water protection is essential to the conservation and health of the natural resource base, wildlife habitat, scenic quality, and recreational and education opportunities. In addition, river channels, lakes and ponds provide flood storage capacity and aquatic habitat. Pollution of surface water can result from a variety of activities within a watershed. In general, the closer the activity to the surface water, the greater the impact on the surface water quality and its dependent wildlife. To sustain surface water functions, surface water is best considered as the water covered area and its surrounding buffers of land.

Wetlands

Wetlands, including vernal ponds, are valued for their storage of flood waters; storage and adsorption of soluble nutrients which might otherwise contaminate downstream surface waters; discharge of water to surface waters during periods of low precipitation; groundwater recharge; filtration of pollution; habitat for many species that depend on wetlands for all or part of their life cycle; and recreational and educational opportunities. As with surface waters, the surrounding buffers are essential to the protection of wetlands.

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife habitat is an important component of the natural resource base, while also contributing to the town's overall scenic quality and rural character. The landscape will continue to support a widely diversified assortment of plants and animals only by maintaining large, unfragmented areas of varied habitat, and by protecting the corridors that connect habitat areas.

Biodiversity

Land that hosts one or more exemplary natural communities, or that may support special populations of flora or fauna, including rare or endangered species, is an important component of the town's natural resource base. ("Rare plants" are listed in and defined by the New Hampshire Natural Heritage inventory as imperiled, either within New Hampshire, regionally, or globally.)

Productive Soils

Soil properties such as depth, permeability, wetness, slope and susceptibility to erosion, define the land's capability to support development and grow crops, trees or pasture grasses. Prime agricultural soils and those of statewide importance are the town's most productive soils for food production. Similarly, forest soils have been categorized for their ability to grow marketable timber. Maintaining active agriculture and forestry are frequently primary considerations in land conservation.

Recreation

Lands may offer personally or socially interactive recreation, or active or passive recreation. Universal access should be provided at a variety of appropriate places where development of such access will not compromise the character of the area.

Connection and Buffers

In addition to the Appalachian Trail, Lyme has a network of town maintained trails and trails maintained by the Dartmouth Outing Club or other organizations. Lands that provide connections between trail segments, or between parcels that allow public access, improve recreational opportunities and provide wildlife with routes to different populations of the same species (important for health of the population), food sources and additional habitat.

Class VI and Discontinued Roads

Class VI roads are public rights-of-way, while no public right-of-way remains on former Town roads that have been discontinued. Both of these often provide connections to existing trails (or are the trail itself), and Class VI roads may be the only public access to some areas.

Scenic Assets

The natural skyline of the ridges and the open fields along Route 10 and the East Thetford Road are important visual components of the local landscape and help define the character of Lyme. Distant views, such as those of and from Smarts Mountain, should also be considered.

Historic Sites and Cultural Landscapes

This includes land and structures listed, or eligible for listing, in the “National Register of Historic Places” as well as structures of traditional use (for example: stone walls, dams, barns, sugar houses, etc.) and/or land that enhances or protects an area of significant local or regional historic interest. (Note: In Lyme the Kent Moses House and Lyme Common and Lyme Center Historic Districts are listed in the National Register.)

Education

Land, due to its natural characteristics and ease of accessibility, may provide unique or unusual opportunities for natural or scientific education.