

Project Selection and Criteria

Mahoosuc Land Trust Project Selection and Criteria

Adopted July 8, 2010

Land Protection Goals

All projects must be consistent with the mission statement and purposes stated in the Articles of Incorporation.

Mission Statement

“To protect and conserve land and traditional land uses including farming, forestry, recreation, significant habitats, scenery and water resources for the benefit of the public.”

Mahoosuc Land Trust Articles of Incorporation – Purpose Section

- a) “To protect and conserve for the benefit of the general public, significant lands and their natural values and traditional characteristics, primarily in the mountain and foothill region of the Mahoosuc Mountains of Western Maine, and Eastern New Hampshire.
- b) To promote and provide general and scientific understanding of the regions significant natural resources and the need for their preservation to the benefit of the general public and future generations.
- c) To assist towns in balancing growth with the preservation of traditional regional characteristics and land uses, especially farmland and farming, forest land and sound forest management, significant historical features, rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands, mountains, and their associated wildlife, scenery, water quality and ecology”.

Land Protection Criteria

In evaluating proposed donations of conservation land or easements, MLT looks at factors which make a proposal desirable and factors which would make acceptance difficult or unlikely. In addition, we want to ensure that accepting the proposal is within the financial, organizational and management capabilities of the Trust. The following list of specific criteria guides our choice of projects.

Land Protection Criteria

Any proposed property that satisfies all the criteria below can be accepted as a potential project:

1. The proposed parcel is consistent with the Mahoosuc Land Trust’s mission and goals.
2. The proposal provides a clear public benefit according to IRS guidelines.
3. The project is within the Mahoosuc Land Trust’s capabilities to perform perpetual stewardship responsibilities on the land and includes a plan to adequately fund stewardship endowment.
4. The proposal adds significant protection to the integrity of the property.
5. The benefit to the public outweighs the benefit to a single landowner or developer.

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Land Protection Attributes

The Mahoosuc Land Trust's mission is to protect and conserve land and traditional land uses including farming, forestry, recreation, significant habitats, scenery, and water resources for the benefit of the public. In order to fulfill its mission the Mahoosuc Land Trust will identify specific natural resources or geographic areas in order to prioritize the areas of its land conservation work.

The following are important attributes, which the Land Trust will look for in potential projects:

1. Land that abuts other conservation or public lands which enhances the environmental integrity of abutting land by creating a larger landscape-scale contiguous area or corridor
2. A parcel that contains areas of high biological diversity
3. A parcel that contains a significant portion of high quality native terrestrial or aquatic ecosystem, significant wildlife habitat, or rare, endangered or threatened species
4. A parcel containing wildlife movement corridors
5. A parcel containing areas that have been identified by Beginning with Habitat, Maine Natural Areas Program, National Wetlands Inventory, New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan or other similarly-based criteria.
6. Land that is in danger of being diminished or is in close proximity to heavily developing areas.
7. Parcels that directly impact the water quality in the watersheds in Mahoosuc Land Trusts region: the Upper Androscoggin and the Upper Crooked River watershed. This area includes wetlands, streams, rivers and tributaries, lakes, ponds, groundwater aquifer recharge areas and mitigation lands.
8. A parcel that protects wild lands from logging or road building, especially at lower elevations.
9. Parcels that contain recreation value such as land containing trails, water access, and scenic views.
10. Land that provides protection and sustainability for working forests.
11. Parcels that provide protection for large working farms located within active farming communities or large farms of historical significance.
12. Parcels near a town center where there is valued land with an intact ecological community, historical importance, or unique vistas.
13. Parcels that could serve as a catalyst and create an opportunity for more land to be conserved.

Mahoosuc Land Trust's Potential Projects: The Staff and the Lands committee will create and maintain a list of parcels that MLT may consider and take proactive steps to permanently protect.

1. The Land Trust will include parcels that reflect the "protection attributes" listed above.
2. If the project satisfies one or more of the "protection attributes", the potential project will be subjected to the Mahoosuc Land Trust's Land Protection Criteria to judge if it is a feasible project.