

LAND CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF ATKINSON



November, 2022

This document is for informational and planning purposes only. The Town of Atkinson does not intend this document to be used for regulatory purposes, and it does not constitute any commitment on the part of the Town or landowners to implement the recommendations contained herein.

Acknowledgements

Preparation of the Land Conservation Plan was led by the Atkinson Conservation Commission:

Paul Wainwright	Chair
Bill Steele	Vice Chair
John Fournier	Secretary
Scott Kukshel	Member
Pete McVay	Member
Jeff Nenart	Member
Suzie Newman	Member
Monique Chretien	Alternate
Hannah Fried	Alternate
Denise Legault	Alternate
Dan Kimball	Emeritus Advisor (non-voting)
Dennis Krause	Emeritus Advisor (non-voting)

Photographs courtesy of the Members of the Commission, and Andrew Butler, PhD candidate at the University of New Hampshire

Maps and Reports Prepared by:

The Rockingham Planning Commission in coordination with the Atkinson Conservation Commission

Additional technical assistance and editing provided by Julie LaBranche, JVL Planning Consultant

Preparation of the Land Conservation Plan was funded by grants from:

The New England Grassroots Environmental Fund



New England
Grassroots
Environment Fund

The New Hampshire “Moose Plate” Conservation Grant Program





In memory of Judy Wainwright, April 29, 1946 – June 8, 2022

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	page ES-1
SECTION 1 – PURPOSE OF THIS LAND CONSERVATION PLAN	page 1-1
SECTION 2 – REASONS FOR CONSERVING LAND	page 2-1
2.1 – Aesthetic and Environmental Reasons for Conserving Land	
2.2 – Studies of the Economic Benefits for Conserving Land	
2.3 – Conservation’s Impact on Atkinson’s Tax Rate	
2.4 – Excerpts and Recommendations from Atkinson’s 2015 Master Plan	
2.5 – State Laws Pertaining to Open Space Preservation	
2.6 – Challenges and Emerging Issues	
SECTION 3 – METHODS FOR CONSERVING LAND	page 3-1
3.1 – Land Ownership	
3.2 – Protection of Town-Owned Conservation Land	
3.3 – Conservation Easements	
3.4 – Cluster Subdivision Dedicated Open Space	
3.5 – Other Zoning Protections	
3.6 – State Regulations	
3.7 – Property Tax Relief Programs: Current Use and Conservation Restriction	
3.8 – Examples of Methods for Conserving Land	
SECTION 4 – CONSERVATION ATTRIBUTES IN THE TOWN OF ATKINSON	page 4-1
4.1 – What is a Conservation Attribute?	
4.2 – An Introduction to the Maps	
4.3 – A Description of the Maps	
4.4 – How to Use the Maps	
Maps 1 – 14	
SECTION 5 – ANALYSIS OF CONSERVATION PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES	page 5-1
5.1 – Conservation Priorities for the Town of Atkinson	
5.2 – Analysis of Conservation Priorities	
5.3 – Examples of How to Use These Maps	
5.4 – Why These Maps Are Important	
Map 15 – Natural Resource Priority Areas	
SECTION 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	page 6-1

Table of Contents, Continued

APPENDIX A – A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN ATKINSON

- The Atkinson Conservation Commission
- Accomplishments
- The Conservation Fund
- The Forest Maintenance Fund
- By-Laws and Rules of Procedure
- Mission Statement
- Policies and Guidelines for the Use of Conservation Lands
- History of Conservation, from *Atkinson then and Now*, 1974 – 1999
- Chet Ladd Town Report Dedication
- Ruth McPherson Town Report Dedication
- Atkinson Residents Who Have Served on the Commission, 1974 – 2020
- Scott Kukshel Essay on the Conservation Fund
- Chronology of Conservation in Atkinson: Excerpts from Town Reports, 1974 – 2020

APPENDIX B – CURRENT STATE OF LAND CONSERVATION IN ATKINSON

Summary of Land Uses in Atkinson – Page B-3

Tables and Maps:

- A – Town-Owned Conservation Lands
- B – Cluster Development Open Space
- C – Conservation Easements on Privately-Owned Land
- D – Projects Funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- E – Lands with Current Use Tax Assessments
- F – Municipal and Undesignated Town-Owned Land
- G – Prime Wetlands
- H – Trails on Conservation Lands
- I – Conservation Lands Allowing Hunting
- J – Current Aerial Photograph (September 2000)
- K – Location of water facilities and fire hydrants (2017)

APPENDIX C – ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Property Tax Rate Analysis
- Buffers and Setbacks Demystified
- Available Sources of Grant Funding