

Wildlife Action Plan Survey 2015

Prepared for:
New Hampshire Fish and Game



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University of New Hampshire
Cooperative Extension

Wildlife Action Plan Survey

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) developed and launched a public input survey to gather information relative to the importance of wildlife and natural lands and potential actions to protect wildlife and natural lands. The 20 question online survey was available May 15, 2015 through May 29, 2015.

CrossCurrent Communications promoted the survey through traditional and social media (see full list of media coverage in WAP Appendix M). The Wildlife Action Plan Engagement Steering Committee members encouraged their members, supporters, staff and network to complete the survey. UNHCE sent two email notifications to their target audience of over 5000 contacts in the natural resources field.

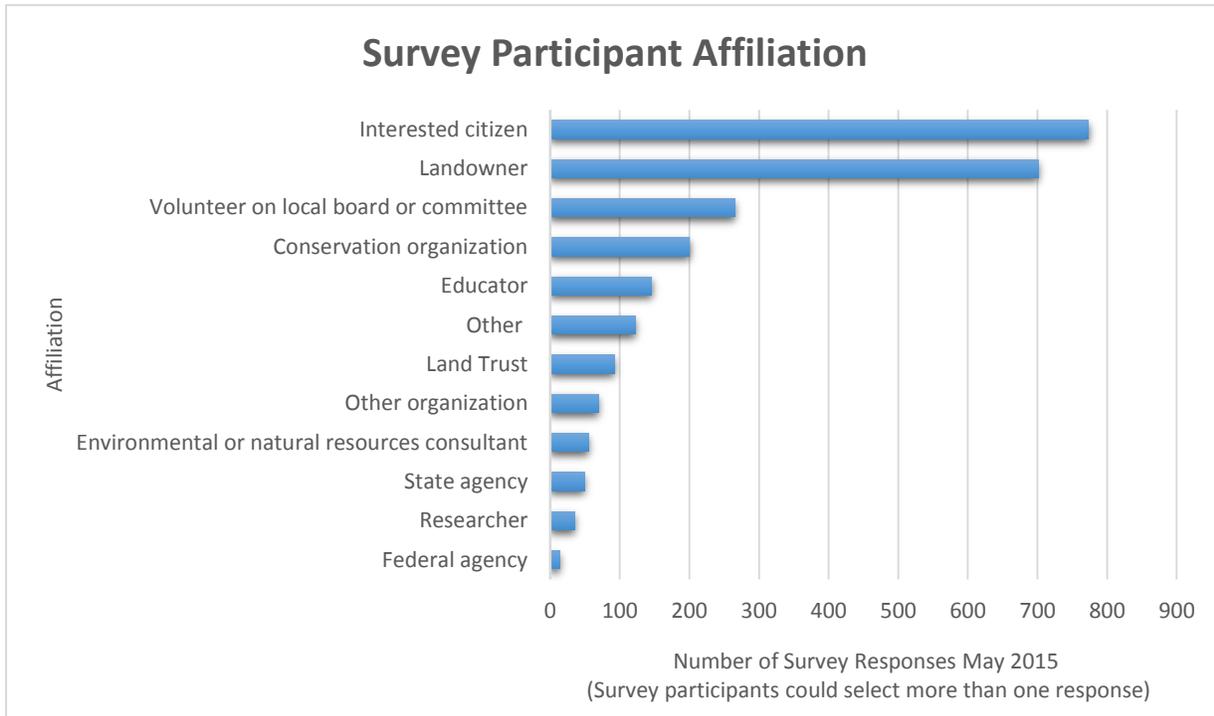
Key Findings:

- There was very strong interest with 1142 survey responses. 75% of those who responded were age 45 and above. 53% were male and 47% female. 98% reported their race as white.
- Survey participants identified as interested citizens (68%) and landowners (62%).
- There is concern that wildlife and natural lands will be deteriorating in ten years.
- There is a strong willingness of the participants to address the threats.
- 46% of respondents were familiar with the Wildlife Action Plan while 54% were not.
- 50% indicated that they had never used the Wildlife Action Plan while the other 50% use it to varying degrees (all the time to rarely).
- Of those who use the Wildlife Action Plan, over 60% use it for determining important species and habitat.
- State-wide and community efforts to protect natural lands that support wildlife are seen as effective.
- Changes from land use development are seen as having the highest impact on wildlife and natural lands.
- Hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation, such as hiking and paddling, are seen as having no impact on wildlife and natural lands
- Survey participants indicated many ways in which they take an active role. 53% are donating to organizations doing this work and 42% are volunteering with a non-profit. 36% are doing land stewardship or land management.
- Funding, education, acquiring land for conservation and enforcement of regulations is seen as most important strategies to address threats.
- NH Fish and Game, cities and towns and state agencies top the list of who to address the threats to wildlife and natural lands.
- Education is important and should be targeted to specific groups and organizations as well as landowners and the general public.
- Long-term funding for NH Fish and Game Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program is seen as very important.
- There is strong support for funding from private foundations, private fundraising from individuals and the state general fund. There is less support for funding through designated portion of rooms and meals tax and tax on purchases of outdoor gear.

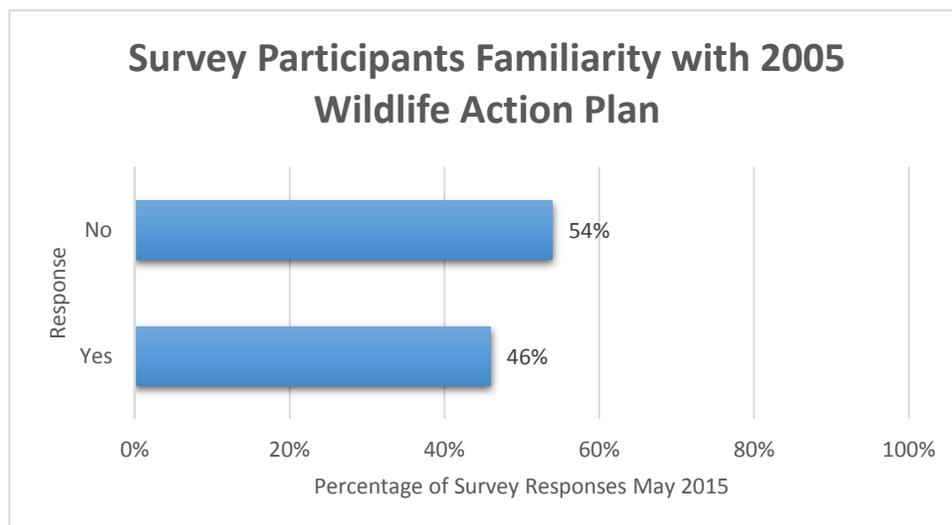
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1. Survey Participant Affiliation

Survey participants were asked to identify their affiliation and were allowed to choose more than one. 68% of respondents indicated that they were interested citizens and 62% indicated they were landowners. This would indicate that more than half of those taking the survey were not affiliated with an agency or organization directly tied to the Wildlife Action Plan. 23% indicated that they volunteered for a local board or committee.

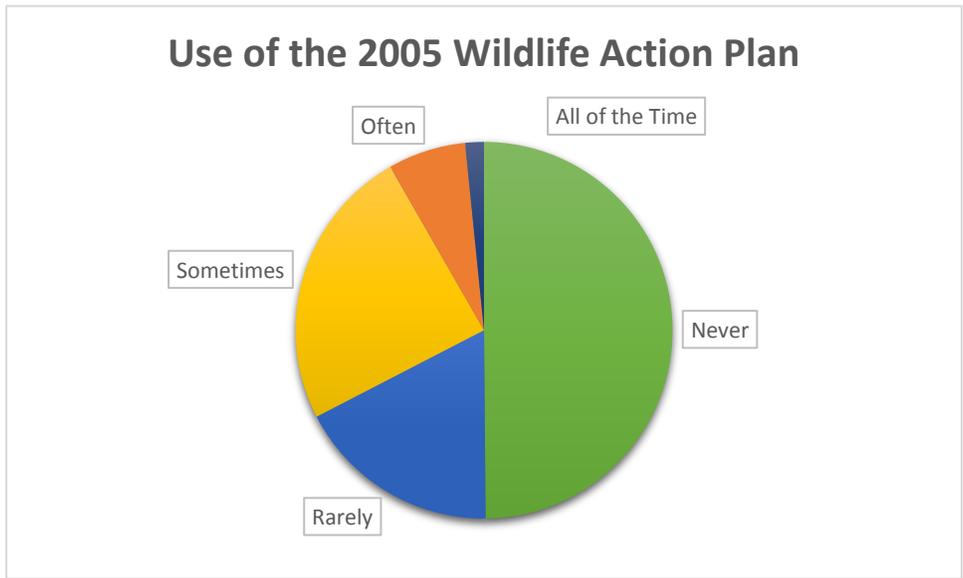


2. Survey Participant Familiarity with the 2005 Wildlife Action Plan



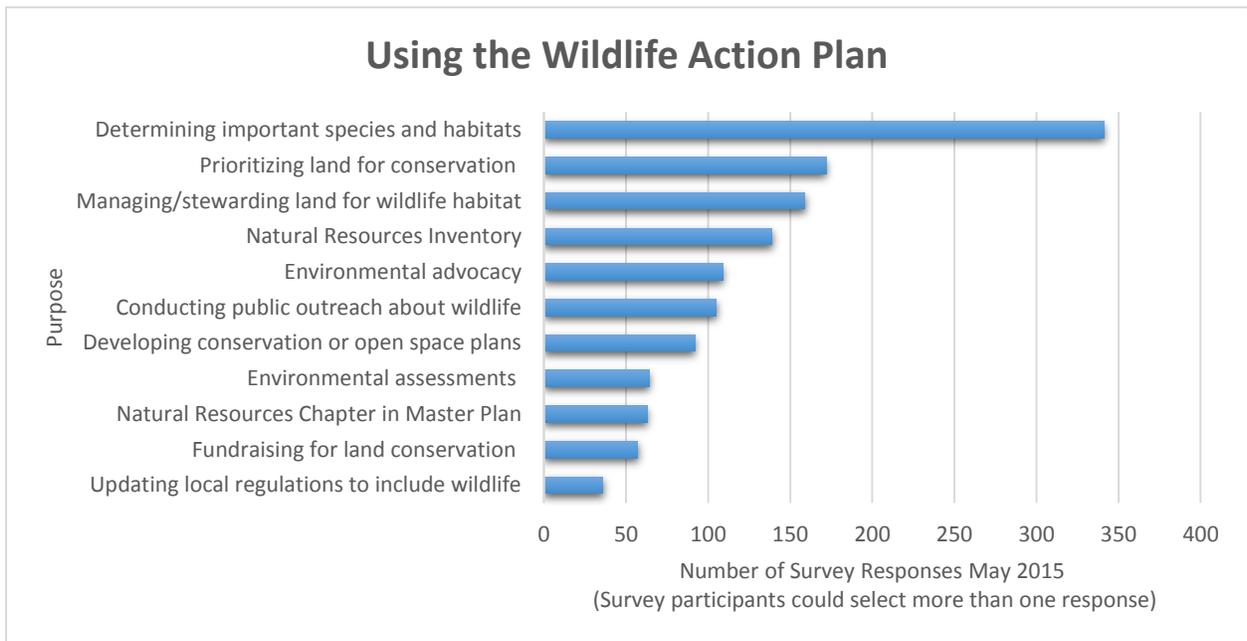
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3. Use of the information and/or maps from the 2005 Wildlife Action Plan

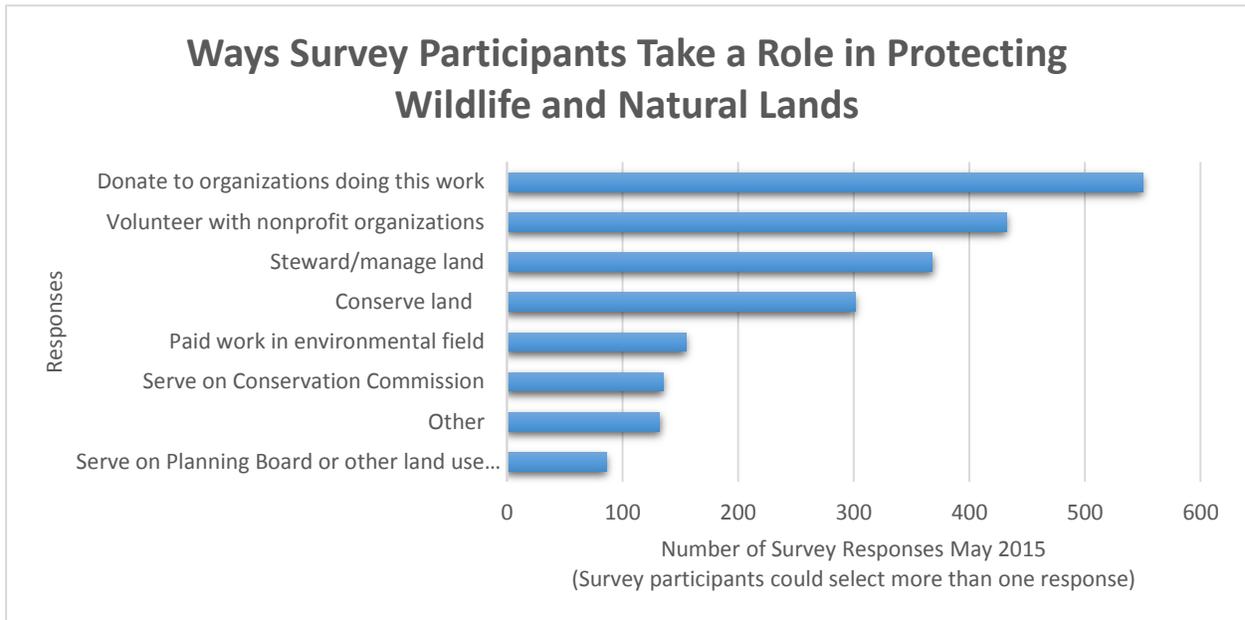


50% of survey participants indicated that they never used the Wildlife Action Plan. Of those who use the Wildlife Action Plan, 63% indicated that they use it for determining important species and habitat.

4. Survey Participants use of the Wildlife Action Plan



5. Survey Participants Role in Protection Wildlife and Natural Lands



Survey participants were asked what role they take in protecting wildlife and natural lands. They were able to select more than one answer. Donating to organizations doing this work was the greatest response. Volunteerism is also very high, especially if you consider volunteering with nonprofit organizations, conservation commissions and serving on land use boards.

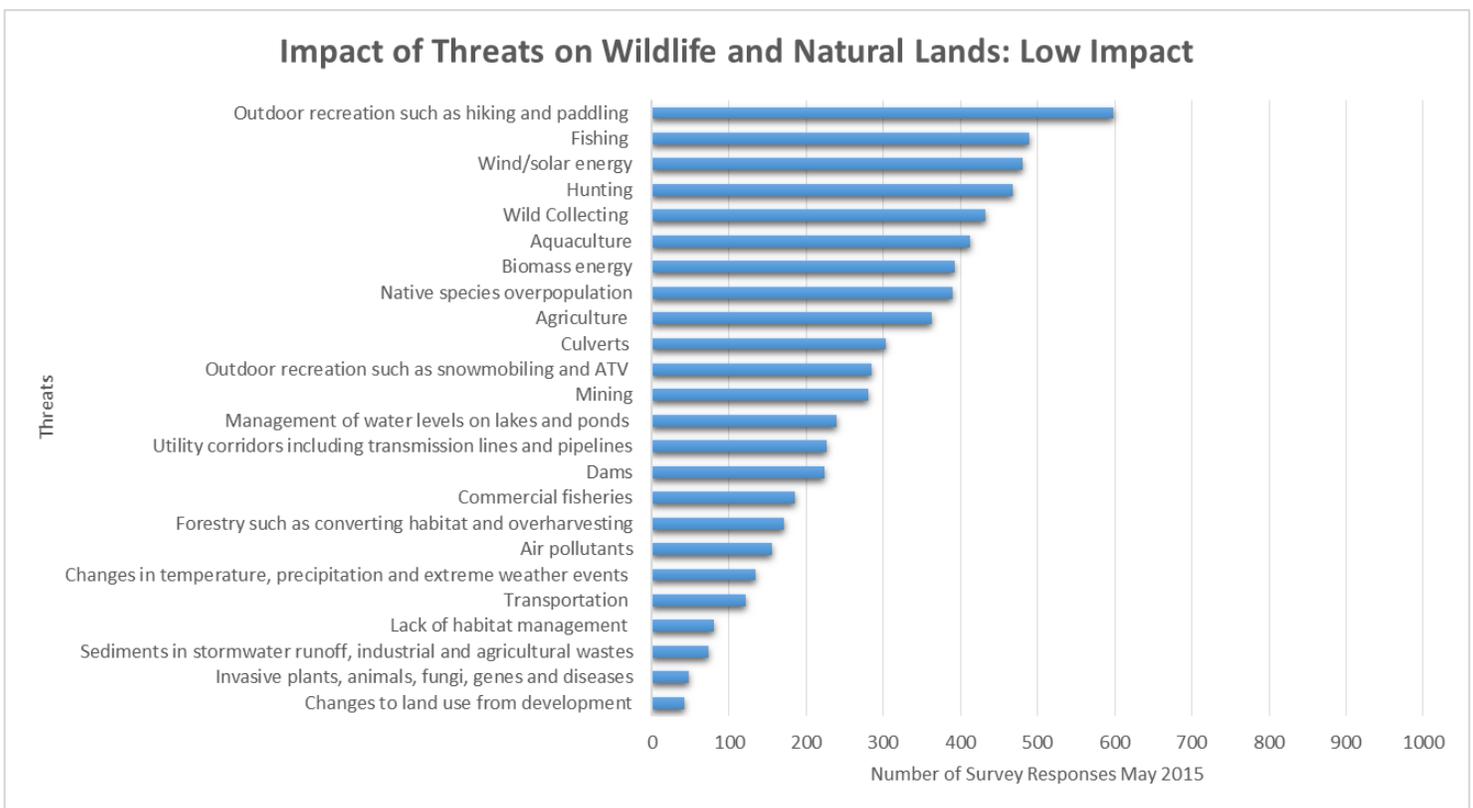
6. and 7. Protecting natural lands that support wildlife

Survey participants indicated that the statewide efforts and community efforts to protect natural lands that support wildlife were effective. 83% indicate that their **community** is somewhat effective or very effective at protecting natural lands that support wildlife while 85% indicate that **state-wide** efforts to protect wildlife and natural lands have been effective over the last ten years.

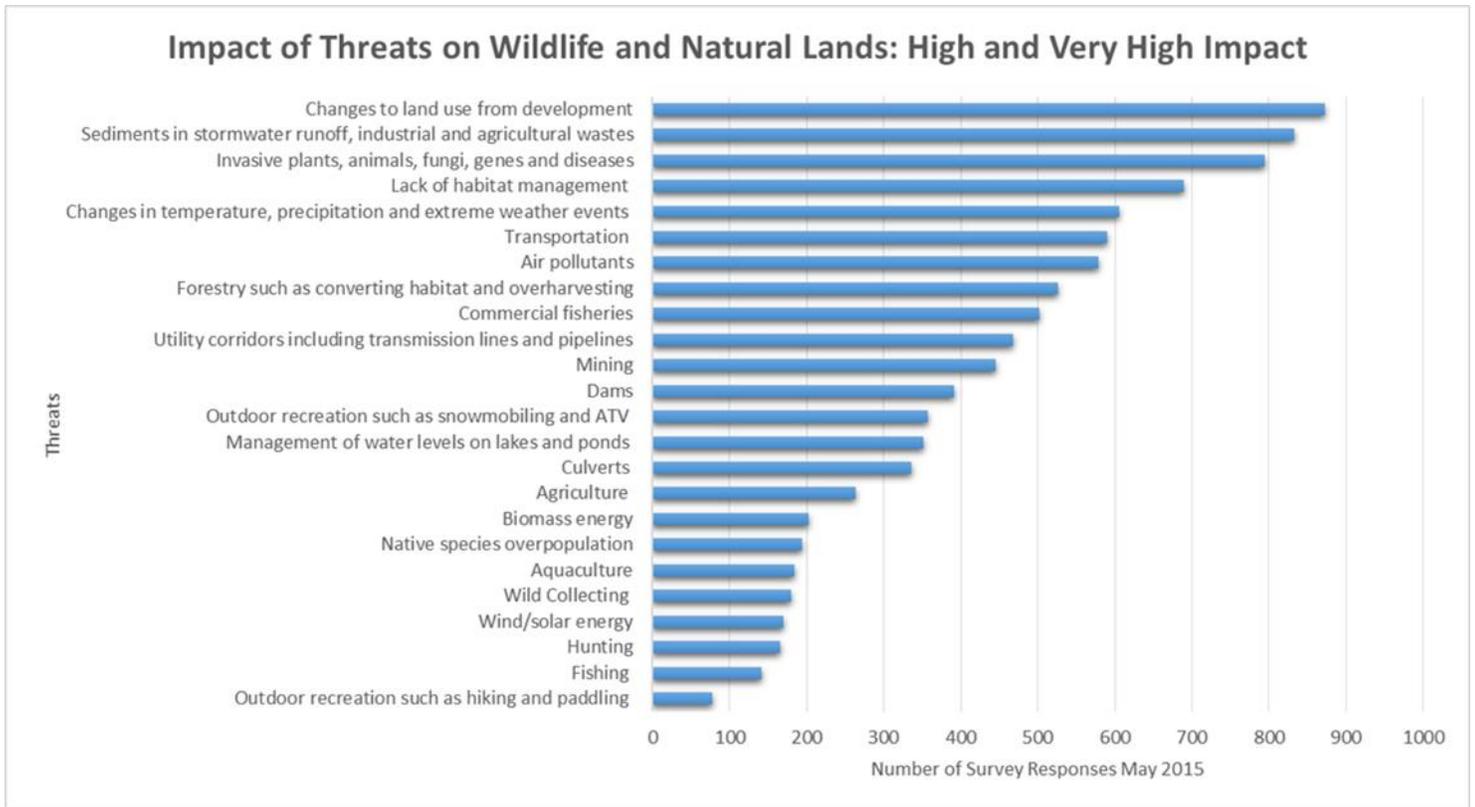
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8. Impact of Threats

Survey respondents were given a list of threats and asked the extent to which the threats had an impact on wildlife and natural lands. The range was from no impact to very high impact. All threats were seen as having some degree of impact. A substantial number of respondents indicated that hunting, fishing, outdoor recreation such as hiking and paddling, wind/solar energy, wild collecting and aquaculture had low or no impact. The threats with high and very high impact were changes to land use from development; sediments in stormwater runoff, industrial and agricultural wastes; invasive plants, animals, fungi, genes and diseases; as well as lack of habitat management.



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9. Survey participants were given the opportunity to share their ideas for action to the threats listed above.

Threat	Action
CLIMATE CHANGE	Improve engine emissions
DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION	Active media awareness of proper large parcel stewardship and forestry management along with organic, natural maintenance plans.
	Advocate for additional state and federal funding for land conservation.
	Aggressively conserve more land
	Limit building in specific wildlife areas.
	Ask for volunteers to help in conservation efforts.
	building without having to tear down more woods
	Communities should have the opportunity to have a say regarding industrial development in their communities.
	Continue current use tax reductions, land tax reductions or rebates for wildlife friendly areas.
	Continuing to add acreage to the protected lands is a good idea Avoid power lines or development near the protected areas (create a buffer zone around these areas).
	Create safer ways for wildlife to cross major highways, as in a bridge over or path under.
	I would like to see zoning laws that: provide more of a buffer zone from building sites; require water rain gardens and other methods to reduce asphalt runoff.
	Increase incentive for maintaining open land & granting access.
	Invest more agency dollars into on the ground work and purchase land in the southern part of the state

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	Limit development
	Limit new business construction, urge re- use of existing buildings.
	Make restaurants and other riverside businesses clean up their acts with heavy fines.
	Maximize efforts to preserve wildlife habitat
	Minimize deforestation and logging for industrialization. Put limits on these things!
	More public land
	More stringent regulation of private lands as well as public lands.
	Set up corridors for multiple uses with both state and private landowners that would multiply uses as well as limit land used for said purposes. This way commercial interests could be met with minimal damage to forests and conservation lands.
	The southern half of NH is way too over developed and overpopulated. Restrict more building and housing developments.
	Vocally and visually advise on best practices for development and growth.
EDUCATION	A regular column in a NH newspaper that focuses on state & federal agencies and NH partners about what is happening 'environmentally' in the state. A more constant communication is necessary to get people onboard with conservation and aware of various threats to wildlife.
	Better education starting at child level.
	Continuing to provide this info is vital to educating the general public in regards to environmental issues.
	Doing more to educate the public on these issues and the impact they are or could have.
	Educate people especially students as young as possible.
	More public outreach and education, via PSAs, social media, even road signs, that remind people to slow for wildlife crossings and to not litter.
	There should be mandatory classes every five or 10 years for those that get some type of OH RV registration or hunting or fishing license.
	More education on how threats can be minimized
	In order to help people understand the need for conservation it is important to promote areas where people can get out and enjoy the outdoors. The key for these areas is to insure that they are multi-use wherever possible so that the population base that can enjoy the outdoors is as wide as possible.
FUNDING	I think that inter-agency cooperation and proper funding for state agencies (especially environmentally focused ones such as F&G, DES, etc) is crucial.
	Increasing the ability of NH F&G to capture revenue and diversifying the commission to provide for more inclusive management and broader vision.
	More funding for Fish and Game
	Perhaps more funding for conservation officers
	Voluntary donation offered on driver's license renewals, or in another venue.
HUMAN ACTIVITIES	Ban clear cutting.
	Ban inhumane hunting such as trapping and animal baiting
	Balance coastal fishing with need for employment of fishermen, maybe more regulation to start new fishing permits and allow current fishing businesses to maintain higher limits.
	Continue to monitor and adjust the bag limits of game and fish (recreational and commercial).
	Don't trap bobcat with current population
	Encourage good hunting and fishing management practices
	Extend archery season and create more public space for bow hunting only.
	Limit hunting

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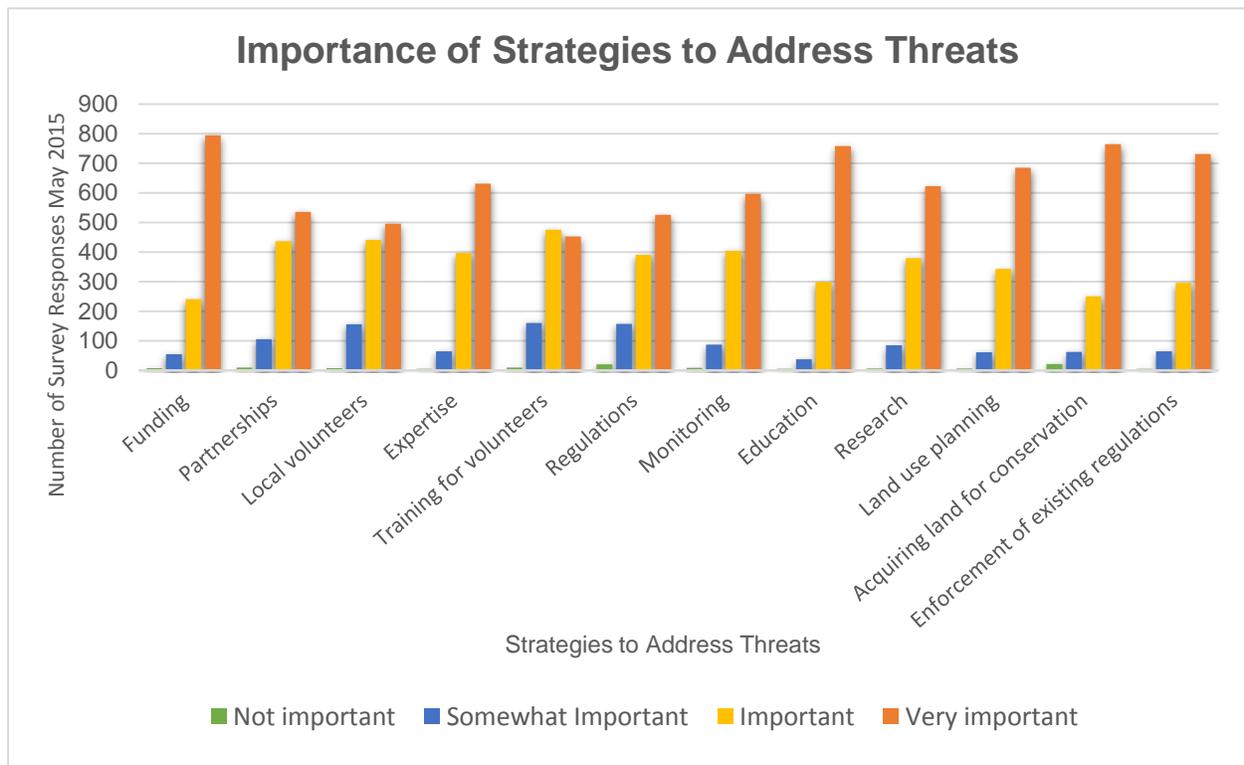
	Lower trapping harvest of Fisher to 5
	Moose lottery for bull moose only
	More education to people on how hunting and fishing properly is a good thing.
	No moose or bobcat hunting and or trapping
	No trapping/hounds bobcat by hunting only
	Prohibiting unfair hunting practices
	Replanting trees where logging occurs
	Tracking forestry more closely and providing more information on forestry management benefits
	Expand solar, wind and hydropower.
	No more wind projects - noise - birds being killed
	Concerns about biomass, should keep our use of this low
	I think solar should be encouraged but only on existing structures. Let's not create fields of solar panels.
	Limit the towers for the solar windmills and transmission lines that cut through wildlife territories.
	Promote renewable energy including biomass. Promote sustainable timber harvesting.
	Promote nuclear energy
	Research needed on effects of wind turbines
	restricting any construction of any pipelines
	Wind/solar should be extremely highly regulated and monitored for damage to birdlife/environmental factors
	1000.00 fine for boating/paddling closer than 200 feet to loon nest
	Better enforcement of environmental regulations. Put a limit on the amount of motorized water-crafts on lakes or create more water space restricting motorized water-craft.
	Enforce off road trucks on class six roads.
	Higher fines for those who break laws concerning wildlife and trashing
	Humans need to be restricted from some areas and human impact activities need to be banned in many places
	Maybe change fishing to even days only
	More trout areas need to be designated fly fishing only.
	Restrictions on powerboat and live bait. We need more actual enforcement of trout and salmon rules.
	Restrict snowmobiles and ATVs to private property only or more restrictions for public parks.
INCENTIVES	Provide some kind of economic incentives to achieve goals
INVASIVES	Educate Sportsman's clubs to the invasive species and ask them to promote the removal of said "target" species, i.e. ... Asian carp removal from the Merrimack river.
	Education campaigns such as the water milfoil and emerald ash borer campaigns are invaluable to the public and I'd like to see more of them produced for public awareness on various issues such as safe building practices, vernal pool education, threatened and endangered species awareness, etc.
	Help get rid of the milfoil in our NH lakes
NATURAL SYSTEMS MODIFICATION	Additional emphasis on removing barriers to flow/passage
	Informed actions on lake level changes and impacts to water and wildlife resources
	Seek opportunities to restore stream flow and protect riparian areas and other wetlands
	Dredge and repair the Suncook River.
	We need a law to prevent businesses from pumping water from rivers/lakes/streams to build

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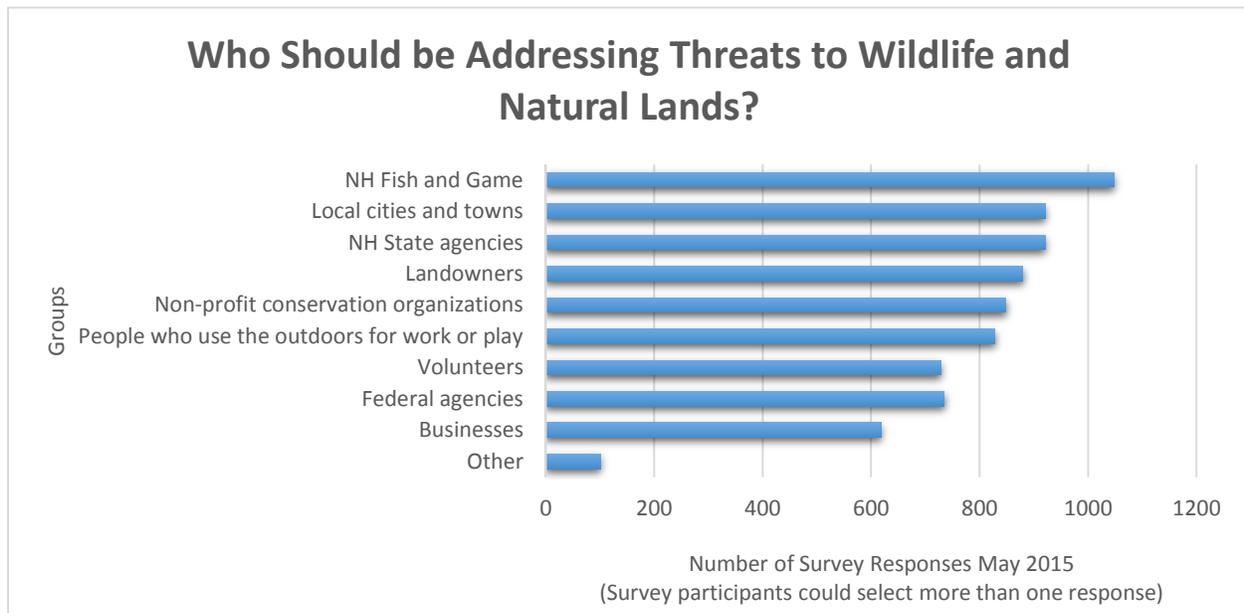
	houses/roads/hydro seed/pool water/irrigation etc
	More resources should be dedicated to eliminating old dams that contribute little to the energy supply yet prevent the migration of fish.
	The positive impact that allowing for culverts to be put in areas and habitats that have known sensitive species. The culverts really do help with providing safe wildlife crossing.
	Would like to see forests managed better to provide better browse
NH F&G	NH F&G needs to be a stronger advocate for the environment.
	The NH fish & game department has lost touch with what the general public. Soon you will have less land to access. The Department should be embarrassed on how they manage their properties, and their interaction with other state owned lands. A very high percentage of state lands are a biological desert. The Department needs to walk the talk.
POLLUTION	Assess sediment into ponds and lakes from road sand
	Build wastewater treatment plants away from Great Bay and Massabesic lake
	Education to avoid pesticides on water quality, effects on bees, birds, bats, butterflies etc.
	Higher priority on investigating improper dumping, fines and prosecution.
	Restrict use of fertilizers, especially within a certain zone near water sources.
	I think chemicals need to be monitored more to reduce the chance of being dumped in places and contaminating the water.
	Minimize the use of chemicals/pesticides.
	Monitor agricultural chemical use
REGULATION/ ENFORCEMENT	Expanded and Aggressive Federal and State regulations are needed to reign-in and correct the misperception that lands and non-human animals can continue to "absorb" sustained and ever increasing levels of abuse.
RESEARCH	Figure out why the moose population is declining

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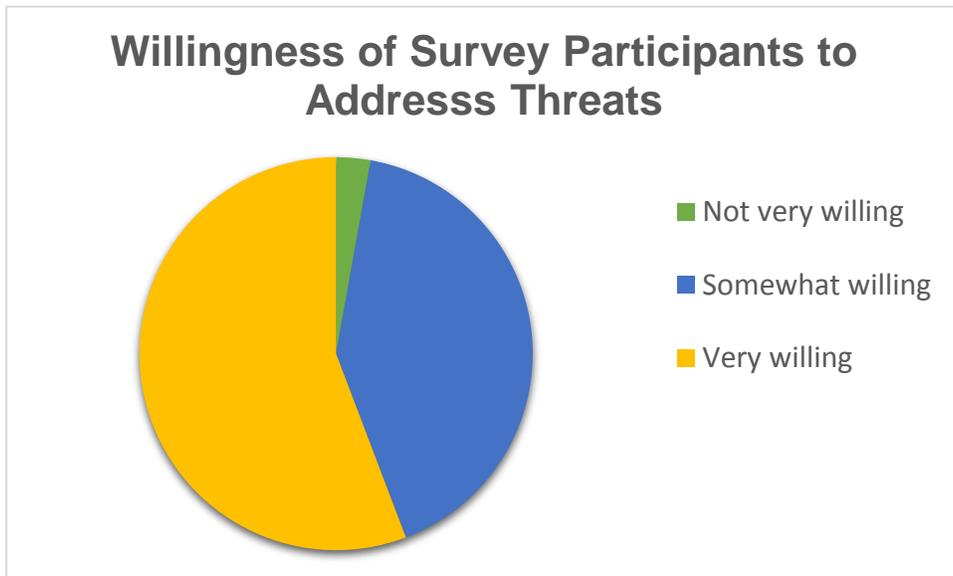
10. Strategies to Address Threats



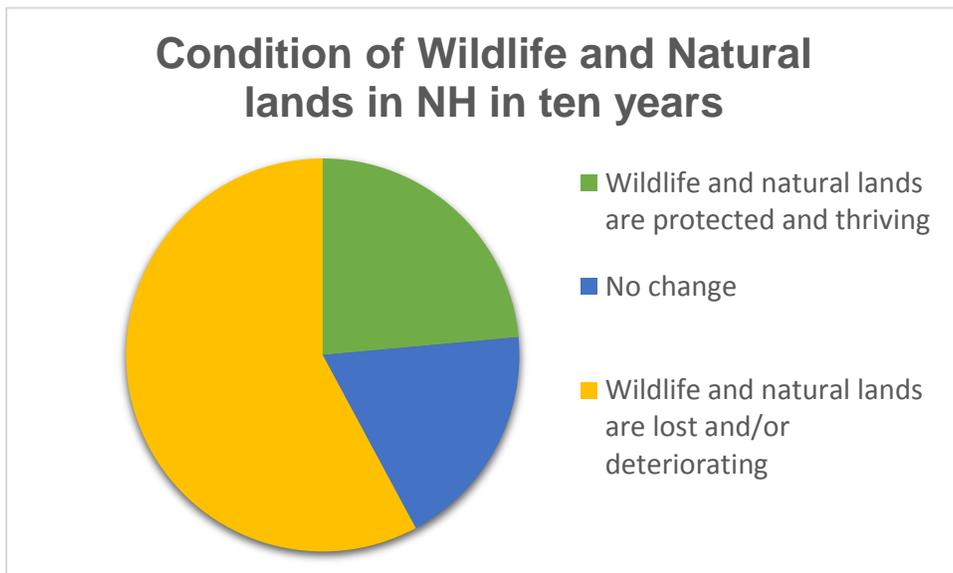
11. Addressing Threats



12. Willingness to Address Threats



13. Future condition of wildlife and natural lands

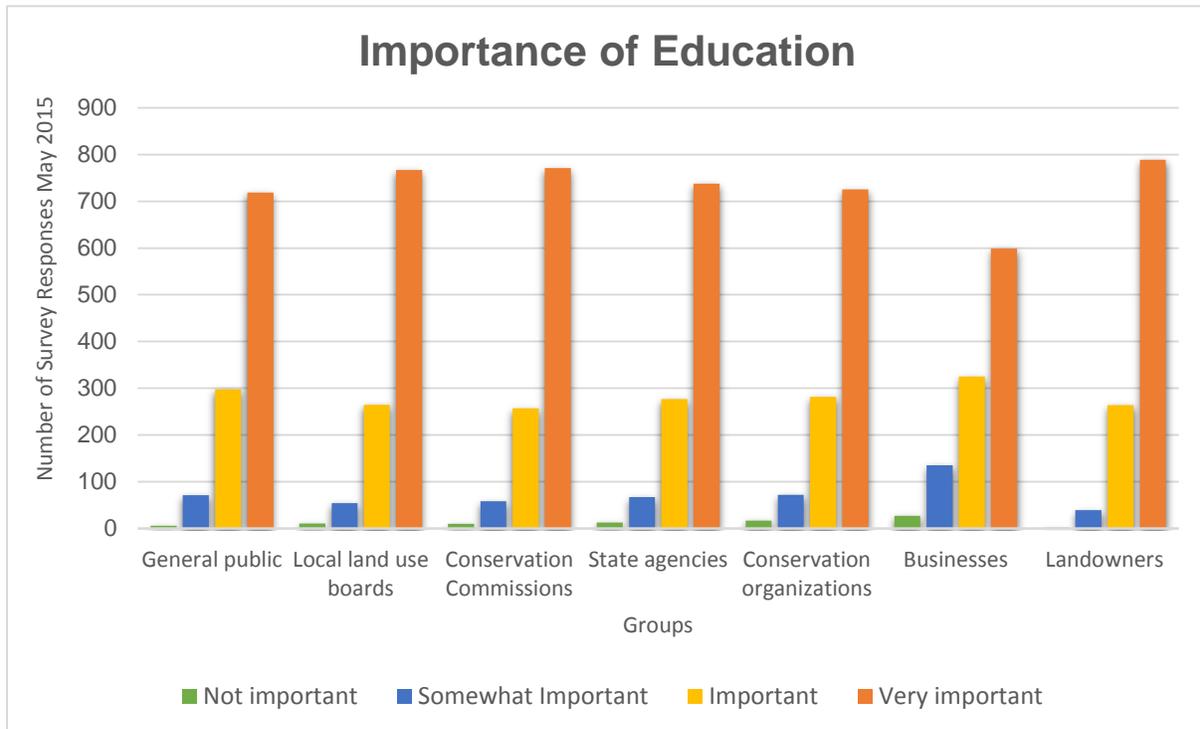


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14. Important Issues facing wildlife and natural lands

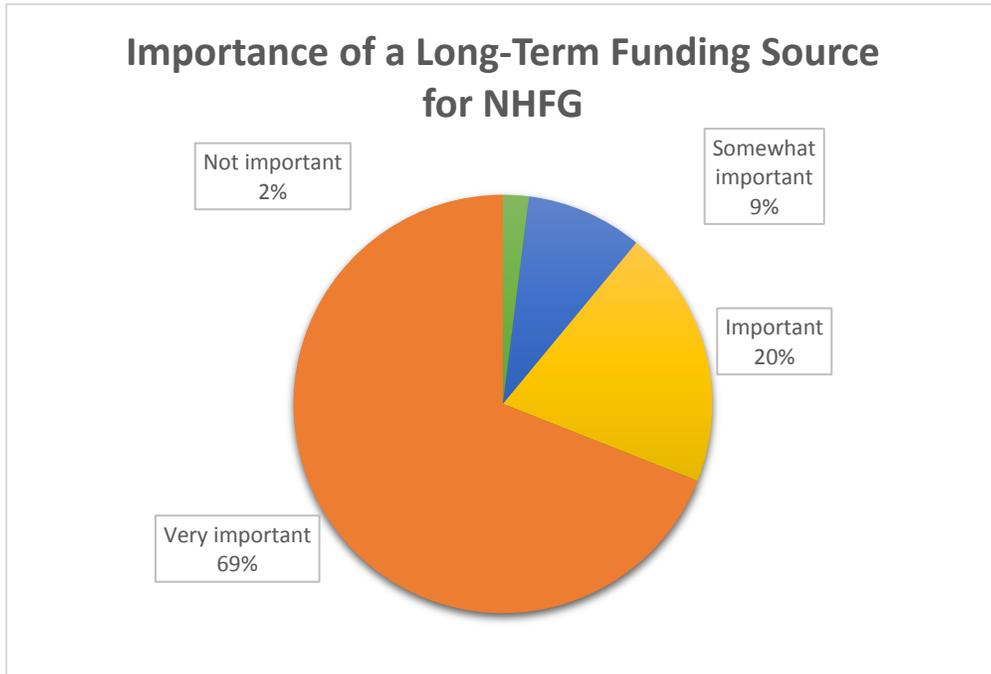
Survey respondents reported that the most important issues affecting wildlife and natural lands are development and habitat loss. There was also strong interest in education for the public, landowners, citizens and decision-makers. Climate change and pollution were also listed.

15. Education of various target audiences

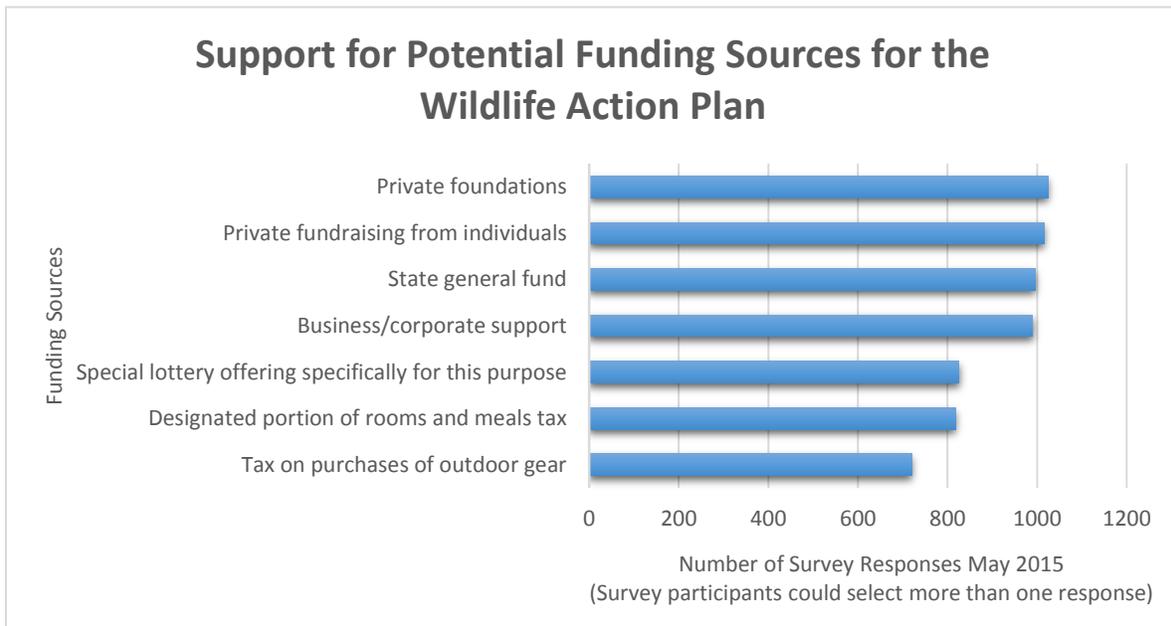


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16. Long-term funding for NH Fish and Game Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program

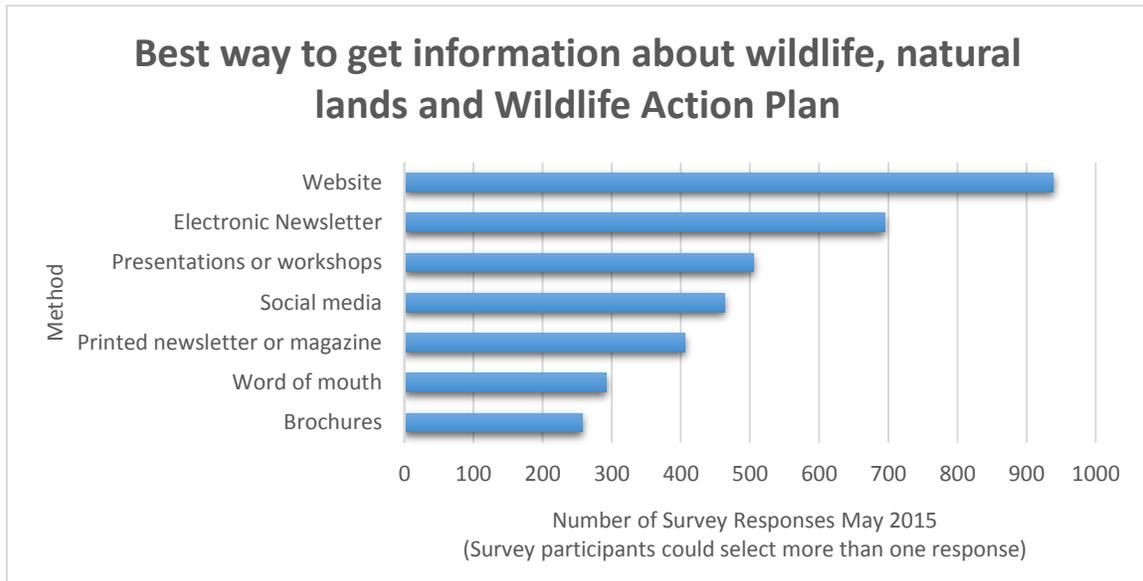


17. Funding support from a variety of sources for the Wildlife Action Plan



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18. Communication about the Wildlife Action Plan



19. Other comments to NH Fish and Game

Other comments were shared as an open-ended question. An analysis of those comments shows that they are identical to the information gathered from the survey and the public input sessions so not represented here. To see those comments please check the Additional Information Report.

Appendix: Survey Questions

2015 Wildlife Action Plan Survey

The Wildlife Action Plan is a roadmap for conservation in New Hampshire, providing decision-makers with important tools for addressing the needs of declining wildlife species and keeping common species common, including restoring and maintaining critical natural habitats. The Wildlife Action Plan qualifies NH Fish and Game for critical conservation funding through the US Fish and Wildlife Service and is implemented by multiple collaborators across the state.

NH Fish and Game, in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, is updating the NH Wildlife Action Plan this year. The update provides New Hampshire with an opportunity to work on assessing new threats to species and habitats and to formulate strategies and actions to address them. The revised Wildlife Action Plan will guide conservation activities for New Hampshire's nongame and endangered wildlife through 2026.

Your input is important to the revision of the Wildlife Action Plan – Please take five minutes to complete the following survey. Any information you provide will be held confidential and the results will only be shared in the aggregate.

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1. What is your affiliation? (check all that apply)

- Landowner
- Volunteer on local board or committee
- Land Trust
- Conservation organization
- Other organization
- State agency
- Federal agency
- Environmental or natural resources consultant
- Educator
- Researcher
- Interested citizen
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Are you familiar with the 2005 Wildlife Action Plan?

- Yes
- No

3. How often have you used the information and/or maps from the 2005 Wildlife Action Plan?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All of the Time

4. If you have used the Wildlife Action Plan, please indicate the purpose. (check all that apply)

- Determining important species and habitats
- Fundraising for land conservation
- Prioritizing land for conservation
- Developing conservation or open space plans
- Natural Resources Inventory
- Natural Resources Chapter in Master Plan
- Conducting public outreach about wildlife
- Managing/stewarding land for wildlife habitat
- Updating local regulations to include wildlife
- Environmental assessments such as site development, transportation or energy
- Environmental advocacy
- Other: _____

5. In what ways do you take an active role in protecting wildlife and natural lands? (check all that apply)

- Volunteer with nonprofit organizations
- Serve on Conservation Commission
- Serve on Planning Board or other land use board/committee
- Donate to organizations doing this work
- Conserve land
- Steward/manage land
- Paid work in environmental field
- Other: _____

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6. How effective is your community at protecting natural lands that support wildlife?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective
- Don't know

7. How effective do you feel that statewide efforts to protect wildlife and natural lands have been over the past ten years?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective
- Don't know

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8. To what extent do you think the following threats are having an impact on wildlife or natural lands?

	No impact	Low impact	Moderate impact	High impact	Very high impact
Dams	<input type="radio"/>				
Management of water levels on lakes and ponds	<input type="radio"/>				
Culverts	<input type="radio"/>				
Lack of habitat management	<input type="radio"/>				
Changes in temperature, precipitation and extreme weather events	<input type="radio"/>				
Chemicals, excess nutrients and sediments in stormwater runoff, industrial and agricultural wastes	<input type="radio"/>				
Air pollutants	<input type="radio"/>				
Invasive plants, animals, fungi, genes and diseases	<input type="radio"/>				
Native species overpopulation	<input type="radio"/>				
Changes to land use from housing, retail, industrial and commercial development	<input type="radio"/>				
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>				
Utility corridors including transmission lines and pipelines	<input type="radio"/>				
Outdoor recreation such as hiking and paddling	<input type="radio"/>				

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Outdoor recreation such as snowmobiling and ATV	<input type="radio"/>				
Issues related to forestry such as converting habitat and overharvesting	<input type="radio"/>				
Hunting	<input type="radio"/>				
Fishing	<input type="radio"/>				
Wild Collecting	<input type="radio"/>				
Commercial fisheries	<input type="radio"/>				
Biomass energy	<input type="radio"/>				
Wind/solar energy	<input type="radio"/>				
Mining	<input type="radio"/>				
Agriculture	<input type="radio"/>				
Aquaculture	<input type="radio"/>				

9. Considering the threats listed above do you have ideas for actions to address them? (limit 2500 characters)

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10. How important are the following to addressing threats to wildlife and natural lands?

	Not important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very important
Local volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partnerships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expertise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training for volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Land use planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acquiring land for conservation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enforcement of existing regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Who do you think should be addressing the threats to wildlife and natural lands? (check all that apply)

- NH State agencies
- NH Fish and Game
- Federal agencies
- Non-profit conservation organizations
- Local cities and towns
- Volunteers
- Landowners
- Businesses
- People who use the outdoors for work or play
- Other _____

12. How willing are you to help in addressing the threats facing wildlife and natural lands in New Hampshire?

- Not at all willing
- Not very willing
- Somewhat willing
- Very willing

13. What will be the condition of wildlife and natural lands in NH in ten years?

- Wildlife and natural lands are protected and thriving
- No change
- Wildlife and natural lands are lost and/or deteriorating

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14. What are the most important issues affecting wildlife and natural lands in New Hampshire? (limit 2500 characters)

15. How important is education on issues related to wildlife and natural lands for the following:

	Not important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very important
General public	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local land use boards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation Commissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Landowners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. How important is it to you that the NH Fish and Game Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program has a dedicated, long-term funding source?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

17. Funding for the Wildlife Action Plan currently comes from donations, moose plate fees, and federal and state sources, which change from year-to-year. In considering funding sources, to what extent do you support the following?

	Do not support	Support	Strongly Support
State general fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private fundraising from individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tax on purchases of outdoor gear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Designated portion of rooms and meals tax	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special lottery offering specifically for this purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private foundations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business/corporate support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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18. Which is the best way for you to get information about wildlife, natural lands and the Wildlife Action Plan? (check all that apply)

- Website
- Electronic Newsletter
- Printed newsletter or magazine
- Presentations or workshops
- Brochures
- Word of mouth
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)

19. Please share any other thoughts about wildlife, natural lands and/or the Wildlife Action Plan.

Demographic Information

20. Town

21. Gender

- Male
- Female

22. Age (choose from drop-down list)

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

23. Ethnicity (choose from drop-down list)

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian / Pacific Islander