



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

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Stephanie L. Simek, Ph.D.
Executive Director

November 3, 2025

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
And the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, NH 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Authorize the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG) and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to jointly administer the revenues from the endowment funds established for management of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Tracts from date of Governor and Council approval through December 31, 2035.

EXPLANATION

In October 2004, the State of New Hampshire purchased an extensive conservation easement covering 171,500 acres of land in Pittsburg, Clarksville and Stewartstown. At that time, three separate endowment funds were created to assist the state with monitoring, stewardship and road maintenance on the lands under easement (Connecticut Lakes Working Forest managed by DNCR), and 25,000 acres purchased outright (Connecticut Lakes Natural Area managed by NHFG). As a condition of the easement, funds in the three endowments are to be managed jointly by the Commissioner of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the Executive Director of Fish and Game.

Attached is a copy of the fully executed copy of the Memorandum of Agreement with DNCR for the sharing of funds for the next ten years.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie L. Simek, Ph.D.
Executive Director, NHFG

Sarah L. Stewart
Commissioner, DNCR

Memorandum of Agreement
New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
and (DNCR)
and
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (F&G)

Revised October 2025

Whereas this Agreement is intended to formalize the cooperative relationship between DNCR and F&G in support of the long-term stewardship, monitoring, and public access objectives outlined in Chapter 148, Laws of 2002, and associated conservation easements. It affirms the agencies shared commitment to sustainable forest management, recreational access, and responsible use of endowment funds.

Whereas Chapter 148 Laws of 2002 made funds available for the purchase of a certain tract of land and related conservation easements located in Pittsburg, Clarksville, and Stewartstown, consisting of approximately 171,500 acres known as the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters tract (CLH tract).

Whereas Chapter 148 Laws of 2002 further declared that "it is in the public interest to acquire fee ownership and conservation easement interest in these lands to ensure that they remain as a largely undeveloped, productive, working forest which also provides public access for recreation and conserves ecologically sensitive areas".

Whereas funds were made available for the purchase of the easement from the Forest Legacy Program administered by the Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service.

Whereas funds were made available for the purchase of the easement from the State Land and Community Heritage Investment Program established in RSA 227-M.

Whereas of the CLH tract, 146,400 acres were sold to the Trustees of the Connecticut Lakes Realty Trust c/o Lyme Timber Company and later to Aurora Sustainable Lands, LLC subject to the Grant of Conservation Easement (DNCR Easement) executed on October 10, 2003 held by the State under the jurisdiction of DNCR to ensure compliance with the DNCR Easement through support of monitoring and enforcement for continued forest management and timber harvesting; support of guaranteed public access for recreation, use and management; and support of road maintenance for continued vehicular access to major portions of the property over the existing road network; and, of the CLH tract, 100 acres are managed by DNCR as an addition to the Deer Mountain campground;

Whereas, of the CLH tract, approximately 3,264± acres, more particularly described as those corridors of land that are generally depicted as the 'Designated Roads,' were conveyed to the State under the jurisdiction of DNCR by Deed of Designated Roads and Reservation of Appurtenant Easement executed on October 10, 2003, subject to the covenants and terms and conditions imposed therein.

Whereas of the CLH tract, the State's fee ownership of 25,000 acres in natural areas are subject to the Grant of Conservation Easement executed on December 30, 2002, and held by The Nature Conservancy to ensure wildlife habitat and public use management of those acres; and those natural areas are managed in public interest by the Fish and Game Department (F&G).

Whereas, Chapter 148 Laws of 2002 established funds for the stewardship of these lands: a) the Monitoring Endowment for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the terms and conditions of the conservation easement interests acquired by the State in the CLH tract; b) the Stewardship Endowment for the purposes of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the State, and for the purposes of recreation, use, and the conservation easement management of the 146,400 acres within the CLH tract; and c) the Road Maintenance Endowment

for the purpose of maintaining the system of roads that exists within the conservation easement and property interest acquired by the State;

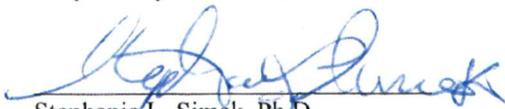
Whereas, Chapter 148 Laws of 2002 further states that the Monitoring and Road Maintenance Endowments shall be administered jointly by the Executive Director of F&G and the Commissioner of DNCR, and the Stewardship Endowment shall be utilized jointly by the Executive Director of F&G and the Commissioner of DNCR;

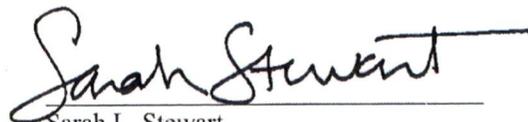
Whereas, F&G and DNCR are committed to working cooperatively to uphold the intent and purposes of Chapter 148 Laws of 2002 and the grants of conservation easements;

Now therefore, F&G and DNCR agree to the following terms:

1. PERIOD OF AGREEMENT: The term of the Agreement shall be ten years from the date of execution by both parties.
2. MONITORING ENDOWMENT: F&G and DNCR shall utilize and administer the funds available from the Monitoring Endowment in accordance with RSA 216:7 and RSA 216:8. The agencies agree that fifty percent (50%) of the funds available from the Monitoring Endowment shall be allocated to DNCR and fifty percent (50%) to F&G. The percentage of allocations may be modified upon mutual agreement of both parties.
3. STEWARDSHIP ENDOWMENT: F&G and DNCR shall utilize and administer the funds available from the Stewardship Endowment in accordance with RSA 216:9. The agencies agree that seventy percent (70%) of the funds available from the Stewardship Endowment shall be allocated to DNCR and thirty percent (30%) to F&G. The percentage of allocations may be modified upon mutual agreement of both parties.
4. ROAD MAINTENANCE ENDOWMENT: F&G and DNCR shall utilize and administer the funds available from the Road Maintenance Endowment in accordance with RSA 216:10 and RSA 216:11. The agencies agree that eighty-nine percent (89%) of the funds available from the Road Maintenance Endowment shall be allocated to DNCR and eleven percent (11%) to F&G. The percentage of allocations may be modified upon mutual agreement of both parties.
5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Disputes arising under this Memorandum of Agreement which cannot be resolved between the agencies shall be referred to the New Hampshire Department of Justice for review and resolution.
6. PROVISION FOR AMENDMENT: This Agreement may be amended by an instrument in writing signed by both parties. Either party may terminate this agreement by providing written notice to the other party at least 30 days prior to termination.
7. SPENDING LIMITS: Both parties mutually agree the endowment cannot be drawn below the original principal balance.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephanie L. Simek, Ph.D.
Executive Director, NHFG


Sarah L. Stewart
Commissioner, DNCR

Approved by the New Hampshire Department of Justice for form, substance, and execution:

By 
Keely Lovato, AAG

Date: 11/13/2025