

Property Management Plan

for

Milan Community Forest Abraham Lot



**Milan Community Forest Committee
Town of Milan
20 Bridge Street
Milan, NH 03588**

2017

This Management Plan has been developed by the Milan Community Forest Committee. The draft plan was presented at a public hearing on May 10, 2017 in order to solicit public input into the plan. All public input was reviewed and considered and a final draft was subsequently completed.

The draft plan was also reviewed by the Milan Community Forest's forester, Kevin Evans, Licensed Professional Forester No 81.

The final Management Plan was adopted by the Milan Community Forest Committee on May 10, 2017. A copy of this plan is available for public viewing at the Milan Town Office, 20 Bridge Street, Milan, NH during normal business hours.

APPROVED



George Pozzuto, Chair
Milan Community Forest Committee

June 14, 2017



Kevin Evans, Forester
Licensed Professional Forester No. 81

June 14, 2017

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Town of Milan, New Hampshire Milan Community Forest

Abraham Lot Management Plan

GENERAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

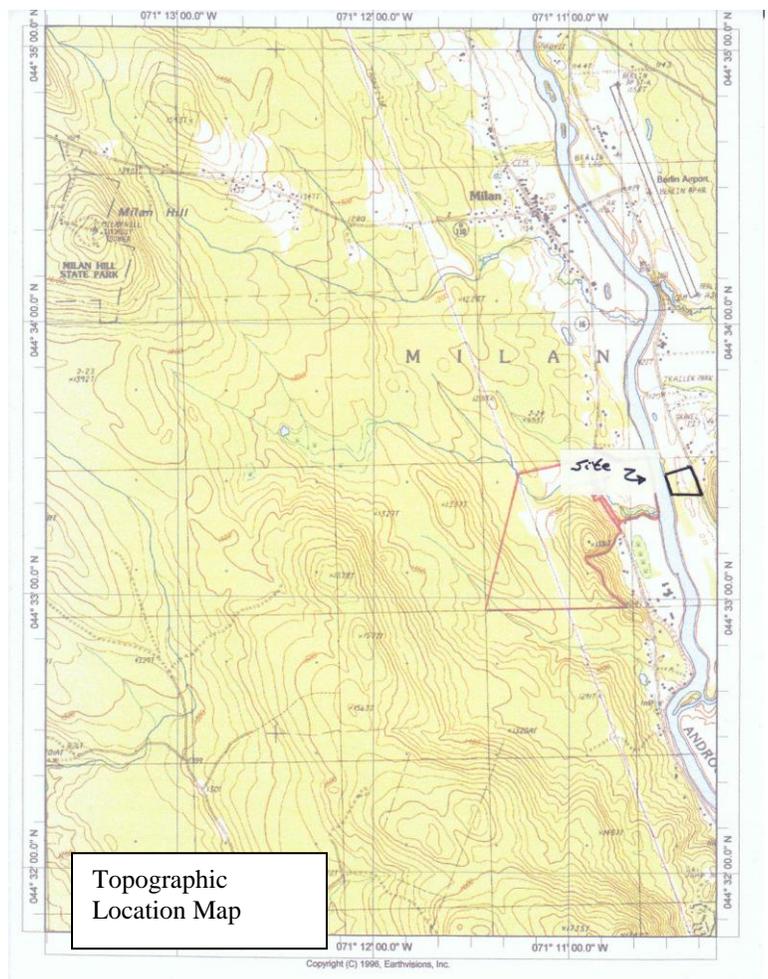
General Background and Description:

The Town of Milan created the Milan Community Forest in 2012. Initially the community forest consisting of seven lots scattered throughout the township and consisted of 997 acres. These seven lots had been acquired at various times for non-payment of taxes. In 2016 and 2017, the Town of Milan acquired additional parcels of land for the community forest, including the subject property which is known as the Abraham lot. The Milan Community Forest is fee-owned by the municipality and managed for the benefit of the people of Milan. Community uses and goals of the forest include an active timber harvest program (excluding the Abraham lot as discussed further in this management plan), outdoor recreation and education, wildlife habitat protection and enhancement, cultural resource protection and scenic protection.

Funding for the Abraham lot acquisition included a grant from the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (NH Department of Environmental Services) as well as funds from the Milan Community Forest Capital Reserve and Forest Management accounts. Additionally Michael and Loreen Abraham, the previous owners, contributed \$14,000 of the assessed value by accepting a lower purchase price. The property was purchased by the Town of Milan on March 31, 2017, and a conservation easement was placed upon the property on April 12, 2017

Location:

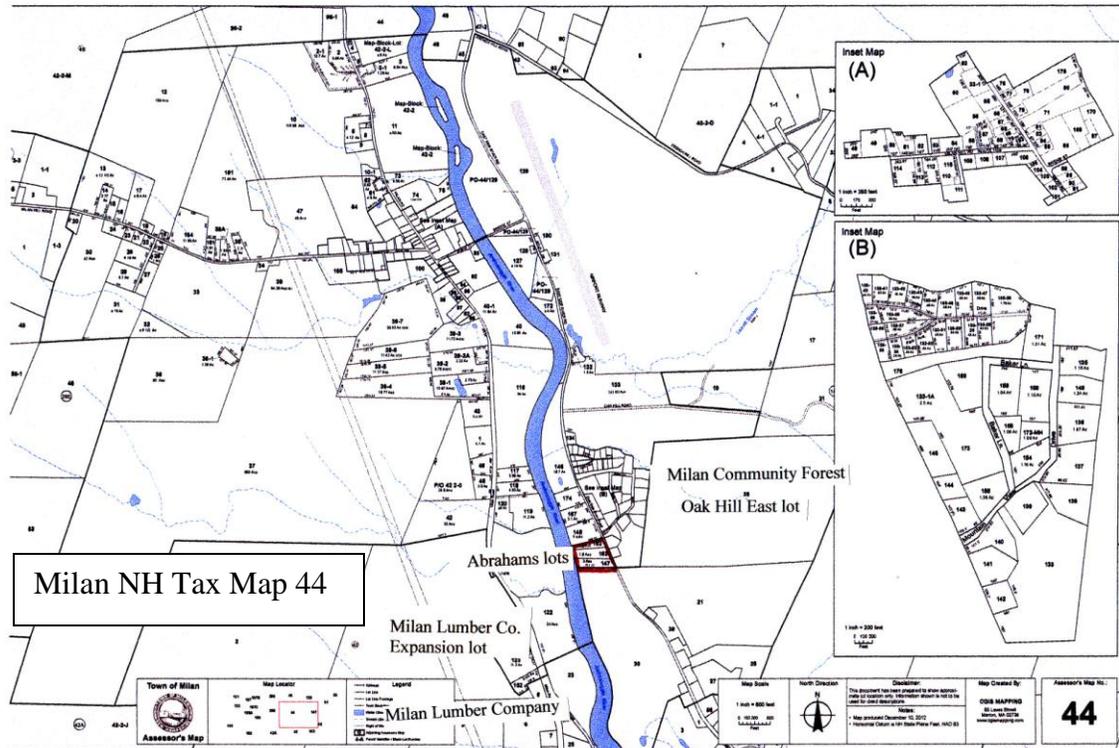
The Abraham lot is located on the east side of the Androscoggin River, approximately one (1) mile south of the Berlin Municipal Airport on the East Side River Road. The west boundary of the lot is the Androscoggin River, and the east boundary is the East Side River Road. To the south is agricultural land and to the north is a residential lot. (see topographic map at right)



Tax Map 44 Lot Number: 162, 163, 147
(see copy of Milan Tax Map below)

Size: 6.6 acres

Deed registration: Book: 1461 Page: 0772 Date: March 31, 2017
Conservation Easement registration: Book: 1462 Page: 0736 Date: April 12, 2017



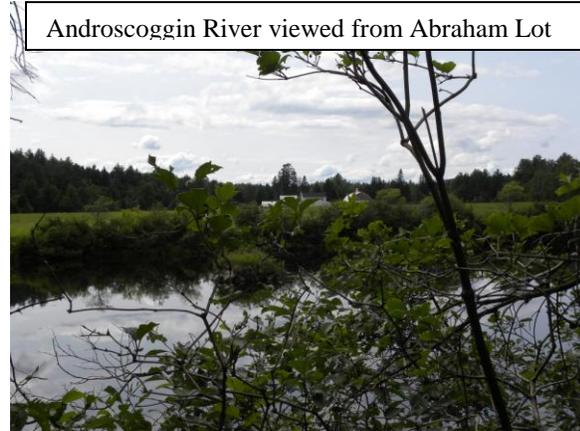
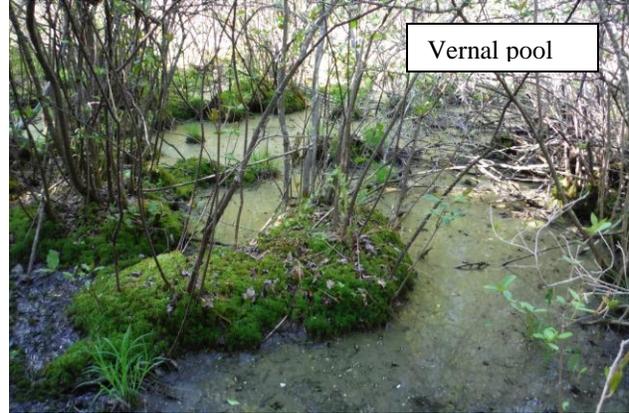
Topography, including sensitive environments:



Abraham Lot looking SW from East Side River Road

The site is mostly level, with shallow swales and low ridges oriented approximately north/south and parallel to the Androscoggin River. This is typical geomorphology for the valley historically subjected flood cycles and erosion. A wetland delineation, classification and assessment report, completed by Lobdell Associates, Inc. in June 2015, is attached as Appendix 5. This document provides further detailed descriptions of the subject property.

The low lying swales typically produce long but narrow vernal pools in the spring. The Milan Community Forest Committee, with assistance of local residents completed a vernal pool investigation report in May 2015. This report is attached as Appendix 6 and details the conditions found with supportive photographs.



The site which borders the Androscoggin River has 382 feet of river frontage. The river bank along the entire length is a steep, near vertical drop-off to the water. At normal water levels, the bank is approximately six (6) feet in height and is composed of silt/loam. The entire length of river frontage is wooded.

Forest resources:

This land was forested prior to settlement in the 1800's where upon it was mostly cleared for agricultural uses. Portions remained forested. The agrarian use ceased in the 1970's and the land has subsequently seen the establishment of early successional growth of shrubs and trees. Predominant tree species are softwoods (spruce/fir) with some eastern larch and scattered white pine. Size distribution varies spatially, ranging from fairly dense stands of mature trees to smaller trees in younger successional stands.



The soil conditions being predominantly wet limit access to timber. Given the objectives for this lot being primarily for habitat and wildlife preservation and enhancement as well as education, the conservation easement does not permit commercial timber harvests. Consequently, a detailed

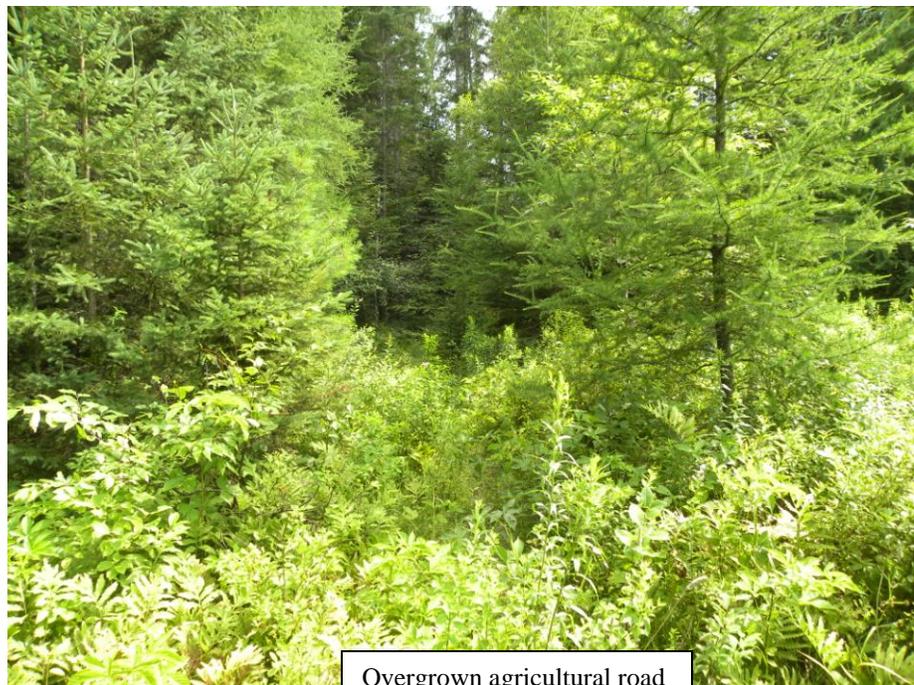
timber cruise is not needed for this site. However, it would be an appropriate site for forestry education activities such as mapping stands, measuring basal areas, estimating timber volumes and so forth.

Agricultural resources:

The field along the East Side River Road has been used for agriculture in the past. Approximately 45% of the properties soils is identified as prime farmland, and approximately 54% are ranked as farmland of local importance by the USDA. However, commercial agriculture is prohibited by the conservation easement.

Access, including existing roads and trails:

The paved East Side River Road runs along the east boundary of the property and provides easy access to the lot. Within the boundaries there are no existing roads or trails at this time. There are the remnants of an old farm road between fields that is mostly overgrown and barely discernable at the present time. The Milan Community Forest Committee foresees the future establishment of a nature trail through the property.



Overgrown agricultural road

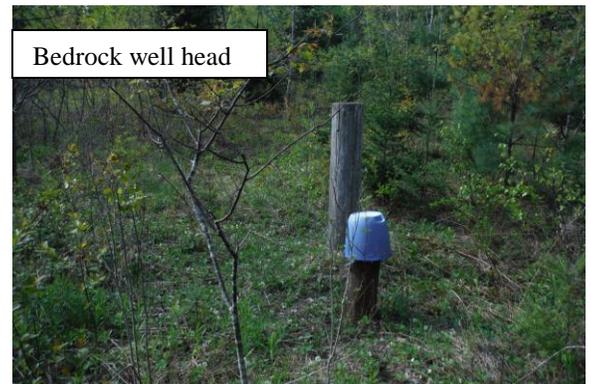
Soils:

Three soil types exist on the property. Along and parallel to the Androscoggin River is a narrow band of Lovewell very fine sand (307A) making up approximately 15% of the property. In the center of the property is a north/south band of moderately well drained Madawaska very fine sand (28B). This area makes up approximately 35% of the property. To the east and west of this soil type are bands of poorly drained (hydric) Grange silt loam (433A) making up approximately 50% of the property. (see soils maps below)



Existing structures:

There are no structures on the property. There is a bedrock well located at the approximate center of lot 162.



Easements, rights of way, and similar restrictions:

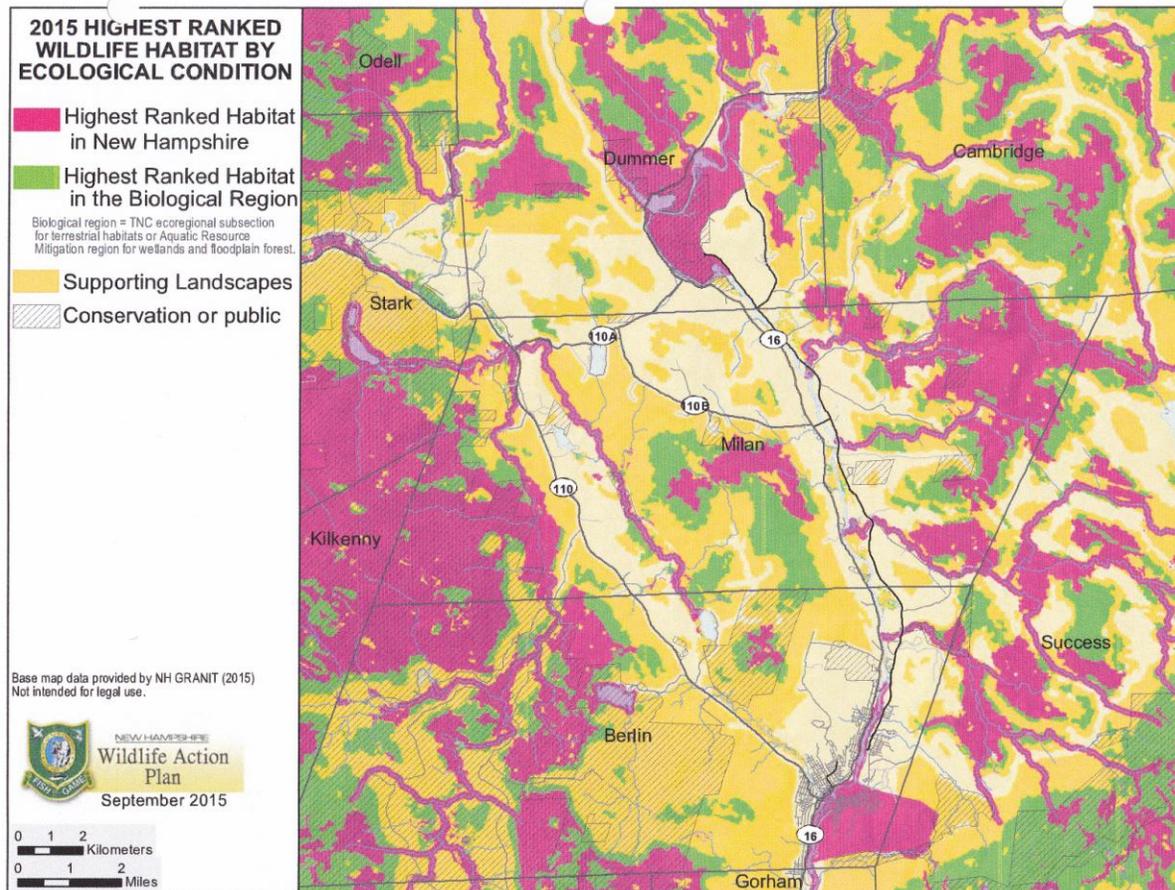
The Town of Milan has granted a conservation easement on the property to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) has a third party right of enforcement. A copy is attached as Appendix 7. The easement prohibits development of the site, motorized recreation and commercial activity of any kind. The use of the site for educational and pedestrian based recreation is allowed. A baseline report was completed by SPNHF as part establishing the conservation easement; a copy is attached as appendix 8.

Funding for the purchase of the lot utilized \$61,000 from the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund administered by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.

There are no other easements or rights of way attached to this property.

Habitat, including any endangered or threatened flora and/or fauna:

Approximately 44% of the property is identified as Tier 2 wildlife habitat (“highest ranking habitats by ecological condition in the bioregion”), with the balance of the property ranked as “Supporting Habitat” as identified in the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan published by the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game in 2015. (see map on following page)



The property provides diverse and critical wildlife habitat including upland, wetland, forested wetland and a small field. The property hosts a wide array of resident and transient wildlife, including bald eagles, osprey, loons, river otters, beaver, muskrat, bob cat, moose and deer as well as many other species of smaller mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. The property is a known perching and feeding site for bald eagles, osprey and other raptors.

The New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau reported one endangered plant species, Case's ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes casei*) in the general area of the property. It also reported a reptile of special concern, wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*), was observed crossing Route 16 approximately 0.4 miles west of the property in 2011. No other flora or fauna of concern was noted. A copy of this report is attached as Appendix 9.

Special cultural features:

There are no known cultural features on the property. Historically, the Androscoggin River was a major Native American transportation route. It is believed that a Native American settlement existed near by, but on the opposite side of the Androscoggin River in the vicinity of what is currently known as Chandler Brook.

Water resources:

The property and associated conservation easement protects 382 feet of river frontage on the Androscoggin River, an important aquatic and fisheries resource. The property provides floodways and water retention for prolonged wet periods, reducing flood peaks. It is also within the wellhead protection area of a public water supply well serving the nearby mobile home community. The property is within the “Hydrological Area of Concern” for the Berlin Water Works, a municipal water supply for the City of Berlin.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Community Forest Management Objectives:

The Milan Community Forest was established in 2012 by the voters of Milan, NH at its annual town meeting. The Milan Community Forest Committee was created at the same time to administer and manage the community forest. The Committee consists of five (5) residents appointed by the Board of Selectmen. A Charter (Appendix 3) was subsequently adopted by the Committee and the Board of Selectmen establishing authorities and responsibilities of both entities in regards to the community forest.

In keeping with the wishes of the voters, the Committee created a Mission Statement (Appendix 1), Vision (Appendix 2), and Public Use Policy (Appendix 4), all of which were reviewed at public hearings and adopted by the Committee. These documents are available on the Town of Milan web page www.townofmilan.org.

The Community Forest is administered and managed so as to support and implement the Milan Master Plan. The overall goals and objectives of the Community Forest are to maintain public lands that are open to the public, for the protection of wildlife and habitat, recreational and educational activities, and sustained forest stewardship so as to deliver revenue to the town and support local forest based industries. Each of the several lots making up the Community Forest have specific conditions, and therefore, specific goals, objectives, and management plans.

Abraham Lot Management Objectives:

The Abraham lot is a special property and is managed somewhat differently than most of the other lots making up the Community Forest. The high percentage of wetlands and river frontage makes this property significant habitat for wildlife and worthy of special protection. Its close proximity to the Milan Village School and easy access makes it ideal for educational activities. Its diverse and abundant wildlife as well as the fragility of the ecosystems lend it to interpretation via a pedestrian trail system. In recognition of this, the Town of Milan has granted a conservation easement to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. The easement does not allow commercial activity or motorized recreation, and establishes protective buffers to sensitive habitat. The Conservation Easement also does not allow the property to be subdivided nor any of the existing tracts conveyed separately.

To those ends, the Abraham lot has the following management objectives:

Timber Harvesting:

1. There will be no commercial timber harvesting on the Abraham lot.
2. Some trees and other vegetation may be cleared to create the infrastructure needed to support the activities and uses of the property, mainly a parking lot and trails.
3. Limited cutting of suitable material for use in creating walkways, bog bridges and other infrastructure, especially where completed in conjunction with item # 2 above will be conducted.
4. Wildlife habitat improvement work may also warrant mowing or vegetation/tree clearing or planting.

Recreational use:

1. The property is open to the public for pedestrian recreational use as per the Milan Community Forest Public Use Policy.
2. Pedestrian recreational uses are encouraged, but should be restricted to trails so as to protect fragile areas.
3. As discussed further below, areas for nature observation will be incorporated into such a trail system. Additionally, an informational kiosk will be installed to inform the public of uses and restrictions as well as trail and other information. The kiosk will be 24 square feet or less and not artificially illuminated.

Educational use:

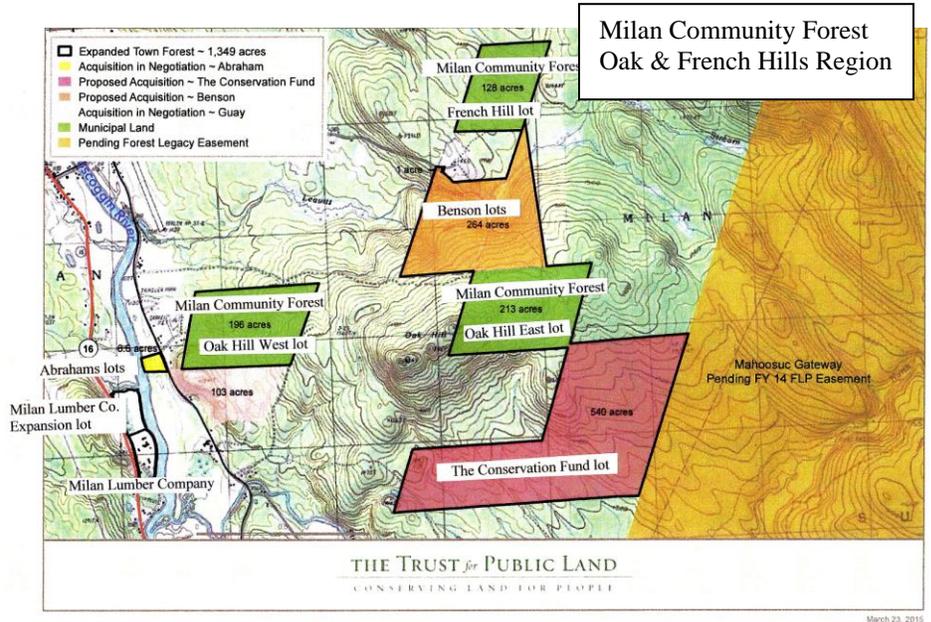
1. The diverse habitats and abundant wildlife make this site an excellent resource for all levels of education. In particular, its close proximity to the Milan Village School and easy access along the East Side River Road will provide ample opportunities for natural science and related educational opportunities.
2. Contact with Berlin and other local schools as well as the White Mountain Community College (WMCC) will encourage use of this property. WMCC offers academic study in Outdoor Recreation Management, Environmental Sciences, Surveying and related fields, all of which could make use of this property both as an outdoor classroom and a living laboratory in which to utilize academic knowledge in furthering the protection and enhancement of the property.
3. The property is also available to home schoolers and the general public. Civic and professional organizations may also want to take advantage of the features of the site as part of tours and demonstrations.

Environmental Protection:

1. Portions of this property are within the 100 year flood plain and also a significant portion consists of wetlands. Consequently, the property has the ability to hold and absorb water from flood events, thus mitigating the effects of high water and storm events.
2. The lot will maintain the vegetation and wetlands of the site, thus protecting the Androscoggin River (an important cold water fishery) from storm water run-off and non-source point pollution.

3. The property is within the well head protection area for the water supply to a near by mobile home community. Protection of this site will assist in maintaining the integrity and quality of this drinking water supply.
4. The property is also within the “Hydrologic Area of Concern” for the Berlin Water Works drinking water intake from the Androscoggin River. The protection of this drinking water source for 9,600 +/- citizens is enhanced by the management and administration of the Abraham lot as a conservation property.
5. The property also overlays one of the region’s largest stratified drift aquifers. Continued protection of this land will help maintain the high quality of this important water resource.

6. The property is one piece of the entire Milan Community Forest. This site is in proximity to other parcels making up the Community Forest and provides a portion of a connective corridor for wildlife from alluvial lowlands to more distant uplands. This corridor provides varying habitats for nesting, resting and feeding areas as well as travel corridors to and from these areas.



The property is also a portion of a climatological corridor providing both flora and fauna access to suitable habitats over extended time frames.

7. The property will also aid in long term climate change mitigation by sequestering carbon dioxide, a known greenhouse gas.
8. The site is known to host a wide variety of wildlife and protection of the property will aid both resident and transient wildlife. A variety of raptors are known to use the property, as feeding, nesting and perching sites above the Androscoggin River. Bald eagles, osprey, various species of hawks and owls have all been observed at the property. Likewise, mammals utilizing the site include bear, moose, deer, otters, beaver, to muskrats and smaller mammals such as mice and voles. Loons are often seen feeding in the Androscoggin River adjacent to this property.
9. No invasive species are known to be on the property, but will be looked for during annual monitoring. Should any invasive species be found, Milan will work with the appropriate agencies, including SPNHF and DES to address their presence.

Access and Infrastructure:

1. The property is easily accessed as it fronts the East Side River Road, a paved road maintained by the State of New Hampshire, Department of Transportation. There are no roads within the boundaries of the property.
2. In order to facilitate safe public access to the site, roadside parking will be enhanced by the Milan Community Forest Committee in the future. Extending the current shoulder parking to accommodate parallel parking of cars and school busses will allow visitors to safely exit vehicles to enjoy the property.
3. A trail system into the property will be developed in the future by the Milan Community Forest Committee. This will control access and protect sensitive areas. It is expected that portions of the trail will need boardwalks and fences so as to traverse wet and/or sensitive areas without harming the environment. Such a system will also allow access during seasons such as spring when soil conditions do not make access easy. Observing seasonal conditions such as vernal pools will also be made possible while still protecting the resource.
4. An assessment of the feasibility to make at least a portion of the trail system handicap accessible will be done. Implementation will depend on the findings and the logistical and financial resources available.
5. Benches, wildlife viewing stands (blinds) and possibly picnic tables will allow for resting and observation areas.
6. Any infrastructure development and construction/maintenance will be coordinated with other individuals, organizations and agencies that have an interest and/or expertise, particularly SPNHF and NHDES. All such work will be done in accordance with applicable best management practices, requirements of the conservation easement, and be mindful of protection of the resource. All trail construction and related work plans will be submitted to and approved by SPNHF and NHDES prior to construction as per requirements of the conservation easement and ARM grant.
7. As per the Milan Community Forest Public Use Policy, no trail construction by private individuals or organizations is allowed other than assisting the Milan Community Forest Committee in completing approved projects.

Management Tasks:

The following tables provide the proposed tasks to be completed in accomplishing the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. While every effort will be made to complete these tasks as proposed, it must be recognized that financial, physical and time resources are shifting and uncertain. Therefore, these tasks may not be completed as delineated below.

Table # 1 2017 Management Tasks

Task #	Priority	Task	Comment
1	High	Completion of conservation easement	Grant to SPNHF
2	High	Completion of management plan	
3	Medium	Marking of north and south boundary lines and all corner pins	Work in conjunction with abutting land owners
4	Medium	Develop detailed habitat map of property	Possible educational project with WMCC
5	High	Monitoring walk to ensure CE compliance	
6	High	Monitoring walk for policing of trash etc. and checking for invasive species	Conduct at least twice a year, spring and fall

Table # 2 2018 Management Tasks

Task #	Priority	Task	Comment
1	High	Identify funding sources for infrastructure development (parking lot, kiosk, trails)	
2	High	Write and submit grant proposals identified above	
3	High	Design of parking facilities along East Side River Road	
4	Medium	Construct roadside parking lot	Seek volunteers and contributions from local businesses & individuals
5	Medium	Design, build, and install informational kiosk at parking lot	Donation by CBF
6	High	Monitoring walk to ensure CE compliance	
7	High	Monitoring walk for policing of trash etc. and checking for invasive species	Conduct at least twice a year, spring and fall

Table # 3 2019 Management Tasks

Task #	Priority	Task	Comment
1	High	Identify trail design partners and trail design criteria & specifications	
2	High	Map & design of nature/cross country ski trail	
3	Medium	Initial survey and layout of nature/cross country ski trail	
4	Medium	Begin construction of nature/cross country ski trail	
5	High	Monitoring walk to ensure CE compliance	
6	High	Monitoring walk for policing of trash etc. and checking for invasive species	Conduct at least twice a year, spring and fall

Table # 4 2020 Management Tasks

Task #	Priority	Task	Comment
1		Continue construction of nature/cross country ski trail	
2		Design, building and installation of nature/cross country ski trail signage	
3	High	Monitoring walk to ensure CE compliance	
4	High	Monitoring walk for policing of trash etc. and checking for invasive species	Conduct at least twice a year, spring and fall

Table # 5 2021 Management Tasks

Task #	Priority	Task	Comment
1		Completion of nature/cross country ski trail construction	
2		Design, building and construction of wildlife viewing structures (blinds)	
3	High	Monitoring walk to ensure CE compliance	
4	High	Monitoring walk for policing of trash etc. and checking for invasive species	Conduct at least twice a year, spring and fall

PLAN REVIEW & AMENDMENT

This management plan will be reviewed at least every five years by the Milan Community Forest Committee. The Committee will consult with the Community Forest forester, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (as the holder of the Conservation Easement), and the Department of Environmental Services (as the third party). The Committee may also consult with other agencies and organizations as it deems appropriate. As part of this review, public input will be sought via a public hearing and all such public comment will be considered prior to making and adopting a final revised management plan.

This management plan may be reviewed and amended more often if the Milan Community Forest Committee finds it is warranted or if requested by the public, or partnering agencies/organizations.