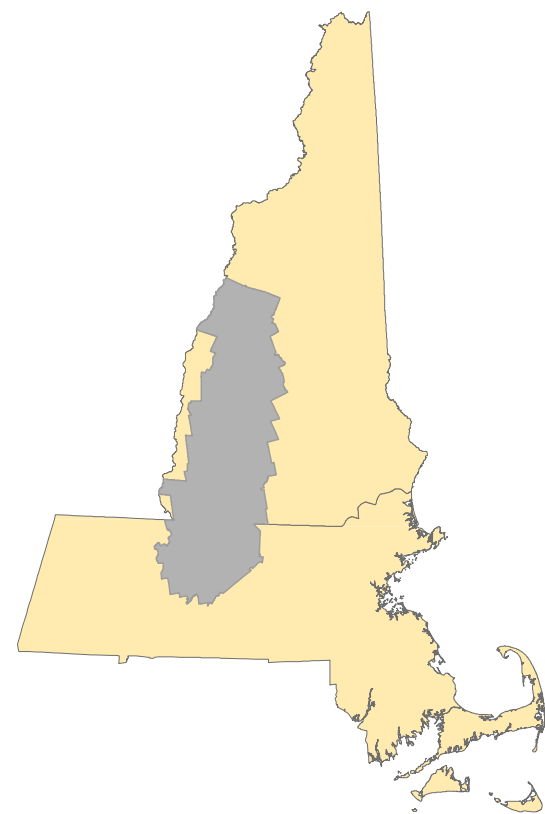


Q2C Regional Plan

Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership - 2018



- Q2C Regional Boundary
- Core Conservation Focus Areas
- Connectivity Corridors
- Conservation & Public Lands
- Lakes & Reservoirs
- Rivers & Streams
- State Boundaries
- Town Boundaries
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- Local Roads



ABOUT

Launched in 2003, the Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) is a collaborative, landscape-scale effort to conserve the Monadnock Highlands of north-central Massachusetts and western New Hampshire. The two-state region spans one hundred miles from the Quabbin Reservoir northward to Mount Cardigan and the White Mountain National Forest, and is bounded to the east and west by the Merrimack and Connecticut River valleys. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the Quabbin to Cardigan region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in central New England, and is a key headwater of the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers.

The Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership is a collaborative effort of twenty-seven private organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in the two Q2C states. The Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership does not protect land directly, its member organizations do. Land is conserved strictly on a willing-seller basis through a combination of conservation easements and land acquisitions, managed by private landowners, conservation organizations, and public agencies. The Quabbin to Cardigan partners share a vision of consolidating the permanent protection of the region's most ecologically significant forest blocks, and key connections between them for wildlife movement and human recreation.

With the original plan completed in 2007, the Q2C strategic conservation plan was updated in 2018 using new natural resource data and an improved, science-based methodology. Newly released climate change resilience data from The Nature Conservancy was also incorporated into the updated plan. Quabbin to Cardigan partners also participated in a consensus-building process to update the "shared vision" for the Q2C region. The Q2C plan has identified approximately 750,000 acres of core conservation focus areas that represent the region's most ecologically significant forests. These conservation focus areas represent about 38% of the two million acre region. An additional 290,000 acres, or 15% of the region, has been identified as key connectivity corridors that buffer and link the core areas.

For more information: www.q2cpartnership.org

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

First, the Q2C partnership reviewed and affirmed the 2006 conservation planning goal and focus, as follows:

"To consolidate the permanent protection of the region's most ecologically significant forest blocks, and key connections between them for wildlife passage and human recreation."

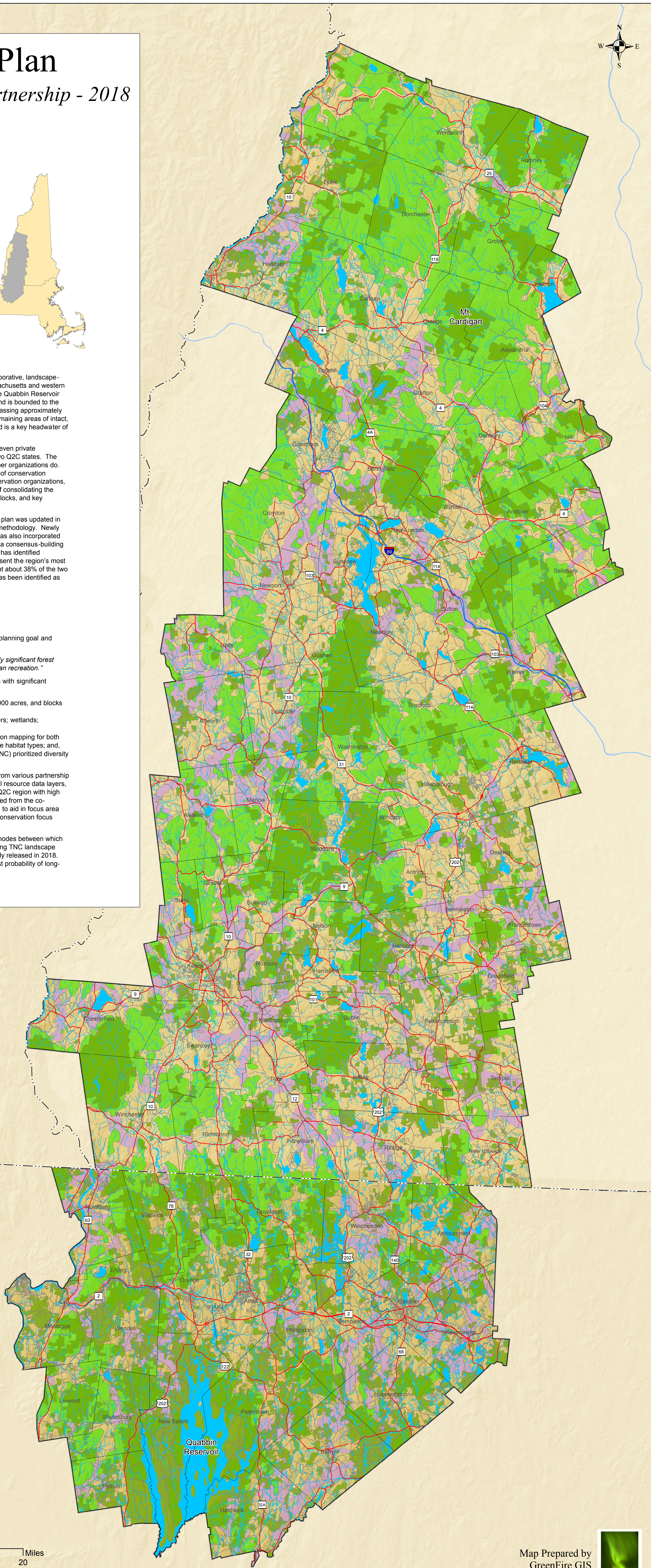
Several natural resource features were evaluated to identify forest blocks with significant embedded ecological features, as follows:

- Forest blocks** in three size classes: 250 to 500 acres, 500 to 1,000 acres, and blocks greater than 1,000 acres;
- Water resources**, including riparian, shoreline, and wetland buffers; wetlands; floodplains; and, high-quality stream watersheds;
- Wildlife habitat**, including state wildlife action plan habitat condition mapping for both New Hampshire and Massachusetts, as well as uncommon wildlife habitat types; and,
- Climate change resilience**, using The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) prioritized diversity and connectivity data from 2016.

A GIS Advisory Team comprised of several knowledgeable staff drawn from various partnership organizations and agencies then assigned weighted values to the natural resource data layers, and a co-occurrence map was generated to determine areas within the Q2C region with high aggregate scores. A GIS-based "focal mean analysis" was then produced from the co-occurrence mapping with the goal of smoothing values across the region to aid in focus area identification. The top 40% of focal mean scores was selected as core conservation focus areas.

Connectivity was addressed by using the conservation focus areas as nodes between which connecting corridors were determined by "least cost" GIS processing using TNC landscape permeability data generated as part of the climate change resilience study released in 2018. The top 20% of corridor route scores were selected as having the highest probability of long-term functioning as regional wildlife movement patterns.

See the technical report at the link above for more detailed information.



0 5 10 20 Miles

Map Prepared by
GreenFire GIS
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