

DEFINITIONS OF PROTECTION STATUS & MANAGEMENT STATUS CODES, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAP STATUS CODE

Revised per agreement of UNH GRANIT, TNC, SPNHF, and NH DES – June 2008

I. PROTECTION LEVEL DEFINITIONS

1: Permanent conservation land

Land permanently protected from development through legally enforceable¹ conservation easement, deed restriction, or outright ownership by an organization or agency whose mission emphasizes protecting land in perpetuity; more than 50% of area will remain undeveloped. Examples include, but are not limited to, federal and state natural resource agency lands; tracts owned by land trusts; town lands or town forest formally assigned to the Conservation Commission through a warrant article; and lands encumbered by a perpetual conservation easement.

2: Unofficial conservation land

Not permanently protected through any legal mechanisms such as deed restrictions or conservation easements. Owned by a public institution, public agency, or other organization whose mission may not be focused on conservation, but whose clear intent is to keep the land for conservation, recreation, or educational purposes and in mostly natural land cover. Examples include, but are not limited to, lands with mostly natural land cover owned by academic institutions; town lands not permanently protected through legal mechanisms; and unprotected county farms.

3: Unprotected water supply lands

Not permanently protected through any legal mechanisms such as deed restrictions or conservation easements. Land owned or controlled by suppliers of public drinking water. Includes all unprotected supplies owned by a municipality or a subdivision of a municipality, and all unprotected private water systems which serve 500 people or more.

4: Developed public land

No known institutional or legal mandates to prevent conversion of natural land cover to human uses. Includes public land having, or expected to have, developed infrastructure on more than 50% of its area (e.g. beaches, picnic areas, ballfields, boat ramps/parking, municipal wellfields).

9: Unknown

¹ In using the terms "permanent" and "legally enforceable" we recognize that all conditions are subject to change, even in wilderness and national parks, but the intent is for the condition to be of very long term.

II. MANAGEMENT STATUS DEFINITIONS:

Refer to Section IV for more detailed defining characteristics and specific examples of each Management Status.

1: A tract entirely protected from conversion of natural land cover and with a management plan or deed restrictions in operation to maintain land in a natural state. Natural processes and disturbance events are allowed to proceed without interference or are mimicked through management practices.

2: A tract entirely protected from conversion of natural land cover and with a management plan or deed restrictions in operation to maintain a primarily natural state, but which may receive uses (e.g. limited vehicular traffic, small-scale wildlife habitat management, etc.) or management practices, including suppression of natural processes and disturbances, that can degrade the quality of existing natural communities.

3: A tract protected from conversion of natural cover for more than 50% of the area, but subject to extractive uses of either a broad-scale low-moderate intensity type (such as timber harvest) or localized-scale high intensity type (e.g., mining).

4: A tract with more than 50% of area unprotected from conversion of natural cover or for active recreation purposes (e.g., ballfields, golf courses). Natural processes are altered or replaced by human use and management of land. □

5: A tract protected from conversion of natural cover for more than 50% of area, but that allows agriculture (e.g. crops, hay, pasture) or are managed in a manner similar to agriculture, though without specific habitat and biodiversity management drivers.

9: Unknown.

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III. GAP Status Definitions

LEVEL	MSTATUS	GAP Status
1	1	1
	2	2
	3	3
	4	4
	5	5
	9	9
2	1, 2, or 3	3A
	4	4
	5	3A
	9	9
3	1, 2, or 3	3A
	4	4
	5	3A
	9	9
4	1 or 2	4 (typically N/A)
	3 or 4	4
	5	4
	9	9
9	Any	9

<u>GAP Status</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Examples</u>
GAP 1	Permanent, legal protection. Managed to maintain a natural state, no motorized recreation, natural processes unhindered, no extractive uses	Federal wilderness areas, most Nature Conservancy Preserves, SPNHF Natural Areas, forever wild easements
GAP 2	Permanent, legal protection. Managed to maintain a primarily natural state, limited snowmobiling allowed, natural processes mostly unhindered, no widespread extractive uses	NH Audubon Sanctuary with snowmobile trail, most U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Refuges
GAP 3	Permanent, legal protection. Managed to maintain natural land cover, allows extractive uses of renewable resources (e.g. timber harvesting), allows higher intensity or density of recreational uses	Most conservation easements in New Hampshire, majority of SPNHF Reservation lands, some town forests
GAP 3A	No legal protection, but current ownership has institutional mandates or intention to manage for natural land cover	Many town forests, water supply lands, Phillips Exeter Academy lands, many UNH lands
GAP 4	No legal protection, allows conversion of >50% of property to unnatural land cover	Small town parks and many other town or county-owned open lands
GAP 5	Permanent, legal protection. Managed for agricultural purposes (e.g. crops, hay, pasture) or in a manner similar to agriculture.	Natural Resource Conservation Service Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) or Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) properties.

IV. MANAGEMENT STATUS – defining characteristics and examples:

Management Status 1

Characteristics:

- Permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover²
- Protection by state or federal legislation, regulation, private deed restriction, or conservation easement
- Mandated management plan in operation to maintain a natural state
- Managed for multiple (all) elements of biodiversity or for a keystone species
- Natural disturbance events allowed to proceed or are mimicked through management
- Fire suppression is acceptable only if done because of State suppression policy (and not simply landowner choice)
- No more than 5% of land cover converted to human uses
- Hunting, fishing, trapping are allowed (at low-intensity)
- No logging (including salvage logging), mining, or other extractive uses
- No intentional introduction or stocking of non-native species
- No snowmobiling or other motorized use
- May include designated ecological reserve areas within a larger area of working forest easement

Examples:

- Federal Wilderness areas
- Most TNC preserves and NH Audubon sanctuaries
- Most SPNHF “designated” natural areas
- Most Forever Wild conservation easements

Management Status 2

Characteristics:

- Permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover
- Protection by state or federal legislation, regulation, private deed restriction, conservation easement
- Mandated management plan in operation to maintain a primarily natural state
- There may be uses or management practices that degrade the quality of existing natural communities, including suppression of natural disturbance
- No more than 5% of land cover converted to human uses
- Hunting, fishing, trapping are allowed (at low-intensity)
- No intentional introduction or stocking of non-native species
- Snowmobiling allowed as long as trails aren’t widespread (covering <5% of the land area)
- Highway vehicles may be allowed on roads as long as roads are limited in scope
- No other motorized recreation
- No timber harvesting, mining or other extractive uses except as below
- Salvage logging of downed timber allowed at a low scope or intensity
- Very restricted and very small-scale wildlife habitat management allowed (<5% of property)
- Very small scale firewood harvesting allowed (e.g., <10 cords/yr)

Examples:

- Most U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges (except reserve/wilderness areas which are GAP 1)
- National Forest Research Natural Areas
- Some NH Fish & Game Department Wildlife Management Areas
- TNC Preserves with snowmobiling

² “Permanent protection” indicates that a property is subject to perpetual deed restrictions or conservation easement that precludes land use conversion on all or nearly all of the land, or that the property is owned by a public agency or conservation organization with a clear land conservation and natural resource management mission.

Management Status 3

Characteristics:

- Permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover for the majority of the area
- Subject to extractive uses of either a broad, low-moderate intensity type (e.g., logging) or localized intense type (e.g., mining)
- Farming allowed on less than 50% of property
- Hunting, fishing, trapping are allowed
- Snowmobiling and other motorized recreation may be allowed but not in a way that would directly degrade the majority of the property (e.g., confined to roads and limited trails)

Examples:

- National Forest lands in a timber management category
- Most conservation easements on forest- or wetland-dominated tracts
- Most permanently protected Town Forests
- Multiple-use state-owned lands (State Forests and Parks)
- Many SPNHF reservations

Management Status 4

Characteristics:

- Publicly owned lands with no permanent legal protection
- No known public or private institutional mandates to prevent conversion to un-natural land cover throughout

Examples:

- Developed town parks
- Small municipal well-fields
- College or university ballfields
- Unprotected County Farms

Management Status 5

Characteristics:

- Permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover for most of the area
- Agriculture is allowed on more than 50% of property
- Agriculture is the primary purpose of the property's land use
- Non-agricultural areas may be subject to extractive uses of either a broad, low-moderate intensity type (e.g., logging) or localized intense type (e.g., mining)
- Other recreation uses may be permitted depending on the agricultural uses and practices at the property.

Examples:

- Permanently protected County Farm
- Natural Resource Conservation Service Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) properties
- Conservation easement with the primary purpose of protecting agricultural resources and values
- Land trust fee ownerships with agricultural production as a primary use and management purpose
- Agricultural Restrictions