NH Land Trust Coalition Membership Survey 2024 Summary

Respondent Demographics

- **20 of 28 member organizations responded (full list at end). These organizations reported:**
  - Having 170.75 FTE employees, ranging from 0 to 45
  - Holding 2,993 easements, with a low of 2 and a high of 800
  - Protecting 183,486 acres, with a low of 30 and a high of 64,000 acres
- **Operating Budgets (18 responded, 2 skipped)**
  - <$199,000 – 3
  - $200 - $349,000 – 5
  - $350,000-$499,000 – 3
  - $500 -749,000 – 1
  - $750-$1M – 0
  - $1-1.5M – 3
  - $1.5M to $2M – 0
  - $2M to 2.99M – 1
  - $3M and higher - 2
- **Of these organizations:**
  - 100%, or 19 are members of the Land Trust Alliance
  - 12 are members of the NH Center for NonProfits
  - 11 are accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, with 1 pending application
  - 14 are enrolled in Terrafirma Conservation Defense

Current Work of the NH Land Trust Coalition (Q5)

Each of the following choices had a mean score of 4.10 (the highest average) and representing the top priorities for the NH Land Trust Coalition's current work.

- Testifying in the legislature (11 highest priority)
- Hosting fall/spring workshops (10 highest priority)
- Hosting/managing the NH listserve (7 highest priority)

There was a clear next tier of priorities, with mean score of 3.70 or lower

- Providing financial support of Saving Special Places (4 highest priority, 9 second highest)
- Hosting occasional water cooler sessions (2 highest priority, 8 second highest)
- Website of NHLTC (5 highest priority. 5 second highest)

BASIC STATISTICS

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Hosting a fall and spring workshop, which offer formal trainings/workshops with guest experts for in-depth presentation on specific topics	2.00	5.00	4.50	4.10	0.99
Hosting and managing the NH Listserve, a user-initiated email distribution list for sharing questions, information, jobs to subscribers	3.00	5.00	4.00	4.10	0.77
Testifying in the state legislature regarding bills that affect land conservation	1.00	5.00	5.00	4.10	1.22
Providing financial support as a sponsor of Saving Special Places, the all-day, annual NH land trust conference	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.70	1.00
Hosting occasional water cooler sessions, which are informal, on-line gatherings for a guided conversation on specific topics	2.00	6.00	4.00	3.65	0.96
Hosting/updating website of the NH Land Trust Coalition with job announcements	1.00	5.00	3.50	3.45	1.20

Future Work of the NH Land Trust Coalition (Q6)

The highest priority for future work of the NH Land Trust Coalition is to **lead and organize Saving Special Places, with 19 respondents indicating it was the highest or second highest priority.**

Consistent with responses to the current work of the Coalition, the next priority was regarding **proactive communication to members on state and federal legislative issues,** with a mean of 3.95 and 13 respondents indicating it was the highest or second highest priority.

Respondents expressed support for a middle tier of activities (3.75 to 3.55 mean scores):

- Partnering with LTA to tailor programs/workshops for NH
- Create or facilitate Peer to Peer learning groups
- Additional trainings/workshops for in-depth presentation
- Producing regular e-news on news, training, funding, jobs, etc
- Hosting more frequent water cooler sessions

Additional activities had more tepid support, with mean scores of 3.40 to 3.10:

- Creating template publications, factsheets, etc
- Providing access to emerging technology at discounted costs
- Facilitate a formal mentor program

Finally, there was **very little support for providing contracted services** to member organizations, with a mean score of 2.6 and 8 identifying this as the lowest priority (the most of any option by far).

BASIC STATISTICS

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Lead and organize Saving Special Places, the all-day, annual NH land trust conference	3.00	5.00	4.50	4.45	0.59
Communicating proactively to members regarding key state and federal legislation affecting land conservation	2.00	5.00	4.00	3.95	0.80
Partnering with the Land Trust Alliance to tailor their programs and workshops to better meet NH's needs	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.75	1.04
Create or facilitate Peer-to-Peer learning groups for the NH land trust community	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.70	1.10
Hosting additional trainings / workshops with guest experts for in-depth presentation on specific topics	2.00	5.00	4.00	3.60	0.92
Producing and distributing a regular e-news to members with relevant news, training opportunities, funding announcements, legislative news, and job announcements	2.00	5.00	4.00	3.60	1.07
Hosting more frequent water cooler sessions, which are informal, on-line gatherings for a guided conversation on specific topics	2.00	6.00	4.00	3.55	0.97
Creating template publications, factsheets, articles, and related materials that could be adapted and reused by any member of the Coalition	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.40	1.24
Providing access to emerging technology at discounted costs, such as aerial imagery systems for easement monitoring	1.00	5.00	3.50	3.20	1.12
Facilitate a formal mentor program for young and emerging leaders within the NH land trust community	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.10	1.34
Providing contracted services to member organizations, such as conservation project negotiation, easement drafting, baseline reports, or similar technical matters	1.00	6.00	2.00	2.60	1.69

Serving our Members and the Land Trust Community's Needs

Questions 7 and 8 were open-ended questions soliciting feedback about how the Coalition could better serve the organization responding as well as the land conservation community in New Hampshire. Unedited answers are pasted below

Q7 How else can the NH Land Trust Coalition better serve your organization's needs?

Networking opportunities with peers and access to technical expertise are the greatest needs for our small 3-person staff. In this way, the annual Saving Special Places conference and existing listserv meet immediate needs to meet other staff grappling with similar issues. The Conserving Your Land publication is also one of the best resources we rely on for educating landowners. Having access to NH-specific templates of key documents would be useful, but I wonder how much is already available through LTA's resource center. To date we've been successful searching LTA's resource center or asking colleagues at NH land trusts to share their examples. 2 out of 3 of us have participated in LTA peer-to-peer roundtable programs (new executive director, transactions and stewardship) and have found them useful. If NHLTC were to develop its own mentorship and professional development programs, I would encourage collaborating with LTA and/or other New England states. I have previously suggested to LTA that they should offer a program for development/communications-focused staff since I think it's a gap in their current offerings.
The most important aspects of the Coalition's work for us are the networking, training, and overall sense of camaraderie we get from working with the coalition and its members. Continuing the work of the Coalition at the current level as UNH steps back is the most important way the Coalition can serve UVLT.
No comment.
Advocate on behalf of streamlined grant funding processes at the state level
By keeping fees reasonable. ;)
Help tell the story of land trust accomplishments and access to trails.
Don't work Anne too hard ;)
Collective research or data collection that benefits all member orgs.
Achieve all the goals, past and future, as you have described, while still keeping dues low (a tough proposition, we know).
Please share with coalition members info on grant funding, HR policies and services (such as group rates for insurance), vendor services skilled in conservation to share among LTs (e.g. a bookeeper, printing house, logger, strategic plan consultant, job search firm). One of the arduous challenges we face (as do many LTs) is capacity and running a compliant and viable business - often not knowing what we don't know- while focusing on conserving land.

Q8 What can the NH Land Trust Coalition do to better serve the land conservation community in New Hampshire?

RESPONSES
From what I've seen, the NHLTC speaks effectively with one voice when it's important to weigh in on policies - and that's work that many small land trusts like ours can't keep tabs on. Beyond that, what's the most needed role for this statewide organization? Clearinghouse of best resources and tools for NH land trust professionals. Leadership and education on emerging topics. Education and information for landowners and general public about conserved lands (how to conserve, where to enjoy, etc.)
I have been so impressed by what the Coalition achieves with an all volunteer group. More opportunities for entry-level and mid-level staff to benefit from mentorship and peer networking will strengthen the level of expertise and professionalism in our sector across the region.
Engage with Native American organizations to acknowledge ancestral lands.
Ramp up education
Tell the story (to a general audience) of why land conservation and good stewardship is important to New Hampshire, and why private land trusts are the best way to get it done.
See above...
More policy stuff: speak/testify/organize more frequently and with a unified voice (on behalf of members) about relevant matters in Concord and Washington. Continue targeted attention to sticky issues like LCHIP's required deed terms.
Stay focused. Bigger isn't always better.
Outreach to the NH Congressional delegation is also a key role that needs focus.
I think some of the suggestions for future work are critical, particularly those that connect and convene professionals and organizations such as the peer learning groups and those activities that pool and leverage resources for teh benefit of smaller land trusts like a document/informational/pr bank. I would also really like to the NHLTC provide support and services around helping land trusts that are not LTA accredited reach that milestone, and/or support for organizations that are facing reaccreditation with new staff that have not been through the process.
1. Find us resources for more capacity funding. 2. Be the statewide voice for the need for conservation and land protection - working with the real estate market, town planners, state highway division, tourism and recreation. Let them know how we can work with them to protect NH and their livelihoods as well. *this work is there, but seems fragmented.
advocacy

Dues

Not surprisingly, as the level of dues increased, the consensus and level of support decreased. However, respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay more in dues for more services and expressed a clear preference for sliding scale dues instead of a flat rate dues.

Q9: When asked about continuing their membership at varying levels:

- $100 - 90% of respondents confirmed they were "very likely"
- $200 – 70% of respondents were "very likely" or "likely"
- $300 – 55% of respondents were "very likely" or "likely"
- $500 – Just 15% of respondents confirmed they were "very likely", with 45% indicating they were "very unlikely" or "unlikely"

Q10: When asked about different approaches to dues:

- 70% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "Our organization would pay more in dues for increased member services made possible by the hiring of a coordinator." Just two selected "disagree" with four "neutral".
- More respondents preferred a sliding scale based on budget size (11 selected "strong agree" or "agree") rather than a flat scale (just 3 selected "agree").

Responding Organizations

Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust
Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
Beaver Brook Association
Bow Open Spaces
Chocorua Lake Conservancy
Five Rivers Conservation Trust
Francestown Land Trust
Hanover Conservancy
Harris Center for Conservation Education
Lakes Region Conservation Trust
Monadnock Conservancy
Moose Mountains Regional Greenways
Newfound Lake Region Association
Pemi-Baker Land Trust (as Rumney Ecological Services)
Piscataquog Land Conservancy
Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Southeast Land Trust
Squam Lakes Conservation Society
The Nature Conservancy
Upper Valley Land Trust