



NFWF Wood Turtle Outreach Project

Conservation Partners Program
Working Lands for Wildlife Northeast Turtles
March 12, 2024

Thank You!



Clean water. Healthy habitat. Thriving communities.
**Connecticut River
Conservancy**



NFWF



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Natural Resources Conservation Service



**THE Orienne
Society**



MASSWILDLIFE



Project Overview

- 2 Year Conservation Partners Program Grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Purpose to facilitate landowner enrollment into Farm Bill conservation programs to restore important Wood Turtle habitat in the Connecticut River basin.

Project Metrics

Outreach

450 Landowners

Site Visits

45

Plans Developed

15

Winter-Spring 2022



Partner Meetings



Data sharing agreements
and GIS Files



Develop Outreach
Materials



Summer-Fall 2022



Mailing #1
Letter and Brochure



Coordination and
Scheduling



Site Visits



Winter-Summer 2023



Site Review with Partners
Coordination with Other
Organizations

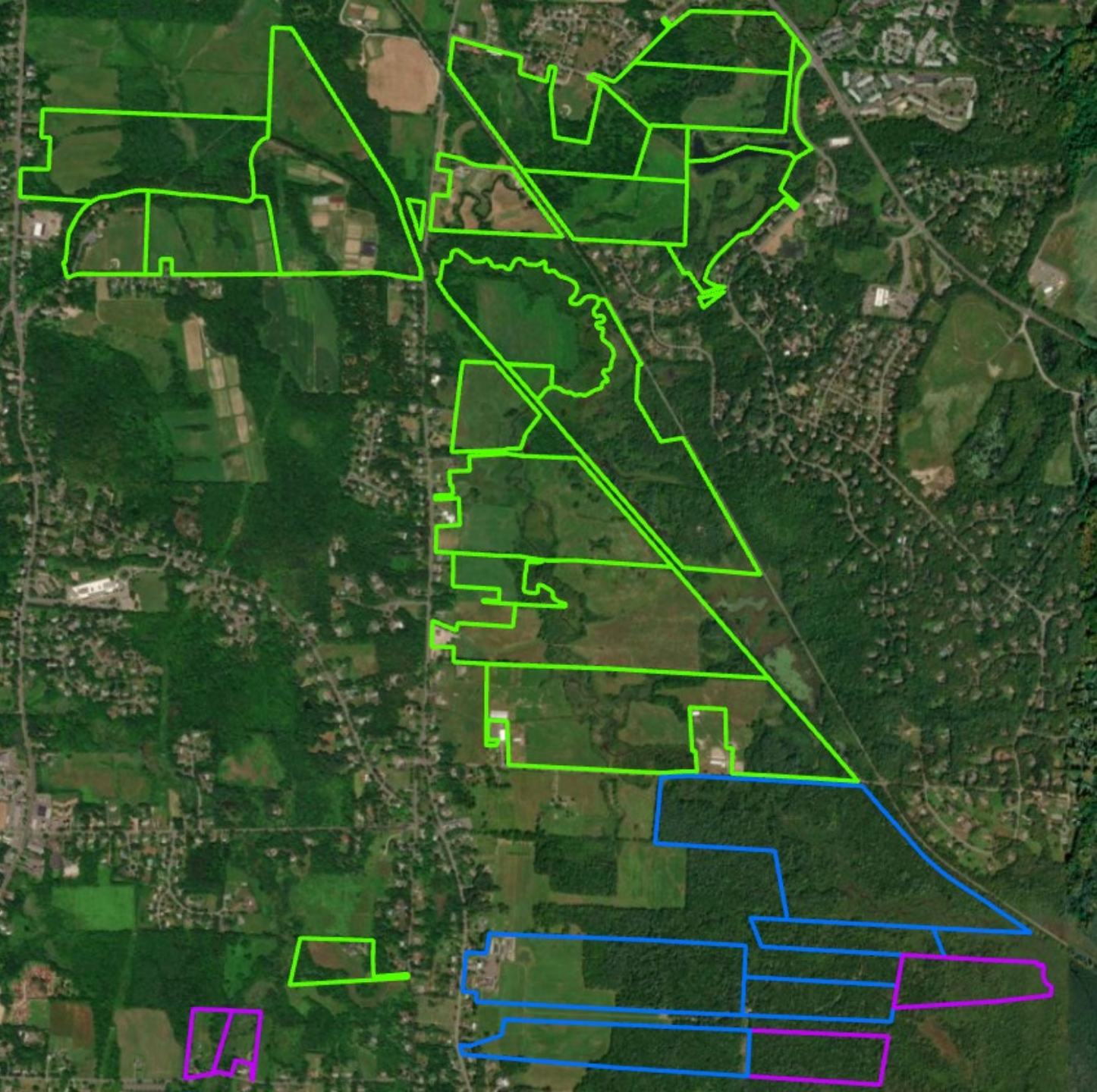


Phone Calls & Mailing #2
Handwritten Card



Site Visits
Initial and Follow Up





Top priority parcels: >25 acres with hayfields directly adjacent to streams in need of a buffer

Medium priority parcels: fields or forest adjacent to streams, smaller parcels adjacent to top priority or conservation land

Other parcels: owned by entities that should be contacted separately



Connecticut River
Conservancy

Clean water. Healthy habitat. Thriving communities.

15 Bank Row, Greenfield, MA 01301
413.772.2020 - www.ctriver.org

June 23, 2022

Landowner Name
Landowner Address

Dear [Name],

The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) is working in your area with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to reduce streambank erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. We would like to talk with you about ways to improve the health and resiliency of your land.

CRC and our partners have a long and successful history of helping landowners secure funding for restoration projects that provide many important water quality and habitat benefits such as planting trees, cover crops, and buffer strips, improving floodplain access, and removing unwanted invasive plants.

At **no cost** to you CRC can:

- Identify and assess potential restoration projects on your land.
- Create an individualized restoration plan that meets your needs.
- Help find funding for project implementation.

If you are interested in having one of our team members walk the land with you and review your [options](#) please contact us at:

Email: restoration@ctriver.org

Phone: 413-772-2020 x 222

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Ron Rhodes
Director of Restoration Programs



RESTORATION OPTIONS FOR LANDOWNERS

Do you have eroding soils and stream banks?

Do you want to improve water quality for people and wildlife?

Do you need financial assistance for your streamside property, farm, or forest?



Connecticut River Conservancy



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Photo credit: Joe Klementovick

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps landowners maintain the productivity of their farms and forests while conserving important natural resources including habitat for wildlife. NRCS offers technical and financial assistance through Farm Bill programs to make improvements that reduce soil erosion and improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and resilience against extreme weather events.



Repair erosion with streambank restoration.

Stabilize streambanks and improve water quality with riparian buffer plantings.



Increase connectivity for fish and wildlife and improve resilience to flooding by removing unneeded barriers.

Improve water quality with stream crossings, livestock fencing and alternative watering systems.



Helping People Help the Land

VT Agency of Ag

What conservation practices are available?

NRCS offers over 200 conservation practices that can improve the health of your land and provide many important environmental benefits. Practices can be combined to create a custom solution to address your concerns while also providing shelter, foraging and nesting habitats for wildlife including birds, fish, and turtles.

Agricultural Management

- Brush Management
- Invasive Species Control
- Prescribed Grazing
- Delayed Mowing
- Young Forest

Planting and Buffers

- Cover Crops
- Pollinator Habitat
- Trees and Shrubs
- Filter Strips
- Stream Buffers

Structural Improvements

- Alternative Watering Systems
- Livestock Exclusion Fencing
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Trail and Road Improvements

Protection and Restoration

- Conservation Easements
- Wetland Restoration
- Stream Restoration
- Stream Crossings

Connecticut River Conservancy can help you make a customized plan and obtain state or federal financial assistance to complete the projects that will benefit the river and your streamside property, farm or forest.

Contact us at 413-772-2020 or restoration@ctriver.org for more information or to schedule a site visit.

We are happy to help!



Photo credit: Michael Tessier

Working together for the health of our
lands and waters.



Connecticut River
Conservancy

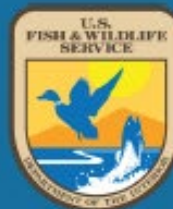


the Orianne
Society



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Outreach

	Effort				Responses				Success
	MA	NH	VT	Total	MA	NH	VT	Total	
Mailing 1	179	90	183	452	5	6	9	20	5%
Mailing 2	36	10	17	63	3	0	3	6	10%
Phone Calls	21	18	24	63	4	5	3	12	20%
Mail Returned	6	9	12	27	-	-	-	-	-
Partner Leads	1	1	11	13	1	1	11	13	

* WP phone numbers ~65% accurate and varied by state.

** Not all 31 responses to 2023 outreach efforts yielded a site visit.

Results

	MA	NH	VT	Total
Initial Site Visits	11	10	26	47
Follow Up Site Visits	2	5	6	13
Plans in Progress	2	3	3	8

1 Conceptual Design completed

1 Buffer planting planned for Fall 2024, funding secured

Land use varied among respondents

Residential



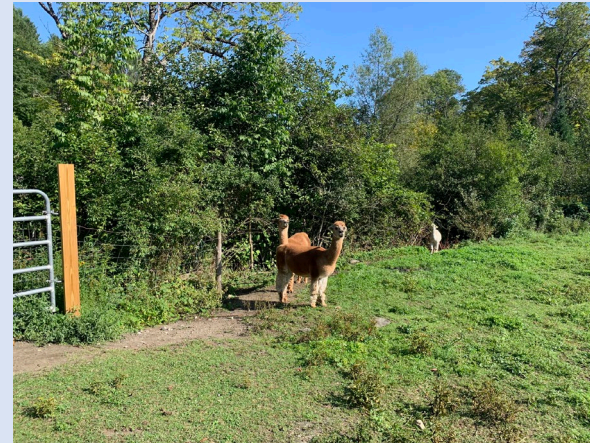
Wildlife or Aesthetics



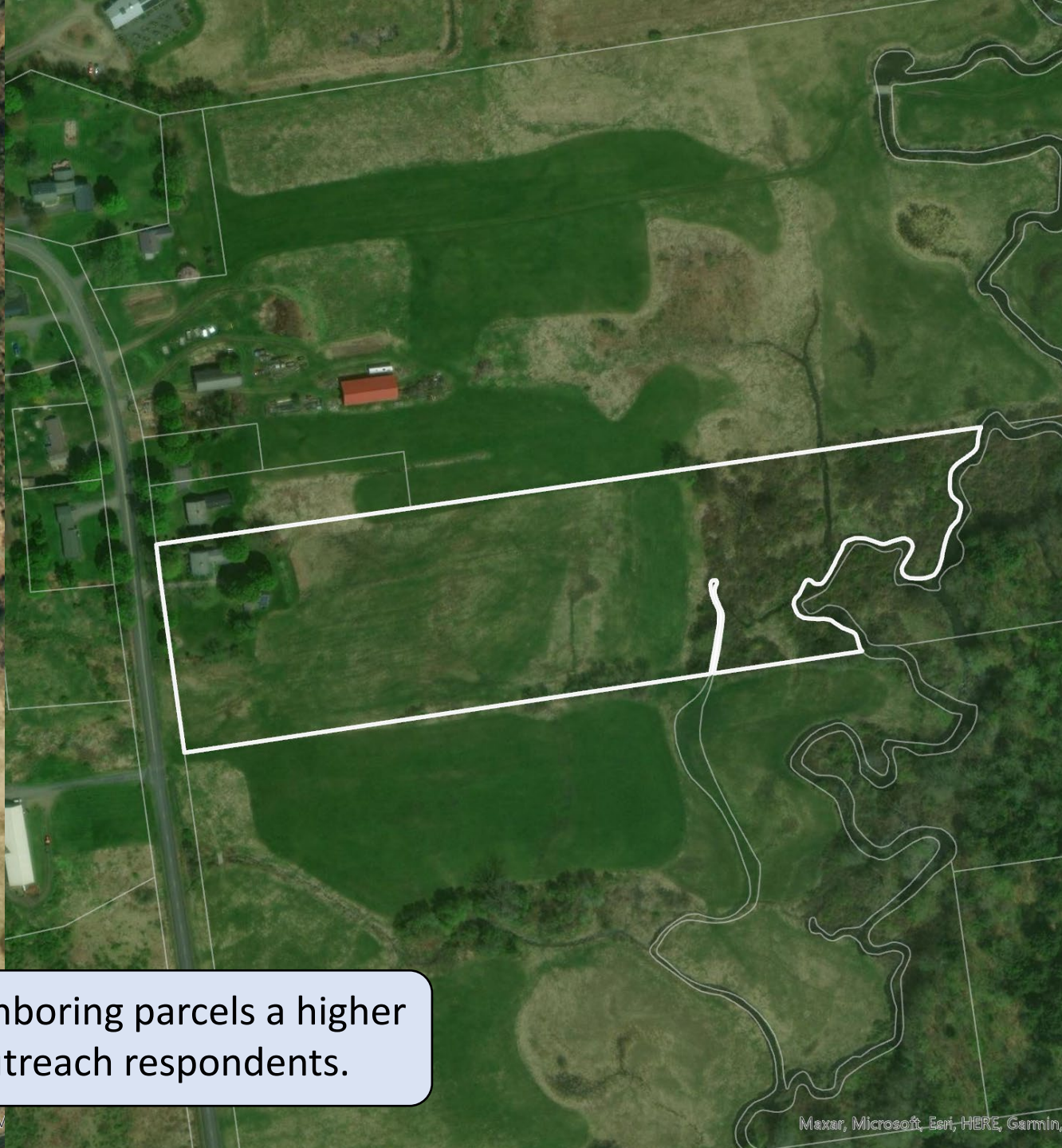
Haying



Pasture



Respondents were conservation minded and/or concerned with erosion



Often, owners of neighboring parcels a higher priority than our outreach respondents.

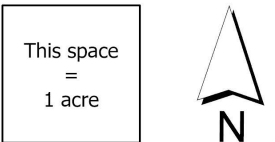
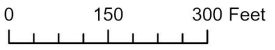
Recommendations to CREP Proposal



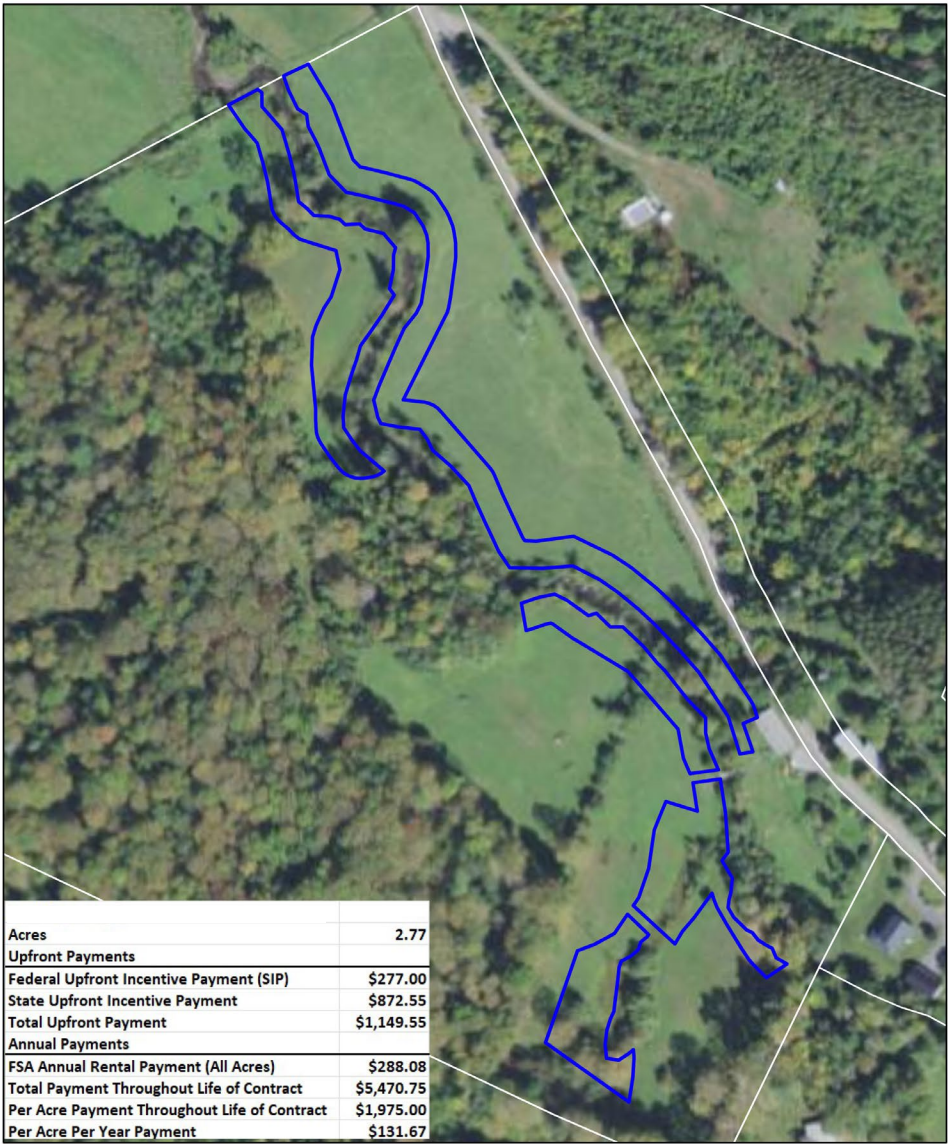
Management Recommendations

42.9 acre property on the _____ used for haying and for grazing llamas.

- Parcel Boundary
- Riparian Buffer
- Bank Stabilization
- Wetlands Restoration
- Invasive Species Management
- Late Season Brush Hog (After Oct. 15)
- Patch Cut
- Permanent Exclusion Fencing
- Temporary Exclusion Fencing
- Pollinator Improvements
- Winter Logging & Forest Management



Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., VCGI, Mapbox, Microsoft

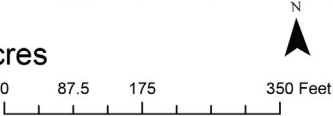


Acreage	2.77
Upfront Payments	
Federal Upfront Incentive Payment (SIP)	\$277.00
State Upfront Incentive Payment	\$872.55
Total Upfront Payment	\$1,149.55
Annual Payments	
FSA Annual Rental Payment (All Acres)	\$288.08
Total Payment Throughout Life of Contract	\$5,470.75
Per Acre Payment Throughout Life of Contract	\$1,975.00
Per Acre Per Year Payment	\$131.67

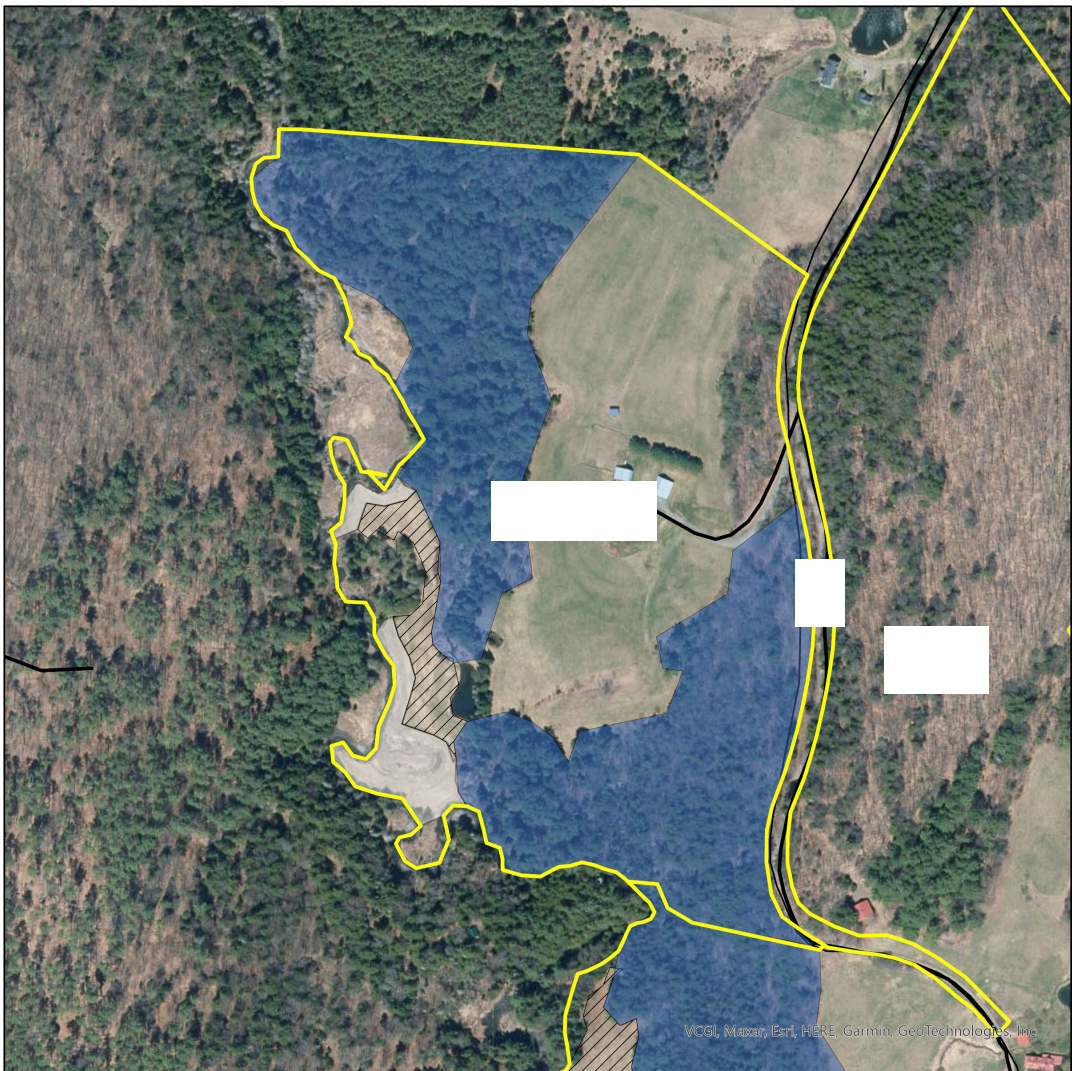
Legend

- 35ft CREP Buffer Parcels

CREP Proposal 2.77 acres



Recommendations to CREP Proposal



Management Recommendations

38.4 acre parcel on upland haying and floodplain brush hogging.



This space = 1 acre

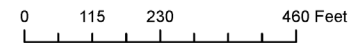


VOGI, Maxxar, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc.



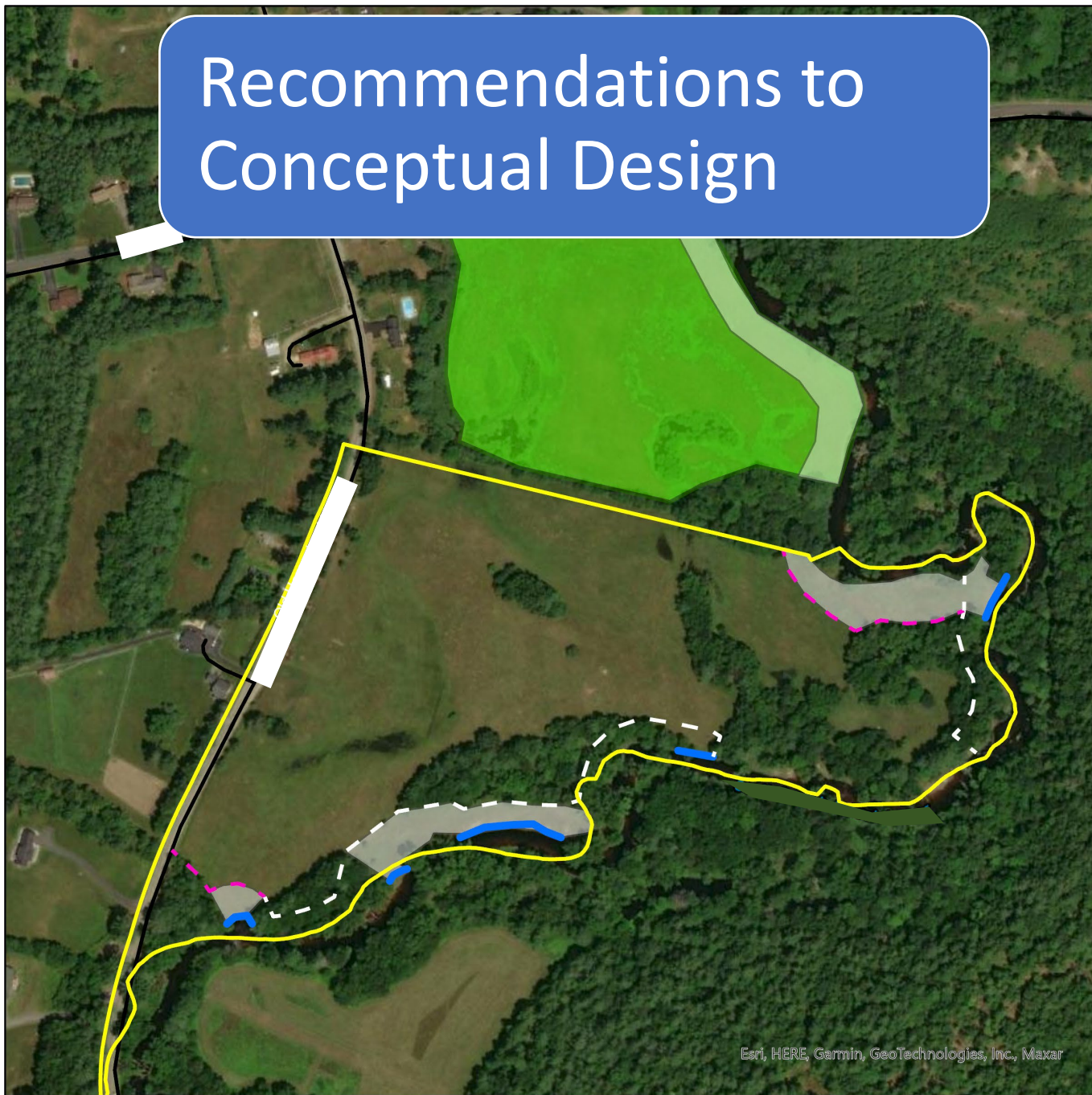
Roads

12.3 acres





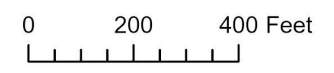
Recommendations to Conceptual Design



Management Recommendations

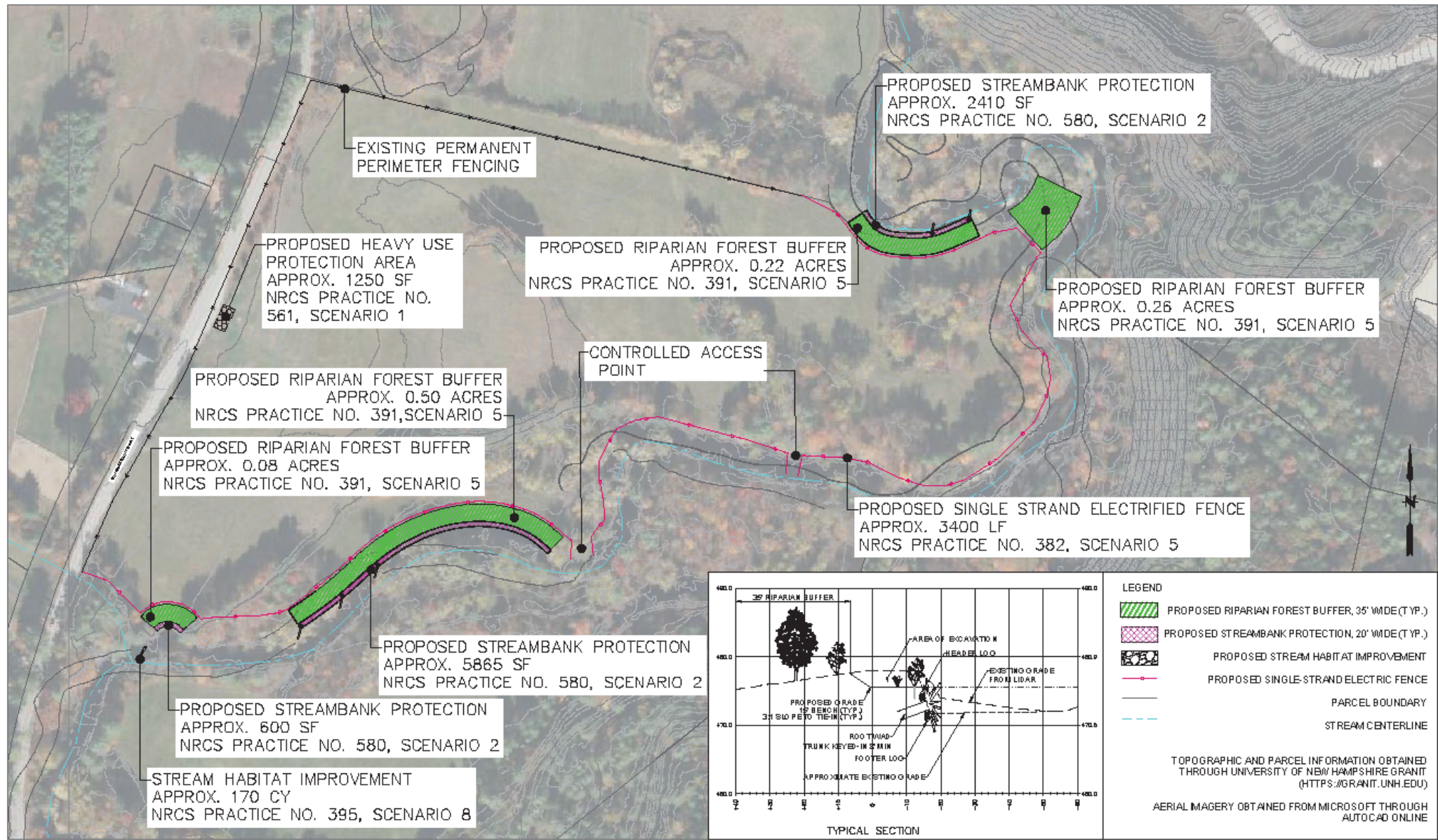
31.2 acre property on the River used to graze a herd of vintage cattle.

- Parcel Boundary
- Riparian Buffer
- Bank Stabilization
- Wetlands Restoration
- Invasive Species Management
- Late Season Brush Hog (After Oct. 15)
- Patch Cut
- Permanent Exclusion Fencing
- Temporary Exclusion Fencing
- Pollinator Improvements



This space = 1 acre





No.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DESIGNER	REVIEWER

SEAL	SEAL	

SCALE	HORL. 1" = 100'
VERT.	1" = 10'
DATE	
HORL.	
VERT.	
GRAPHIC SCALE	0 20 40 60 80 100



CONNECTICUT RIVER CONSERVANCY
BANK STABILIZATION CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

CD-001

Lessons Learned



Outreach is time consuming



Sensitive species adds complexity



Consider hiring a designer and include in budget



Handwritten notes and phone calls effective for targeted outreach



Budget more time for scheduling



Budget more time for site visits



Coordination with other organizations yielded mixed results



Need compelling argument for farmers to plant buffers in active hayfields



Patience, Persistence & Partnerships

Discussion & Questions

Ideas for Increasing enrollment in programs?

Utilize CREP or similar program in MA/NH. How can CRP be used more often in NH? Conceptual design funding a limiting factor.

Make programs easier to understand and enroll in

Need better strategy to reach the managers/owners of larger farms. Most of our response was from landowners who lease their fields to other farmers.

Materials to address concerns about lost hay productivity - one-page handout about benefits of buffers and programs that compensate for lost hayfield for each state

Materials could also address the value of letting rivers meander. A common sentiment we encountered from landowners was the wish to have river channels put back to where they were 10+ years ago.

