



Permittee-Responsible Mitigation Guidance

The goal of compensatory mitigation is to sustain the functions and values of aquatic resources in the watershed through *protection, restoration, and enhancement*, of wetlands and streams, to compensate for the aquatic resources lost from impacts.

In New Hampshire, the permittee should first explore whether there are local projects recommended by the Town's Conservation Commission that may be used as mitigation.

Types of projects that can be used as local compensation for losses to wetlands and streams and included on a Town's 'Mitigation Priority List'

Land Protection

of a wetland, stream, or vernal pool and its critical upland buffer

- Acquisition of land by fee-simple purchase by a municipality or conservation entity.
- Conservation easements and deed restrictions preventing future development.

Wetland Restoration & Enhancement

to increase functions & values of degraded wetlands

- Remove fill from a wetland to restore natural hydrology and vegetation.
- Restore natural hydrology
- Improve water quality by eliminating pollutant discharge into a wetland, removing impervious surfaces in the upland buffer, and establishing stormwater treatment.
- Tidal marsh and mudflat enhancement
- Living shoreline creation

Stream Restoration & Enhancement

for aquatic connectivity, habitat, & flood resiliency

- Reconnect aquatic habitats by removing dams and upgrading culverts to allow for fish and wildlife passage.
- Daylighting buried streams and channel rehabilitation.
- Habitat enhancements for fish and wildlife such as wood additions and step-pool creation.
- Reconnect a stream with its floodplain with graded benches and plantings.
- Remove bank armoring and use bioengineering for to stabilize banks.

The biological, physical, and geochemical processes that occur within wetlands, streams, and lakes provide important ecosystem services such as water purification and storage, wildlife habitat, flood storage and attenuation, called "Functions and Values". When considering what type of mitigation is suitable to offset the impacts from a project, it is important to understand the functions that have been lost and their importance in the watershed. To learn more about the important functions that wetlands and streams perform, and what methods are used for assessments, read the [Wetlands Fact Sheet on Functional Assessments](#).

What makes a good mitigation site?

The Project Contains High-Value Resources and Functions

Wetlands and streams that perform multiple functions that are significant to the watershed are good candidates for mitigation sites. In particular, it is most beneficial if the mitigation site is located in the same HUC 10 watershed, to better offset the losses locally.

Benefits to Water Quality and Supply

Areas that are important to public water supply sources, and lie within source water, wellhead, groundwater protection, or high-yield aquifer areas are great candidates for mitigation projects as they serve a critical function in maintaining clean water supplies to the public.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

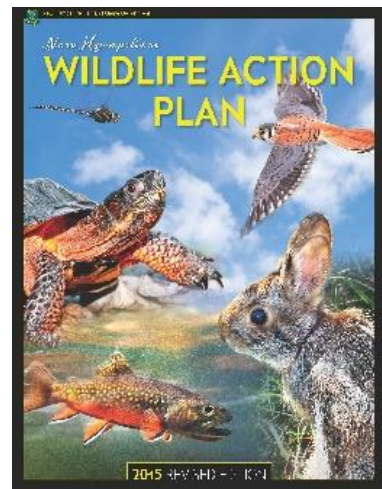
Protection or restoration of an area that will benefit an exemplary natural community, threatened, rare, or endangered species is highly encouraged. Areas ranked as Statewide (Tier 1) or Regional Biological Significance (Tier 2) by the NHFG Wildlife Action Plan are important to sustaining critical wildlife habitat. High-value aquatic resources such as vernal pools, prime-wetlands, fens, and coldwater streams, are excellent targets for mitigation.

Landscape Connectivity

Projects that will connect conservation lands by adding to existing protected parcels and establishing new connections between conserved lands, are important to landscape resiliency. Contributes to continuous blocks of undeveloped land by adding to within one of the larger, unfragmented blocks of land within its HUC 10 watershed. Projects that reconnects high-quality stream habitat that is important to fish and other aquatic animals.

Supports Regional Conservation Efforts

Projects that have strong support from the host-municipality and local conservation partners are encouraged. Areas identified as a priority in a conservation plan and that are under high threat to potential development and conservation groups are eager to have it protected.



Tips for Creating your Town's Priority Mitigation List

It is important for your Conservation Commission to have a diverse list that captures many types of projects that are accepted as compensatory mitigation. This will better prepare your town to find a project that will appropriately offset the lost functions when a major impact project is being permitted!

- Perform a natural resource inventory of your town to identify high-quality wetlands, streams, vernal pools, and assess their buffers. Point out areas that need some restoration work to enhance the functions on the site.
- Reach out to local land trusts and conservation organizations to collaborate on finding areas with a common conservation interest.
- Explore the NHFG Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) and the Natural Heritage Bureau database to identify exemplary natural communities, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitats in your community. Highlight parcels that contain Tier 1 and Tier 2 WAP habitat and identify areas that contain, and have suitable habitat for threatened or endangered species.
- Prioritize areas that contain vernal pools, buffers on prime wetlands, frontage on designated rivers, and headwater streams.
- Put a conservation easement on an existing town-owned land, such as town forests that are not currently protected.
- Look for parcels adjacent to existing protected lands or those that would connect separated conservation parcels to build upon local conservation efforts. .
- Find farmlands that could be sustainably managed for grassland species and riparian corridors that could be retired from agriculture and replanted with native trees.
- Identify deficient culverts in your community and target those that would open up fish and wildlife passage and increase flood resiliency.
- Look for old, high-risk dams that could be removed.

Resources to assist you in putting together a comprehensive Mitigation Priority List for your Town

There are many online mapping tools and conservation organizations that use the best available science to help you explore what potential projects are in your community.

- [NHDES Aquatic Restoration Mapper](#)
- [NHDES One Stop Mapper](#)
- [NHDES Wetlands Permitting Tool](#)
- [NHFG Wildlife Action Plan Town Maps](#)
- [GRANIT View](#)
- [NH Wetlands Mapper](#)