

# CONSERVATION LAND – The Power of Private Conservation

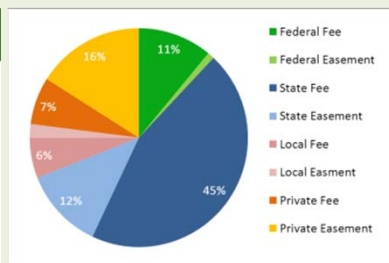
In 1955, when the newly-formed Nature Conservancy rallied to purchase 555 acres of old growth hemlock forest in New York's Mianus River Gorge, who could have predicted that by 2012 the region would be home to more than 3,000 private land trusts, conservation organizations, and individual easement holders? Collectively, these private entities hold over 4.3 million acres of land: more area than the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. The majority of private conservation land is held in easements designed for multiple natural resource uses (GAP 3).

Only five percent of all privately held conservation land is protected specifically for nature (GAP 1 and GAP 2).

## Conservation Organizations Making an Impact



4.3 Million Acres Conserved



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**GAP 1: Permanently Secured from Development and Intended Only for Nature and Natural Processes**



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**GAP 2: Permanently Secured from Development and Intended for Nature with Some Management**



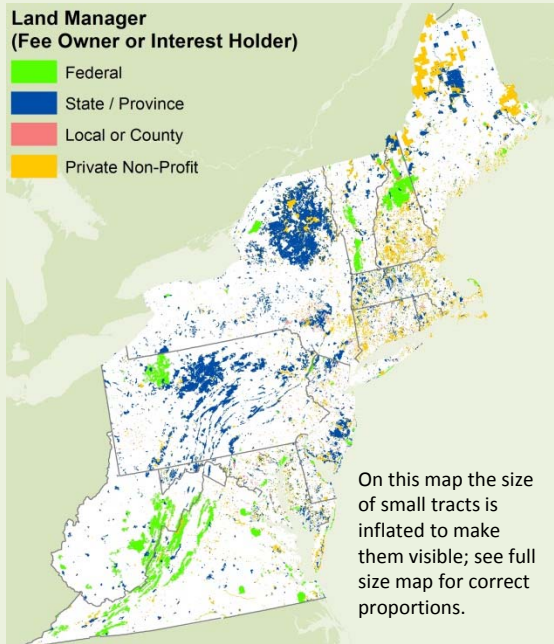
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**GAP 3: Permanently Secured from Development and Intended for Multiple Natural Resource Uses (e.g. forest management)**

## Ownership of the 24 Million Acres of Secured Land

### Land Manager (Fee Owner or Interest Holder)

- Federal
- State / Province
- Local or County
- Private Non-Profit



On this map the size of small tracts is inflated to make them visible; see full size map for correct proportions.

In the Northeast, the 4 million acres of privately secured conservation land now rivals the federal land holdings of 6 million acres.

The rapid growth of private conservation land supplements the 12 million acres protected by individual states.

### Land Conversion Far Exceeds Land Securement

In all, land converted to agriculture or development accounts for 43 million acres or 28 percent of the region. Land secured from development accounts for 24 million acres or 16 percent of the region. Thus, land conversion exceeds land securement by almost 2 to 1.

\* The term "Northeast" and all statistics refer to the 13 New England and Mid-Atlantic states.

Underlying data developed by The Nature Conservancy's Eastern Science Office with support from the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.



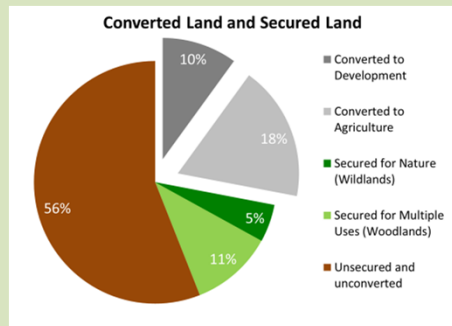
Fact sheet supported by Sweet Water Trust  
www.sweetwatertrust.org

**For the full report and large maps go to:**

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/UnitedStates/edc/reportsdata/stateofnature>

## Secured Land: 24 million acres




In the Northeast, **only five percent** of all land is set aside specifically for nature. These “Wildlands” are classed as GAP Status 1 or 2. Another 11 percent are managed for multiple natural resource uses like forest products and drinking water. These “Woodlands” are classed as GAP Status 3. Overall, secured land that is permanently conserved against conversion to development - totals 16 percent.

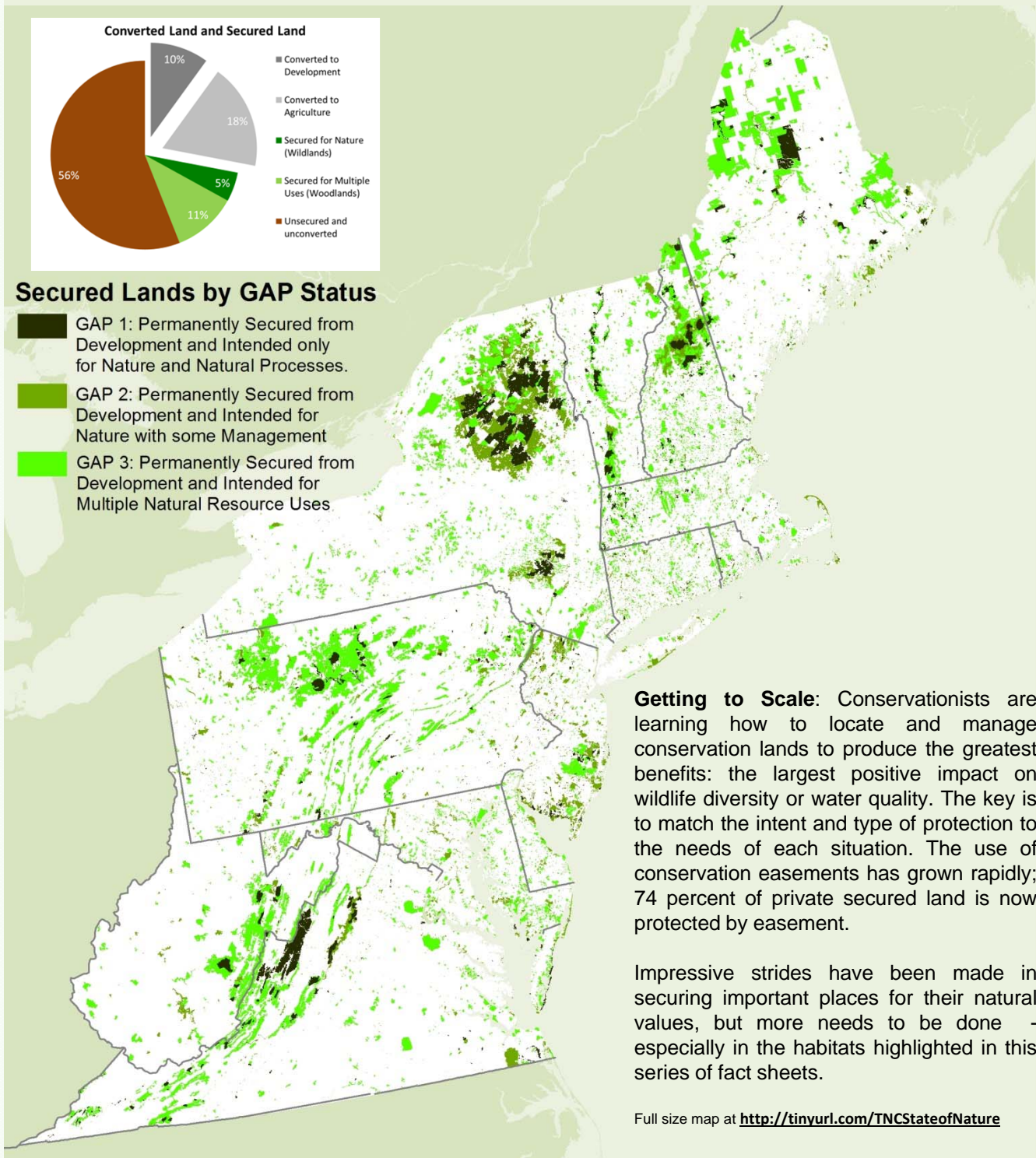


## Converted Land: 43 million acres

Land that is converted to development, roads, transmission lines, agriculture, or other non-natural conditions, currently accounts for almost twice as much area as secured land. Declines in water and air quality, depletion of soil nutrients, losses of species diversity, and increases in disease are all associated with land conversion. Converted land in the Northeast totals 28 percent.

### Secured Lands by GAP Status

-  GAP 1: Permanently Secured from Development and Intended only for Nature and Natural Processes.
-  GAP 2: Permanently Secured from Development and Intended for Nature with some Management
-  GAP 3: Permanently Secured from Development and Intended for Multiple Natural Resource Uses



**Getting to Scale:** Conservationists are learning how to locate and manage conservation lands to produce the greatest benefits: the largest positive impact on wildlife diversity or water quality. The key is to match the intent and type of protection to the needs of each situation. The use of conservation easements has grown rapidly; 74 percent of private secured land is now protected by easement.

Impressive strides have been made in securing important places for their natural values, but more needs to be done - especially in the habitats highlighted in this series of fact sheets.

Full size map at <http://tinyurl.com/TNCStateofNature>