

Granite State Future: ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Submitted by
Lakes Region Planning Commission

*This outline is intended to assist the planners of each region as they develop the Environmental Appendix of their Regional Plans.
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The **Environmental Planning Chapter** evaluates land use decisions and develops strategies to sound environmental planning and evaluates opportunities to enhance natural resource connectivity for both ecological purposes and human health benefits. A well-connected system of trails, parks and open space provide low to no cost fitness and healthy recreation opportunities for citizens. Additionally, maintaining large unfragmented open space and conservation networks further support our state's natural heritage and economy that depends upon the state's pristine environmental resources.

1. Introduction

- a. Purpose
 - i. This chapter **will**:
 1. Summarize findings of the planning process
 2. Provide recommendations for future policy objectives
 3. Provide a platform for future discussions
 - ii. This chapter **will not** capture all the data and expertise that is dispersed among the State's institutions and individuals, all of whom belong in this ongoing conversation
- b. Introduce Overarching Challenges and Opportunities

2. Environmental Assets, Issues and Opportunities

- a. Identify Major Issues
 - i. Identify Major threats and challenges
 - ii. Draw relationships to other chapters
- b. Major, long-term trends in protection strategies
 - i. Major programs and legislative landmarks (e.g., Clean Air, Clean Water, Current Use, establishment of CSPA/HCPP, dismantling of CSPA/HCPP, etc.)
 1. Discuss impacts, benefits and challenges to your region's towns
 2. How has this shaped the local and regional role?
 - ii. Evolution of awareness and resultant behavior change (*e.g., raw sewage was once discharged directly into Lake Winnepesaukee, now much of the Lake is encompassed by a public sewer system*)
- c. Present Community Engagement Results
 - i. Communities of Interest/Place, Listening Boxes, Open Houses, etc.
 1. Tell the story
 2. What was said?
 3. What did it teach us?
- d. Identify the Most Significant Priorities for the Future

3. Existing Conditions and Environmental Trends in the Region - For this section, first refer to Appendix A, “List of Environmental Topics.” Using the list as a starting point, work with your regional team to identify the issues of highest priority/urgency in your region. Then write about those topics within the following framework (Don’t forget, this chapter should talk about recreation opportunities and challenges, not just natural resource protection):

- a. Topic #1 (e.g., *Stormwater*)
 - i. Background (e.g., *Stormwater consistently ranks as the #1 threat to New Hampshire’s surface waters. While recent changes to federal law will direct tighter regulation in the State’s most populous municipalities, the vast majority of oversight falls into the hands of municipal land use boards...*)
 - ii. Current Conditions and Recent Trends (e.g., *As illustrated through [studies like SPNHF’s “NH’s Changing Landscape], the _____ region has experienced a blab, blab, blab percent increase in developed acreage. Widely corroborated studies document a predictable decline in water quality as new impervious surfaces arise within the surrounding catchment. Thus, it is likely that regional water quality declines documented in Table 5.1 are significantly correlated with increased, contaminant-laden overland flow.*)
 - iii. Opportunities (e.g., *Cognizant of their overarching responsibility to “enhance the public health, safety and general welfare and encourage the appropriate and wise use of land,” many New Hampshire Planning Boards are currently taking steps to revise planning ordinances and regulations so they address water quality threats as they emerge. Here in the _____ region, for example, the communities of Weare, Whatte and Whenne have all blab, blab, blab*)

4. Summary of Findings

- a. What really stood out to your planning group as you conducted your research?
- b. Were any commonly held perceptions challenged through this process?

5. Conclusions

- a. Highlight the Region’s strengths
- b. Revisit major threats and challenges (2.a.i)
- c. Establish Priority Areas for Environmental Protection

6. Goals and Objectives - For this section, determine whether it will be best to categorize goals and objectives by threat or by resource. Then, write about those topics within the following framework, making sure to address each of the topics covered in your “Existing Conditions” section:

- a. What have we as a region decided we want to do? Conserve? Protect? Pave everything?
- b. Considering the barriers that have been identified, where do we need to focus?

7. Recommendations & Plan of Action

- a. For each priority area for environmental protection, recommend solutions that reflect the greater level of dialogue that this planning process has enabled. (e.g., *We learned that many municipalities have been weary of revisiting their stormwater regulations because such work was deemed to fall outside the technical capacity of the volunteers sitting on each Planning Board. Now, however, with working models up and running in so many neighboring communities blab, blab, blab*)
- b. For each solution, provide actionable steps for progress.