

Welcome



Cornish Conservation Commission

Community Fall Forum - 2025/26 Conservation Plan Project

November 19, 2025



Welcome



Cornish Conservation Commission Mission:

The Cornish Conservation Commission is dedicated to the protection of the Town of Cornish's rural character, natural environment, and working landscape by encouraging and supporting land conservation efforts, public education, and careful Town planning.

- ❖ We also manage conservation funds from the town budget and land use change tax—public dollars that should be spent in a manner that reflects community values.
- ❖ Developing a **Conservation Plan for Cornish** provides a clear map for investing these funds. It will help us work with willing landowners to protect the community's highest priority natural places, now and for the future.

Why Tonight Matters: From Community Input to Priorities



Spring Forum Recap:

- ❖ Celebrated the new Natural Resources Inventory.
- ❖ Launched the Conservation Plan Project.
- ❖ Gathered essential community input on valued / special places and concerns.

Progress Since Spring:

- ❖ Our partner, Moosewood Ecological, merged this community input with public data and new field surveys on private parcels.
- ❖ This work established a strong, data-rich picture of Cornish's natural landscape.

Tonight's Goal:

- ❖ We now move to the next phase: Identifying Cornish's emerging conservation priorities.
- ❖ These priorities must be ecologically meaningful and community-informed.

Cornish Conservation Plan Project



Key Tasks & Timeline

Timeframe	Task
April	Review publicly available ecological data
May	Community Forum (5/21/25) - Special places
Summer	Field surveys and site visits
Summer-Fall	Mapping and co-occurrence modeling
Fall	Community forum (today!) - Priorities
Fall - Winter	Draft conservation plan
Winter	Community forum (2-11-26) - Plan review
Spring 2026	Publish conservation plan

Tonight's Goal



Refine Conservation Priorities for the Cornish Conservation Plan

Work toward a shortlist of 5 – 7 conservation priorities that are evidence-based, community-informed, and realistically actionable.

Tonight's Agenda



1. Welcome, Intros and Goals for Tonight (Glenn/Robin) (10 mins)
2. Conservation Priorities / What's happening across NH (M.E. - Jeff) (15 mins)
3. Review the Commission's Preliminary Priorities List (Robin) (5 mins)
4. Present Site Visit Data & Mapping Highlights (M.E. - Steven) (20 mins)
5. Review Evidenced-Based Emerging Conservation Priorities (M.E.) (10 mins)
- ~ *Tea and Fall Treats Break (10 mins)* ~
6. Small Group Breakouts to Discuss What Priorities are Resonating (30 mins)
7. Vote on Top 5-7 Conservation Priorities & Group Synthesis (15 mins)
8. Closing Thoughts and Next Steps (Jeff / Robin) (5 mins)

Cornish Conservation Plan Project



Jeffry Littleton, Principal Ecologist, Moosewood Ecological LLC

Steven Lamonde, Project Manager and Ecologist, Moosewood Ecological LLC

Jaime McGuigan, Ecologist, Moosewood Ecological LLC



Mission

To facilitate the conservation and stewardship of biological diversity and ecological integrity throughout the New England landscape.



Conservation Priorities - Statewide

New Hampshire – Key Conservation Priorities

1. **Clean Water & Flood Resilience:** Protect source water, wetlands, and watersheds.
2. **Wildlife Habitat:** Focus on Species of Greatest Conservation Need and habitat connectivity.
3. **Forests & Farmland:** Sustain working lands and promote long-term stewardship.
4. **Rivers & Coasts:** Restore river systems (e.g., dam removal) and coastal habitats.
5. **Climate Resilience:** Adapt to changing conditions and reduce vulnerability.
6. **Invasive Species:** Coordinate statewide prevention and management.



What's Happening Across NH?

Habitat & Wildlife

- Protect key habitats through land protection/easements
- Manage habitats for at-risk species (per State Wildlife Action Plan)
- Control invasive plants in priority areas
- Maintain landscape connectivity for wildlife movement

Water Quality & Quantity

- Protect source water areas (esp. within 5-mile buffers)
- Preserve/restore wetlands and streams
- Implement watershed protection plans
- Improve stream crossings for aquatic passage and erosion control

What's Happening Across NH?

Climate Resilience & Hazard Mitigation

- Protect flood storage and climate-resilient lands
- Reduce flood, erosion, and other hazards

Planning & Assessment

- Develop long-term conservation priorities
- Evaluate properties for ecological value and risk

Partnerships & Education

- Collaborate with agencies, land trusts, and landowners
- Provide outreach and public education

Land Management

- Manage town lands for recreation, forests, and public benefit

CCC's Preliminary Conservation Priorities List*

- 1. Protect natural and working landscapes to sustain rural character**
- 2. Conserve 20–25% of town lands through voluntary, landowner-led conservation**
- 3. Support landowners with education, guidance, and funding where possible**
- 4. Protect wildlife habitat and ecological corridors**
- 5. Preserve active farmland and productive soils**
- 6. Steward Town easements on conserved lands through ongoing monitoring and care**
- 7. Collaborate regionally with conservation partners and neighboring towns**
- 8. Integrate conservation priorities into town planning and zoning documents**

**Per 2024 CCC Statement of Intentions*

Site Visit Data & Mapping Highlights

- ❖ **Nine field days** (June 5th - September 16th)
- ❖ **12 private properties visited, totaling 1,264 acres**
- ❖ **Additional roadside and riverside surveys**
- ❖ **Approximately 700 species of flora, fauna, and fungi observed**
- ❖ **Over 350 detections of 26 rare or uncommon plant species**



Cornish Stage Road



Platt Road



White Swan Farm Road



Blow-Me-Down Mill (1891)



Dingleton Hill Covered Bridge (1882)



Wood Frog



Spotted Salamander





American Black Bear



Solitary Sandpiper



Rich mesic forest



Narrow-leaved glade fern



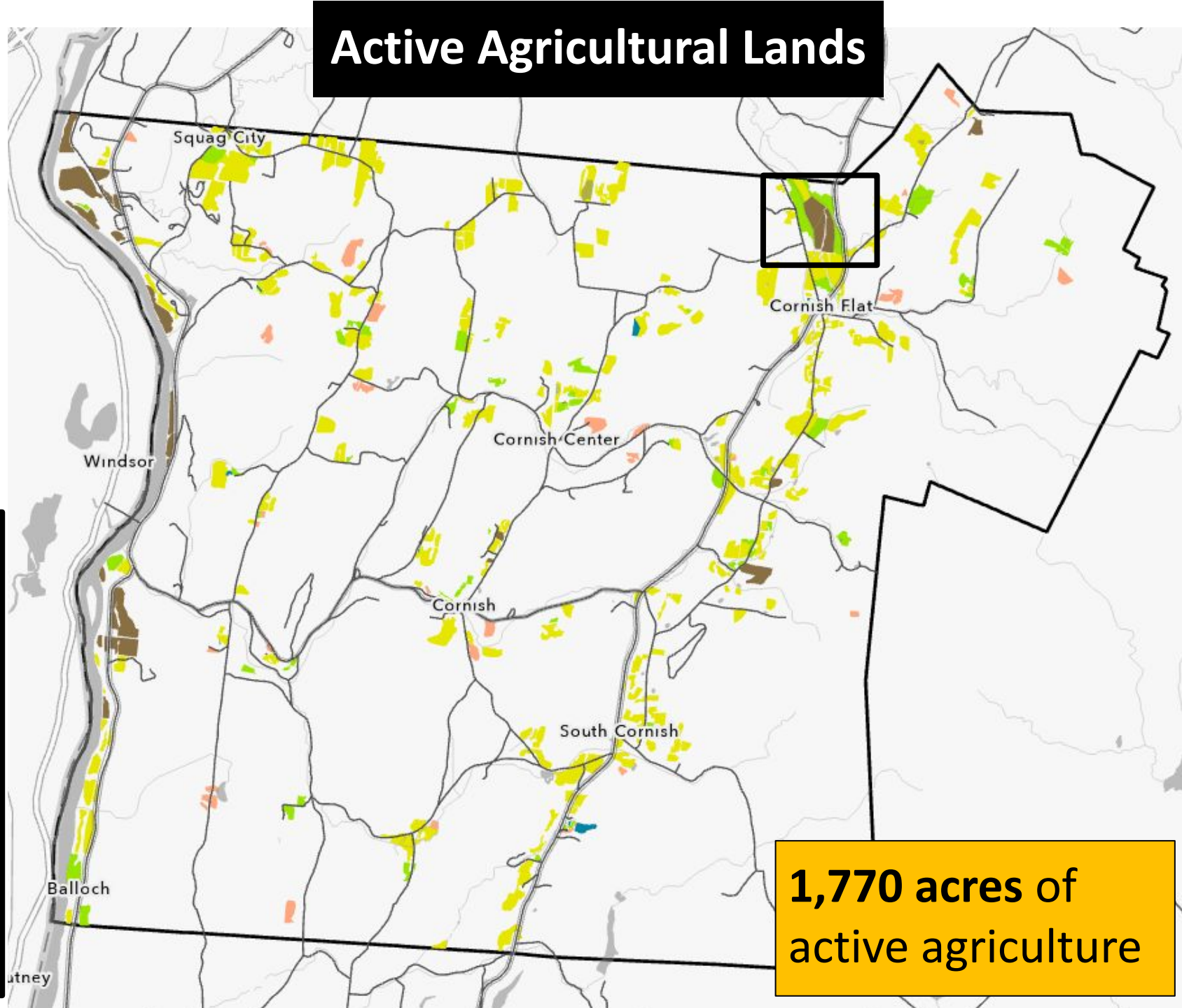
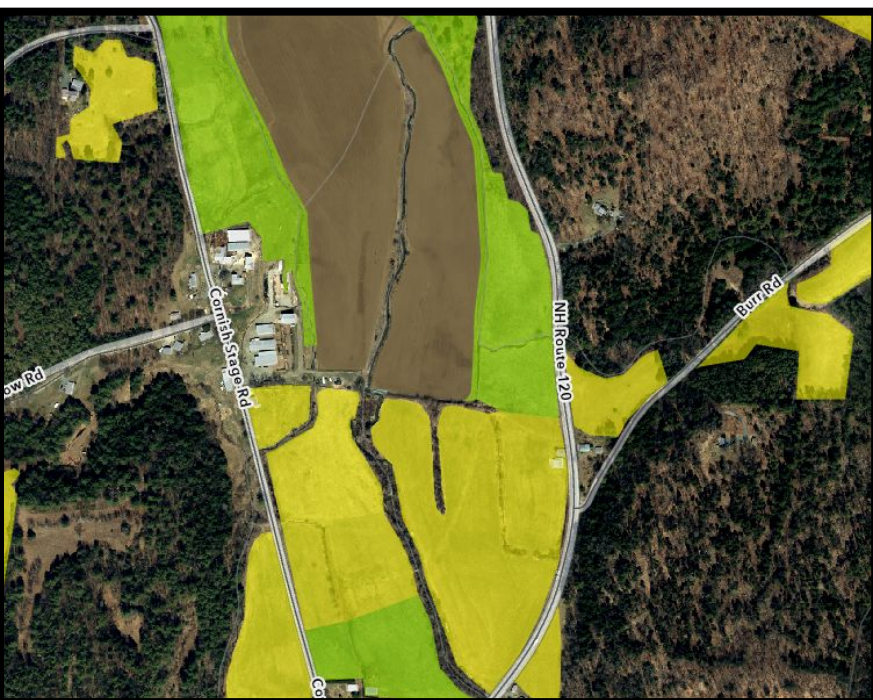
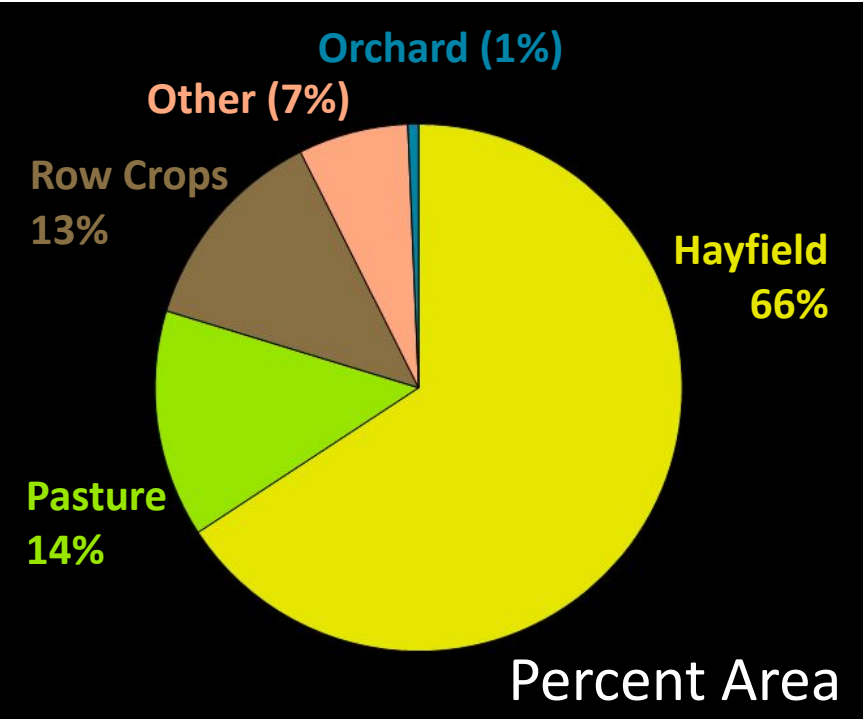
Bearded flatsedge



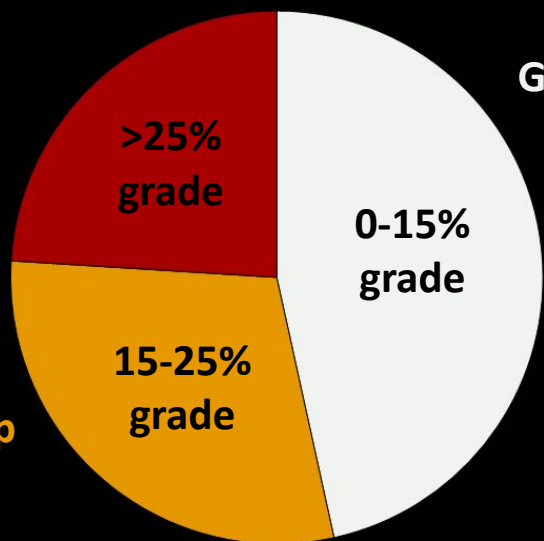
Bur-reed sedge



Northern tubercled orchid



Extremely Steep
24%



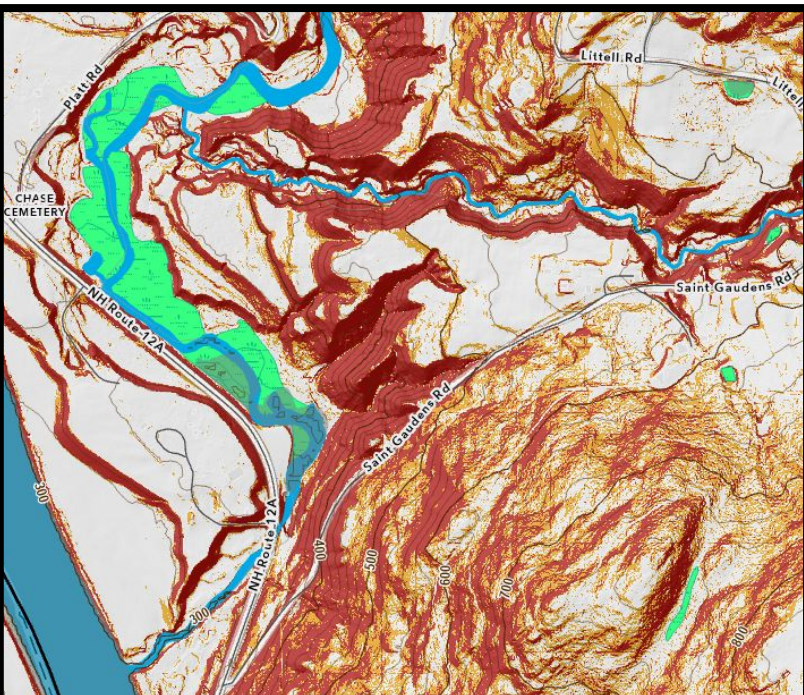
Gentle
47%

**0-15%
grade**

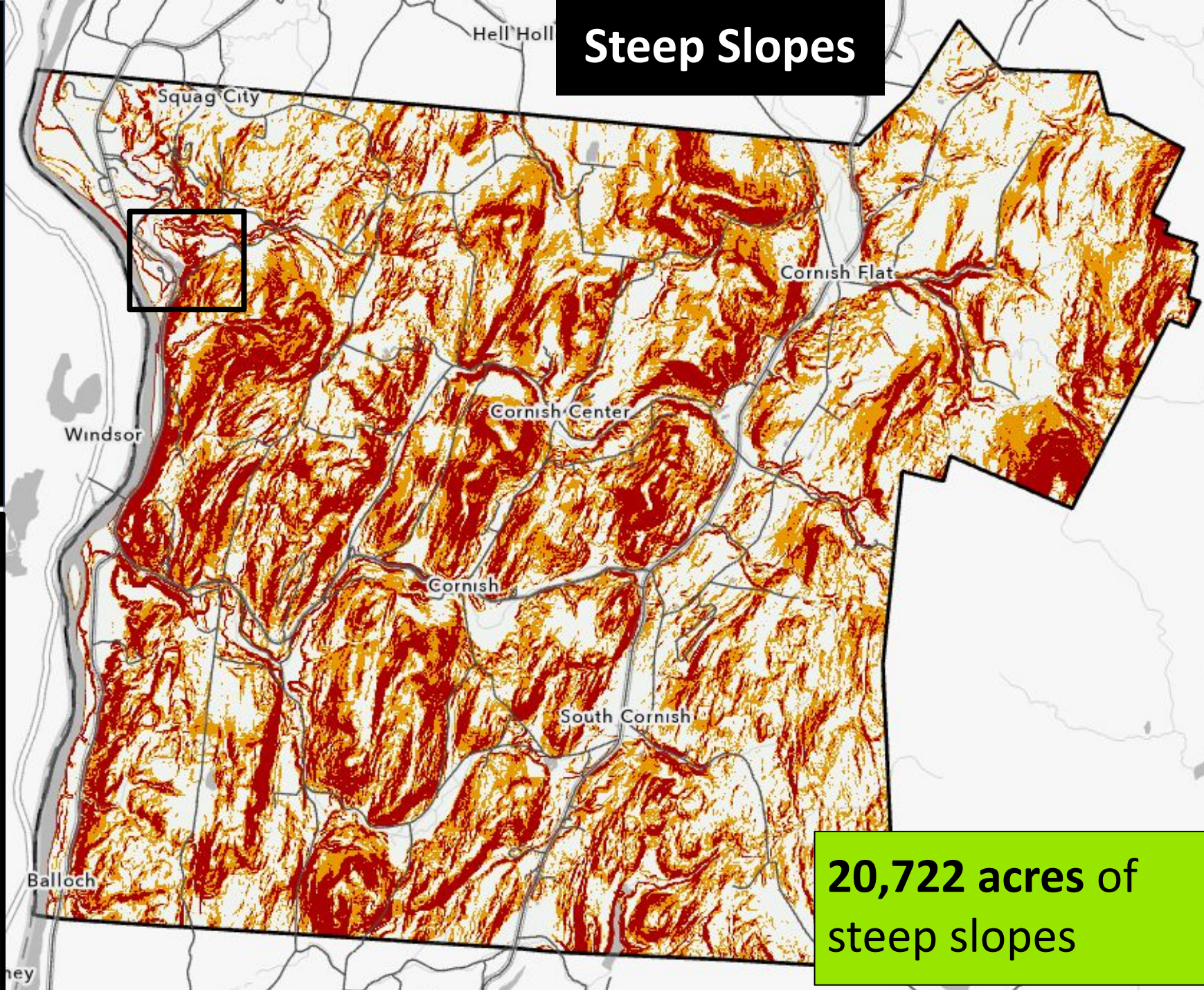
**15-25%
grade**

Steep
29%

Percent area



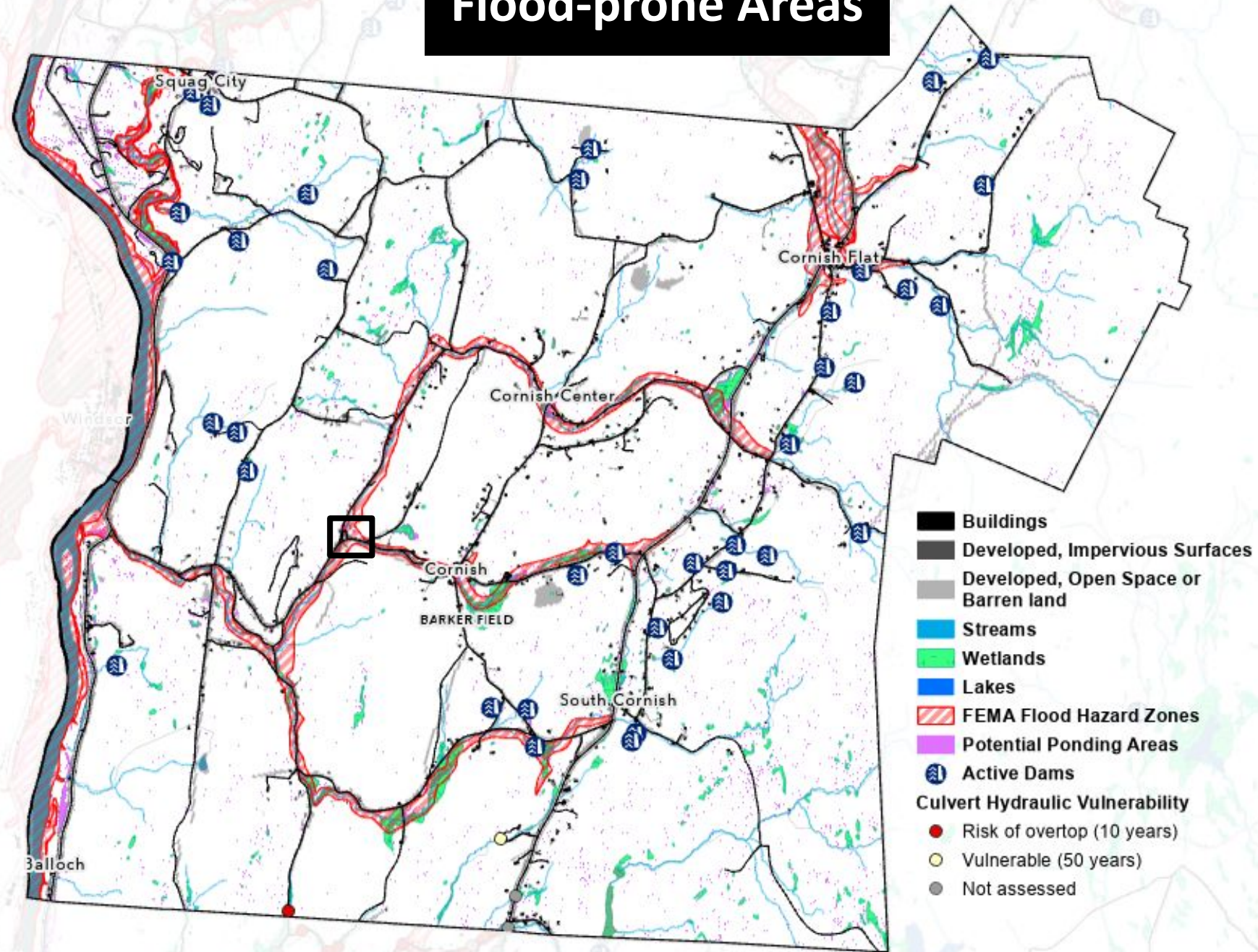
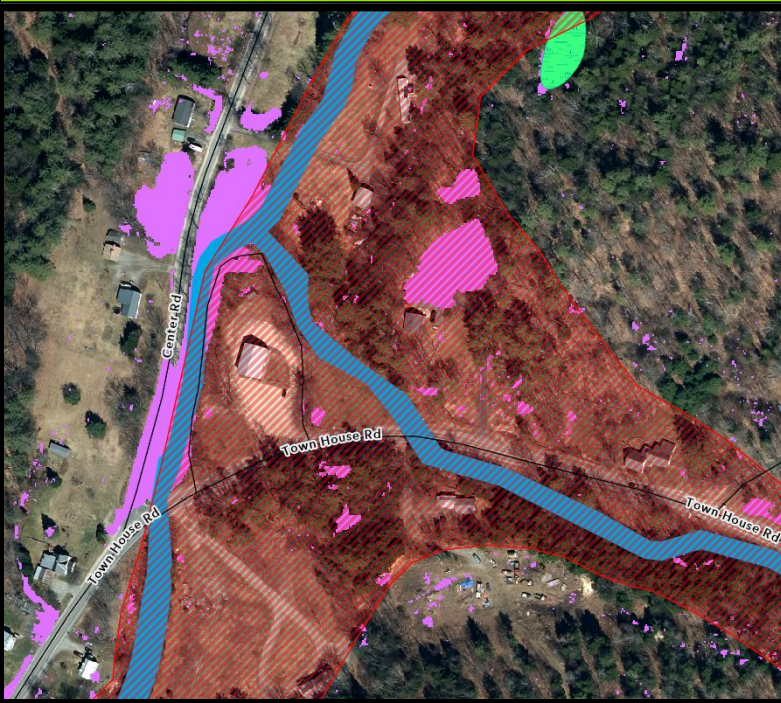
Steep Slopes



**20,722 acres of
steep slopes**

1,010 acres of wetlands
648 acres of basins
274 acres of flood hazard areas
110 stream crossings
38 active dams
10 miles of at-risk roads
2 vulnerable culverts

Flood-prone Areas



Evidenced-Based Emerging Conservation Priority Themes

1. Preserving Cornish's rural character, scenic beauty, and working lands
2. Maintaining public access to natural spaces
3. Preserving important botanical areas
4. Improving flood resilience
5. Actively managing invasive species
6. Maintaining strong wildlife connectivity
7. Curbing deer over-browse



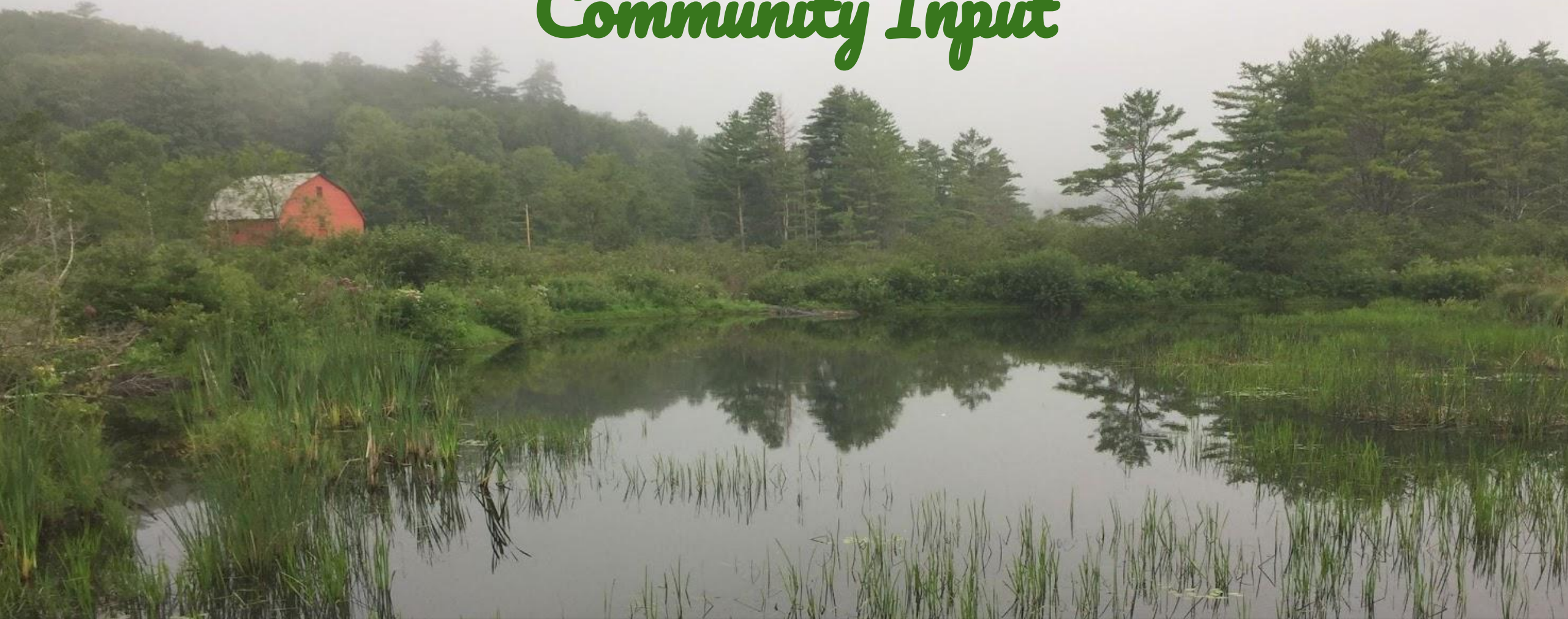
Break



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Community Input



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An aerial photograph of a lush green forest with a winding river or stream cutting through the center. The trees are dense and vibrant green, and the water reflects the surrounding foliage.

Small Group Breakouts to Discuss ‘What Conservation Priorities are Resonating’

Discussion prompts

- 1. Which conservation priorities feel most important for Cornish right now?**
- 2. Why do these stand out to you?** (What values, places, histories, or experiences do they connect to?)
- 3. What trade-offs or questions** should we be aware of as we consider these?
- 4. What would success look like** if we focused on these priorities over the next 5–10 years?

Dot-Voting: Identify Your Top Conservation Priorities

- 1. Around the room are 14 potential conservation priorities, two per flipchart sheet.**
- 2. Every person has been given 7 dots.**
- 3. Use 1 dot per priority — place your dots on the conservation priorities that matter most to you.**
- 4. No need to rank — your dots are simply votes of support.**
- 5. You'll have 5 minutes to walk around, reflect, and place your dots.**

After voting, please return to your seats — we will unpack the results together and close out the evening!

Consolidated List of Conservation Priorities

(State / CCC / Evidenced-Based)

1. Protect source water, wetlands, and watersheds.	8. Conserve 20-25% of town lands through voluntary, landowner-led conservation
2. Improve flood resilience	9. Support landowners with education, guidance, and funding when possible
3. Protect wildlife, habitat and wildlife corridors	10. Integrate conservation priorities into town planning and zoning documents
4. Preserve Cornish's rural character, scenic beauty, and working lands	11. Steward Town easements on conserved lands through ongoing monitoring and care
5. Adapt to changing conditions and reduce vulnerability associated with climate change	12. Collaborate regionally with conservation partners and neighboring towns
6. Curb deer over-browse / Forest health management	13. Preserve important botanical areas
7. Actively manage invasive species	14. Maintain public access to natural spaces

Closing Thoughts and Next Steps



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An aerial photograph of a calm lake surrounded by a dense forest of green trees. The lake has some small, grassy islands in the middle. The word "Questions" is written in a green, cursive font across the center of the image.

Questions



How to Stay Involved

- **Attend our Final Forum for this Project on February 11, 2026 where we will preview the complete Cornish Conservation Plan and seek further input**
- **Talk to your neighbors about the project and encourage them to attend**
- **Reach out to the Conservation Commission with any questions**

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Upcoming Events

- **December 10 - Monthly CCC meeting (at 7pm Town Offices) Public always welcome!**
- **Working toward a joint presentation with SAGA on challenges to forest health - invasives, insect pests and deer overbrowse**
- **We need and want your suggestions for educational presentations and field trips for 2026 (add your thoughts/ideas to the suggestion sheet)**
- **[Cornish Conservation Commission Website](#)**

Thank you for coming!



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