



CITY OF KEENE

R-99-11

In the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Nine
Relating to Guide the Development of Management Plans for
A RESOLUTION ~~...Forested Land Owned by the City of Keene for Conservation~~

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Keene, as follows:

WHEREAS: The City of Keene owns several parcels of significant, forested land for conservation;

WHEREAS: The Conservation Commission has proposed principles to guide the development of management plans for certain forested conservation land owned by the City of Keene;

WHEREAS: The Management Plan Guidelines will apply to fifteen (15) City-owned conservation parcels listed in the guidelines.

WHEREAS: The Management Plan Guidelines contain recommendations relating to property inventories, biodiversity, vistas, buffer zones, water resources, harvesting, recreation, species preserves, and management decision making.

WHEREAS: The Management Plan Guidelines contemplate several categories of Land Use: Natural, Species Preserve, Harvesting, Recreation, Development for Municipal Services, Buffer Zones, and Restricted Access.

WHEREAS: The Management Plan Guidelines are intended to promote coordination and cooperation among various City departments involved with the management of City land.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Keene adopts the Management Plan Guidelines for land Owned by the City of Keene dated November 12, 1998.

Patricia T. Russell

Patricia T. Russell, Mayor

In City Council April 15, 1999.
Referred to The Planning and Development Committee.

PASSED

Passed: May 20, 1999

City Clerk

A true copy; attest:

Patricia T. Russell

Proposed Management Plan Guidelines
for
Land Owned by the City of Keene

Proposed by the Keene Conservation Commission

This document contains principles to guide the development of management plans for forested land owned by the City of Keene for conservation. The guidelines apply to the following city land:

Beech Hill
Robin Hood Forest
Beaver Brook Falls
Keene Forestry Park (near Airport)
Stearns Hill
Ashuelot River Park
Tenant Swamp (north and south)
Ash Swamp Brook Swamp
Dinsmoor Woods
Ladies Wildwood Park
Forested areas of Wheelock Park
Greater Goose Pond Forest (all City parcels contiguous from the Goose Pond and Drummer Hill parcels)
Route 101 – Beaver Brook floodplain
Roberts Parcel – Ash Swamp Brook south of Route 9
Three Mile Swamp

This list may be amended as needed from time to time.

The document also contains recommendations for a process which will be used to develop a plan for a particular property. Each plan will be specific to a property and to the time it is written. As knowledge and circumstances change, the plans can be changed as well.

Its recommendations relate to property inventories, biodiversity, vistas, buffer zones, water resources, harvesting, recreation, species preserves, and management decision making. It also recommends that these issues be viewed in the context of adjacent parcels.

City owned land is currently under the management of at least three City departments. Also more than one City board, commission, or Council Committee is involved with the management of City owned land. Several community groups and individuals have also taken an interest in how City owned land is managed.. This document is intended to promote coordination and cooperation among these groups, using shared management principles.

City staff members are in the process of creating a map that shows all City owned land. When that map is completed, it should serve as a tool for the development of a coordinated plan for all public lands.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

Under this plan, parcels of land will be grouped into management units. A plan will be developed for each unit. The Conservation Commission or its subcommittee will work with city staff to develop the plan in the light of overall goals and guidelines. Data from a biological inventory of the property, a wetland delineation, soils inventory, history of uses and harvesting, and the status of adjacent properties will be gathered and considered. Each plan will have an appropriate time horizon and review schedule.

Final approval of a given management plan will be by the City Council. Approved plans will be written and kept on file in the Planning Department.

Several categories of land use are possible.

- 1) Natural; where nature takes its course.
- 2) Species preserve; in which management preserves habitats or species.
- 3) Harvesting; in which plants or animals are harvested.
- 4) Recreation; either low impact without facilities or high impact with facilities.
- 5) Development; for municipal services.
- 6) Buffer zones; which protect water resources, species, or vistas
- 7) Restricted Access, areas closed to the public for safety or security reasons.

The categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, some harvesting may be required to preserve species. Some recreation may be compatible with a species preserve area or a natural area.

Some land could be sold and the proceeds used in conservation work in the City. This might occur as part of a plan to acquire a large parcel, to recoup some of the cost.

These are public lands being managed by the government. Therefore the public should be able to enter and enjoy these lands in a manner which preserves them for others. Public access to areas around the airport, water supplies, or other public utilities may be restricted for safety and security purposes.

The proceeds of any harvest or sale of these lands should be used to carry out land management plans, or to acquire additional lands as part of the City of Keene Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPERTY INVENTORY

Before a management plan is written for a given unit, an inventory will be made. The inventory will be a record of present and historical human use, and of the plants and animals that live on it or pass through it regularly. Information will also be collected on the soils and topography of the parcel. Of particular interest will be any endangered species, wetlands, or areas that affect the aquifer. All the data gathered will be considered in the writing of the management plan, to insure that the specific attributes of the unit are reflected in the plan.

BIODIVERSITY

Management plans should promote a variety of plant and animal populations. This variety brings the ecological benefit of adaptability to a catastrophic event such as a hurricane, fire, or insect infestation. It also provides marketing flexibility as the value of tree species shifts over time.

Some areas may be left alone to preserve species. Harvesting may enable other species to survive.

A broad view of all City lands needs to be kept. Each unit does not stand alone. It is part of a total ecological system of adjacent, regional, and statewide lands. Each plan should be consistent with statewide efforts to maintain and enhance New Hampshire's biological diversity.

VISTAS, TRAIL CORRIDORS, AND GREENWAYS

Some areas have been acquired to preserve the scenic hillsides or to provide scenic trails. The management plans for these areas should reflect that purpose. Such areas may be set aside from harvesting activity because that might damage the esthetic qualities of the unit.

Existing trails, woods roads, and scenic vistas should be maintained to provide the citizens of Keene the opportunity to enjoy their lands.

SPECIES PRESERVES

Some parcels may be managed with the goal of protecting certain species, including those which are threatened or endangered. The management plan for these areas would focus on preserving the ecosystems which support these species.

WATER RESOURCES

Management plans should preserve water resources. Water resources such as wetlands, rivers, ponds, and aquifers, all contribute to the preservation of species diversity and to the quality of human life. This is an esthetic and ecological concern, and a concern for preserving a supply of fresh drinking water in City wells and reservoirs. Buffer zones contribute to achieving these goals.

The role of plants in filtering water entering the aquifer must be considered. Plants control soil erosion and assist with flood control. Water quality is improved.

BUFFER ZONES

Buffer zones should be included in any plan as a way of protecting water resources. These zones would not allow cutting. Buffer zones should follow current guidelines set forth in the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development; Division of Forests and Lands; Forest; Operations Manual. The manual will be kept on file with the management plans.

New trail locations should take into consideration any fragile or biologically significant areas where increased foot traffic could cause damage. Discretion must be used in creation of any maps or brochures of park open spaces so that sensitive areas receive only the number of visitors they can handle.

HARVESTING

Harvesting may be part of a management plan. It can contribute to species preservation, or maintain vistas while providing revenue for use in management of other City land. It should never be contemplated as a purely economic activity, but should always be part of an ecological management plan.

Guidelines set forth in the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development; Division of Forests and Lands; Operations Manual should be followed.

RECREATION

Recreational uses of City land could be viewed as a continuum from low impact uses without facilities, to high impact uses with sport and comfort facilities.

Low impact recreation would be activities such as hiking or cross country skiing, with picnicking on a carry in carry out basis. Such a use would be compatible with preserving species diversity, provided trails and maps are planned to protect sensitive locations or species.

As a part of an overall plan, some areas may be available for motorized sports or developed into more organized sports facilities such as baseball or tennis. Such a plan would be possible, as long as it included the consideration of the various issues noted elsewhere in this report.

MANAGEMENT DECISION MAKING

It is recommended that management plans be written jointly by a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission formed for that purpose and City staff responsible for overseeing the particular unit. The Conservation Commission can solicit input from the public and assist in gathering inventory data. The City may hire area professionals to conduct research on a management unit.

A management plan must be completed for a unit before any timber harvesting is done on it. Trails and vistas may be maintained until the plan is completed.

When the plan is written, it will be submitted to the appropriate committees of the City Council and to other boards or commissions for their review and comment. The plan will be revised to reflect the input of the various groups who have reviewed it. At the end of this process, the plan will be submitted to the City Council for adoption.

Once the plan is adopted, the plan will be carried out by the responsible City department. The Conservation Commission will serve as an advisory group to the department in carrying out the specifics of the plan.

Plans may be reviewed and changes adopted through this same process

