

CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

Although more collaborative efforts may exist, the five case studies selected represent some of the most promising--and prominent--landscape scale efforts in place today. A summary of the age, service area, mission, participants, structure, funding, key accomplishments, and unique features of each group follows. For a quick, visual reference, Table 3 summarizes this information (next page). The general location of each effort is shown in Figure 1.

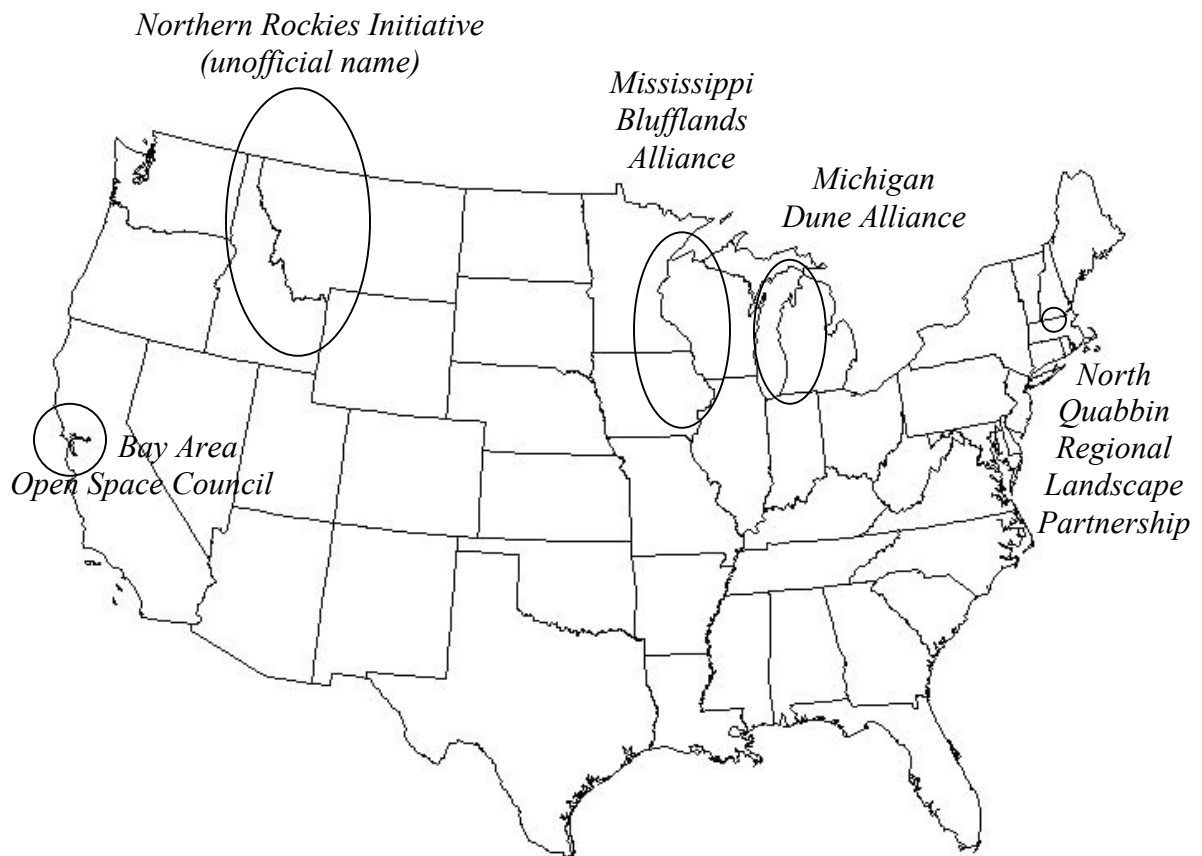


Figure 1: Case Study Locations

Table 3: Summary of Landscape Scale Collaborative Initiatives

<i>Program</i>	BLUFFLANDS ALLIANCE	BAY AREA OPEN SPACE COUNCIL	MICHIGAN DUNE ALLIANCE	NORTH QUABBIN REGIONAL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP	NORTHERN ROCKIES INITIATIVE (unofficial name)
<i>Date Established</i>	1993	1990	1999	1997	2000
<i>Service Area</i>	Mississippi River Blufflands in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa	Nine counties bordering the San Francisco Bay in California	Eastern shore of Lake Michigan in Michigan	Approximately 1800 square miles in north-central Massachusetts	western Wyoming, Idaho, east/central Montana, British Columbia, and Alberta
<i>Mission</i>	To “coordinate land protection efforts in the region while educating landowners and others about its significance”	“To strengthen the technical capacity of the park & open space organizations and & agencies active in the region, & to broaden public support and financial commitment to open space protection”	To “promote conservation and stewardship of the coastal marshes, dunes, forests and freshwater river systems along the shores of Lake Michigan”	“To collaborate to identify, protect, and enhance strategic ecological, cultural, and historic open space in the rural landscape of the North Quabbin Region”	Still working to define; currently “a loose association of land trusts in the Rockies who are looking at ways of working together to conserve the most important & threatened lands in the region”
<i>Participants</i>	-Four local land trusts (two in Illinois and two in Wisconsin) -Two statewide land trusts (Minnesota and Iowa)	Over 150 organizations, including private, nonprofit land trusts and public park and open space agencies	-Five land trusts - The Nature Conservancy -A small number of state and federal land management agencies	At least 25 private organizations, regional and municipal commissions, and state and federal agencies, including three land trusts	Over 20 local land trusts and national land conservation organizations with offices in the region (continues next page)

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<i>Structure</i>	Internal coordination with assistance from Gathering Waters Conservancy (WI); decisions made by consensus; operations governed by a written partnership agreement	Coordinated by three staff members of the Greenbelt Alliance; full council and Executive Committee meet in alternate months; loose consensus format	The Conservation Fund has served as coordinator, facilitator, consultant, and fiscal agent for the group, which operates on an informal, consensus basis	An executive committee meets on a quarterly basis, while the full group meets approximately twice a year. Coordinator role varies.	Meets at least twice yearly; currently coordinated by LTA NW
<i>Funding source</i>	Private foundation; funds must be matched by individual trusts	40 dues-paying members, private foundations, and public sources	Private foundations and public sources	None designated	Private foundations
<i>Results (sample)</i>	Joint projects such as workshops, landowner referrals, purchases of property; individual trusts have negotiated easements, added staff, done strategic planning, etc.	Instrumental in passage of \$55 million + state conservation bond; sponsors research and workshops; maintains GIS database of protected lands	Participating trusts have developed three year work plans; some have been able to hire additional staff	The protection of Tully Mountain and the establishment of the twenty-mile long Tully Loop Trail	Cooperative GIS mapping; support for conservation planning and stewardship projects
<i>Unique features of group</i>	-Multi-state effort -Written partnership agreement outlines commitments of participants	-Large size -Has three full time staff -Members contribute financially -Public and private partners present	-Wide range of government partners present, but do not participate in land protection activities	-Public and private partners present -Large number of participants relative to number of land trusts (only 3 trusts out of 25+ organizations)	-Multi-state effort -Very large geographic scale of operations

THE BLUFFLANDS ALLIANCE (MN, WI, IA, IL)

Founded in 1993, the Blufflands Alliance is “the nation’s first multi-state alliance of...private organizations working together to save a regional landscape” (Bulasko, 2001, p. 2G). Non-profit land trusts working along the Mississippi River in four states--Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois--have joined together to “coordinate land protection efforts in the region while educating landowners and others about its significance” (Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, 2001, p.14). The region encompasses 24 counties and approximately 350 miles of river, north from Davenport, IA to the confluence with the St. Croix River on the Wisconsin-Minnesota border (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Blufflands Alliance Focus Area (Education Place, 2002)

This stretch of the Mississippi is home to unique geologic features (the “blufflands”), as well as rare plant species, migratory bird habitat, important Native American

archeological sites, and productive farmland. It is also “the nation’s fourth-fastest growing area in terms of rural land consumed by development” (Engstrom, 2000, p.6).

Of the four founding organizations, three continue to participate--the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy, and the Minnesota Land Trust; three additional trusts have since joined (the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (IL), the Natural Land Institute (IL), and the Mississippi Valley Conservancy (WI)). The Standing Cedars Land Conservancy (WI) attends meetings but does not participate financially. The group meets quarterly for a full day, coordinated in part by the Gathering Waters Conservancy, an umbrella group located in Wisconsin. Decisions are made by consensus, and operations are governed by a written partnership agreement, under which “groups who fail to meet their goals could have Alliance payments withheld until goals are met or could even be ejected from the Alliance” (Engstrom, 2000, p. 5). Having this accountability built in helps ensure that the participants meet the goals outlined in their three-year work plans, as required by the group’s primary funder, the Minnesota-based McKnight Foundation.

The McKnight funding is primarily targeted toward building each group’s capacity (through staff, training, workshops, etc.), but some support does go directly to land protection projects. Participating organizations must match the McKnight contributions at a 3:1 ratio; thus, the approximately \$2.8 million given by McKnight since 1998 has leveraged around \$8.5 million in matching funds. Funds are distributed through a rotating fiscal agent, based on each group’s capacity to match the funds and to carry out projects, as determined via required quarterly and annual reports. A revolving loan fund has been established as well.

The effort has produced impressive results. Almost 12,000 acres of land have been protected either through acquisition or conservation easement by members of the Alliance since 1998. Almost 800 landowner contacts and presentations were made in the same span of time, with around 280 newspaper articles generated as well. Individual groups have taken on projects to benefit the group effort, such as the Minnesota Land Trust’s work on conservation development, the Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy’s investigation of purchase and transfer of development rights programs, and the Iowa

Natural Heritage Foundation’s work on habitat conservation needs. Participants have also worked on joint projects, including co-hosting outreach workshops, sharing landowner referrals, serving as back-ups on easements, and joint purchases of property. At the same time, participating groups have benefited individually, either by adding staff, doing local outreach, completing local projects, training staff, completing strategic plans, and working with local governments. Future plans include developing an even larger-scale focus and coordinating conservation efforts from the “headwaters” to the “backwaters” (encompassing the entire Mississippi River), including looking for federal funding support.

THE BAY AREA OPEN SPACE COUNCIL (CA)

Founded in 1990, the Bay Area Open Space Council involves both private, nonprofit land trusts and public park and open space agencies. The Council’s area of focus includes the nine counties bordering the San Francisco Bay in California, a large estuary fed by countless streams and drainages flowing into the Bay from within the nine counties (Figure 3).

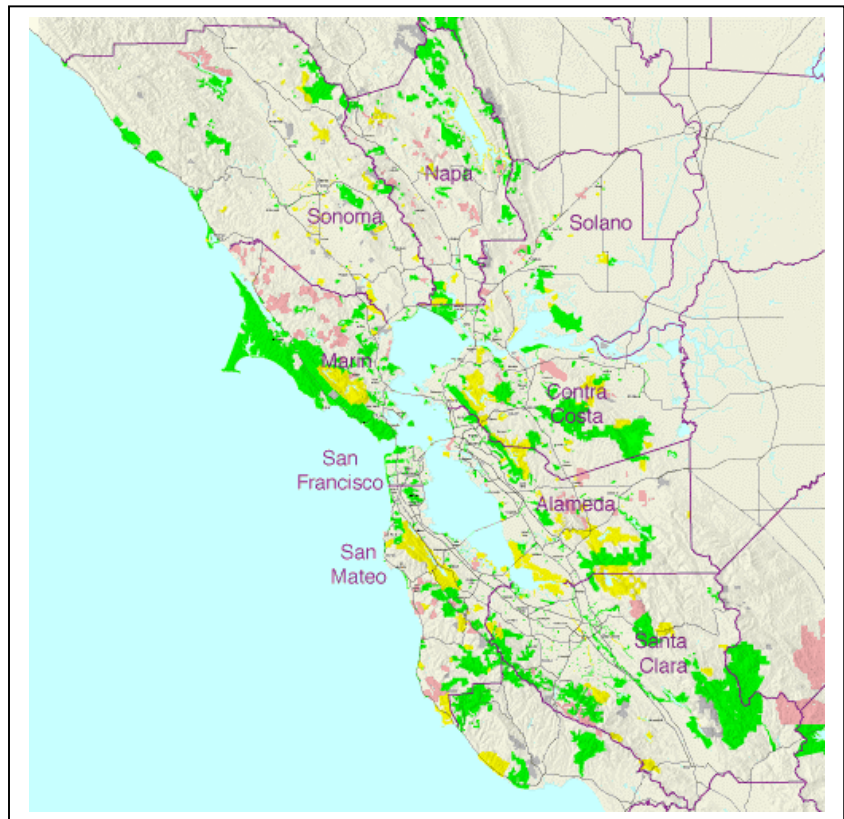


Figure 3: Bay Area Open Space Council Service Area
(Bay Area Open Space Council, 2002)

Although a large metropolitan area, the Bay Area remains home to a range of wildlife species, ongoing agricultural enterprises, and outdoor recreational pursuits. A central purpose of the Council is to “enhance the region’s quality of life by articulating the region’s vision of which lands should be protected as open space through public ownership or conservation easements, and by developing financial and organizational resources to implement this vision” (Bay Area Open Space Council, 2001, p.1). As such, two “objectives are central to the Council’s mission: first, to strengthen the technical capacity of the park and open space organizations and agencies active in the region, and second, to broaden public support and financial commitment to open space protection” (Bay Area Open Space Council, 1999, p.1).

Over 150 agencies and organizations involved in land conservation and management in the Bay Area participate in the Council, with approximately 40 organizations contributing as dues-paying members. Fifteen organizations comprise the Executive Committee, and are representative of the types of participants found in the council as a whole:

- The California Coastal Conservancy
- East Bay Regional Park District
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
- Trust for Public Land
- San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
- County of San Mateo
- Marin County Open Space District
- County of Santa Clara
- Peninsula Open Space Trust
- Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation

- Muir Heritage Land Trust
- Save Mt. Diablo
- Landpaths
- Greenbelt Alliance

Three staff members of the Greenbelt Alliance serve as the coordinators of the Council, disseminating information, conducting research, and organizing the bi-monthly, three-hour council meetings. In the off-months, the Executive Committee meets to discuss project ideas, set policy, and provide administrative oversight for the group's efforts. The Executive Committee presents project ideas to the full group, which makes decisions based on a loose consensus format. If a project is proposed and members voice opposition, another project is selected.

The Greenbelt Alliance serves as the group's fiscal agent, managing the dues paid by members (which range from \$100/year for small organizations to \$1000/year for larger ones) as well as grant funds received. Support for Council projects has come from both private and public sources, including institutions as diverse as the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Marin Community Foundation, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the National Park Service.

The Council has been able to accomplish a range of projects, including spearheading legislation that led to the creation of the Bay Area Conservancy Program in 1997. Funded by the state of California as part of the California Coastal Conservancy, the Bay Area Conservancy Program channeled \$10 million in 1999 and \$55 million in public funding for open space preservation funding to the area (Guenzler et al, 2000). Additionally, the staff of the Council conducts research on topics of interest to the land conservation community, such as regional conservation needs and conservation easement stewardship, hosts workshops and conferences, and coordinates a GIS database of the region's protected lands. These efforts have helped identify "gaps," areas currently unserved or underserved by open space preservation organizations. The Council has also identified target areas for preservation as part of a conservation plan produced for the Bay Area Conservancy program (Bay Area Open Space Council, 1999a). Current projects

also include “Transit Outdoors,” encouraging the use of public transportation to reach natural areas, and promoting AB 104, The Motor Vehicle Mitigation Fund. The Fund would be created by statewide legislation and would be aimed at reducing the impacts of motor vehicles on surface waters of the Bay area. Finally, the Council has instigated two landscape scale initiatives within the larger bay ecosystem, one in the Diablo Ridgeland and one involving the Blue Ridge-Berryessa Natural Area. Future plans for the group involve investigating systems for collective easement defense, creating a stewardship grants program, and facilitating cooperative projects among members.

THE MICHIGAN DUNE ALLIANCE (MI)

Formed in 1999, the Michigan Dune Alliance brings together five land trusts, the Nature Conservancy, and a small number of state and federal land management agencies. Assembled to “promote conservation and stewardship of the coastal marshes, dunes, forests and freshwater river systems along the shores of Lake Michigan,” the Dune Alliance “seeks to mobilize private, public, and not-for-profit resources to protect the priceless sand dunes along Lake Michigan” (The Conservation Fund, 2000, p. 1). Comprising the most extensive freshwater dune ecosystem in the world, the Lake Michigan shoreline is home to unique and rare species and ecosystems. However, many of these systems are threatened by development, water quality degradation, and sand dune mining. The Dune Alliance was formed to help strengthen the local land trusts’ ability to meet these threats.

Current land trust members include the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, the Leelanau Conservancy, the Little Traverse Conservancy, and the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (all located in Michigan) (Figure 4).

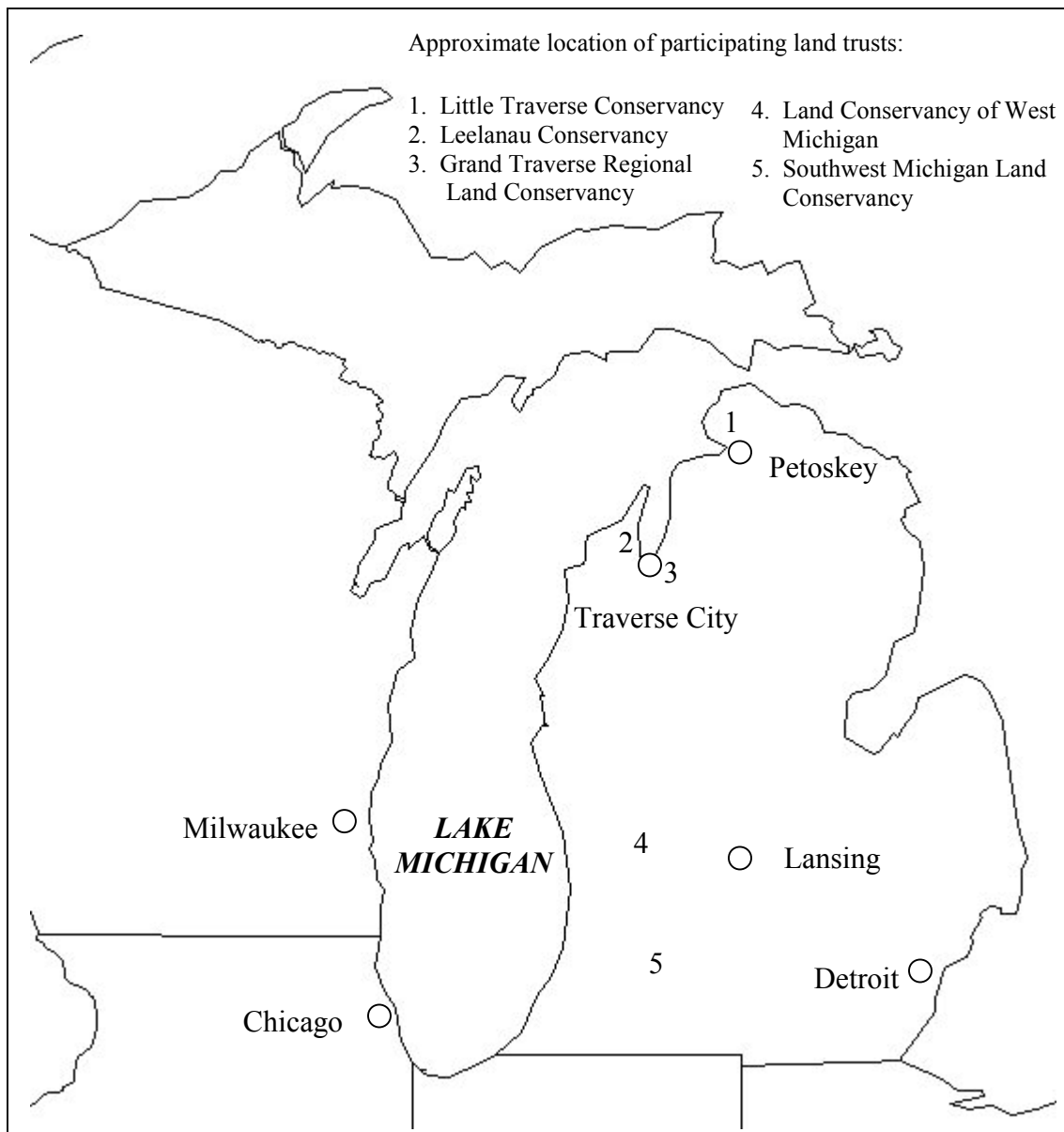


Figure 4: Michigan Dune Alliance Locations

The participating land trusts are supported in their efforts by the Michigan and Great Lakes offices of The Nature Conservancy, the Midwest Office of The Conservation Fund, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the US Forest Service, and the National Park Service. Meetings are currently held as needed and are approximately three hours long. At least three times a year, meetings include educational presentations of interest to participants (on freshwater ecology, stewardship, funding

possibilities, etc.). The Conservation Fund has served as coordinator, facilitator, consultant, and fiscal agent for the group, which operates on an informal, consensus basis.

Funding thus far has come from both private foundations and public sources. Of the \$722,000 the Alliance received in December of 2000, \$600,000 came from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, \$72,000 was from the US Environmental Protection Agency, and \$50,000 came from the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program (Land Trust Alliance, 2001). The current plan is to distribute these funds to the land trusts twice a year, according to the progress each has made on their “work plans,” as reported in bi-annual progress reports. Each participating land trust has generated a three-year work plan, outlining how and when it will develop site plans for targeted conservation areas within its region. Fourteen “targeted sites” were identified by The Nature Conservancy through its eco-regional planning process. Thus far, funds have been distributed to gather information and, in some cases, hire additional staff. Future plans are to continue to develop the capacity of participating organizations to be able to implement their work plans. Operating support, funds to hire additional staff, stewardship funds, assistance with GIS mapping, community education funds and possibly acquisition funds are all part of the plan.

THE NORTH QUABBIN REGIONAL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP (MA)

In May of 1997, the Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and the Harvard Forest sponsored a regional meeting to discuss forming a collaborative effort to protect the North Quabbin region. Over 40 people attended, and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership was born. The mission of the effort is “to collaborate to identify, protect, and enhance strategic ecological, cultural, and historic open space in the rural landscape of the North Quabbin Region” (Youngblood, 1997, p.1).

Covering approximately 1800 square miles in central Massachusetts, the North Quabbin region stretches from the Connecticut River Valley in the west to Mt. Wachusett

in the east, and reaches south to the Prescott Peninsula in the Quabbin Reservoir and north to the New Hampshire border (Figure 5).

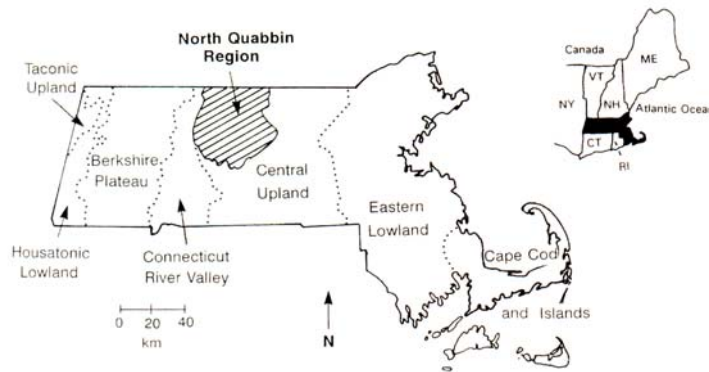


Figure 5: North Quabbin Region (Golodetz and Foster, 1997)

Some of the largest roadless areas in Massachusetts are found here, as are the forested hills, wetlands, rivers, and lakes that numerous species, including bobcat, fisher, and warblers all call home (North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership, 1998). Thirty-seven percent of the region is already protected (Golodetz and Foster, 1997), making it the largest contiguous complex of protected lands in all of Southern New England (North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership, 1998).

At least 25 private organizations, regional and municipal commissions, and state and federal agencies participate in the partnership, including three land trusts: the Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust (MGLCT), the New England Forestry Foundation, and the Trustees of Reservations. Various participants have handled coordination of the group over time, with staff members of the MGLCT, volunteers, and staff members of county planning departments all having filled the role at different times. An executive committee meets on a quarterly basis, while the full group meets approximately twice a year.

A primary function of the partnership is to raise the profile of selected projects, proposed by participants, through an endorsement procedure. As such, the partnership itself does not handle and receive funding; rather, the individual groups heading up each project will receive and distribute funds. Two early partnership-endorsed, cooperative

projects included the protection of Tully Mountain and the establishment of the twenty-mile long Tully Loop Trail. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, the Sudbury Foundation, the Fields Pond Foundation, Eastern Mountain Sports, the National Park Service, and others contributed to the various organizations that participated in this project. Currently, significant funding for additional land protection projects is being provided through the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), which has identified the region as a statewide priority. The EOEA's "Tully Initiative," in its first nine months, helped protect 4,785 acres in 81 parcels in the North Quabbin Region (Youngblood, 2001), and aims to protect over 10,000 more (New England Forestry Foundation, 2000). Other future cooperative projects include land protection around Lake Rohunta, and possibly near the "1000-acre Swamp" near the small town of Phillipston.

THE NORTHERN ROCKIES INITIATIVE (unofficial name)

(ID, MT, WY (U.S.), AND BC, AB (CANADA))

The newest of the five case studies chosen, the Northern Rockies Initiative began in the spring of 2000. The "Northern Rockies" region can be loosely defined (from an United States-based perspective) as the montane ecosystem stretching from western Wyoming through Idaho and east/central Montana and into British Columbia and Alberta. Large protected areas, including Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, the Frank Church Wilderness, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and Banff National Park exist within this region (Figure 6).

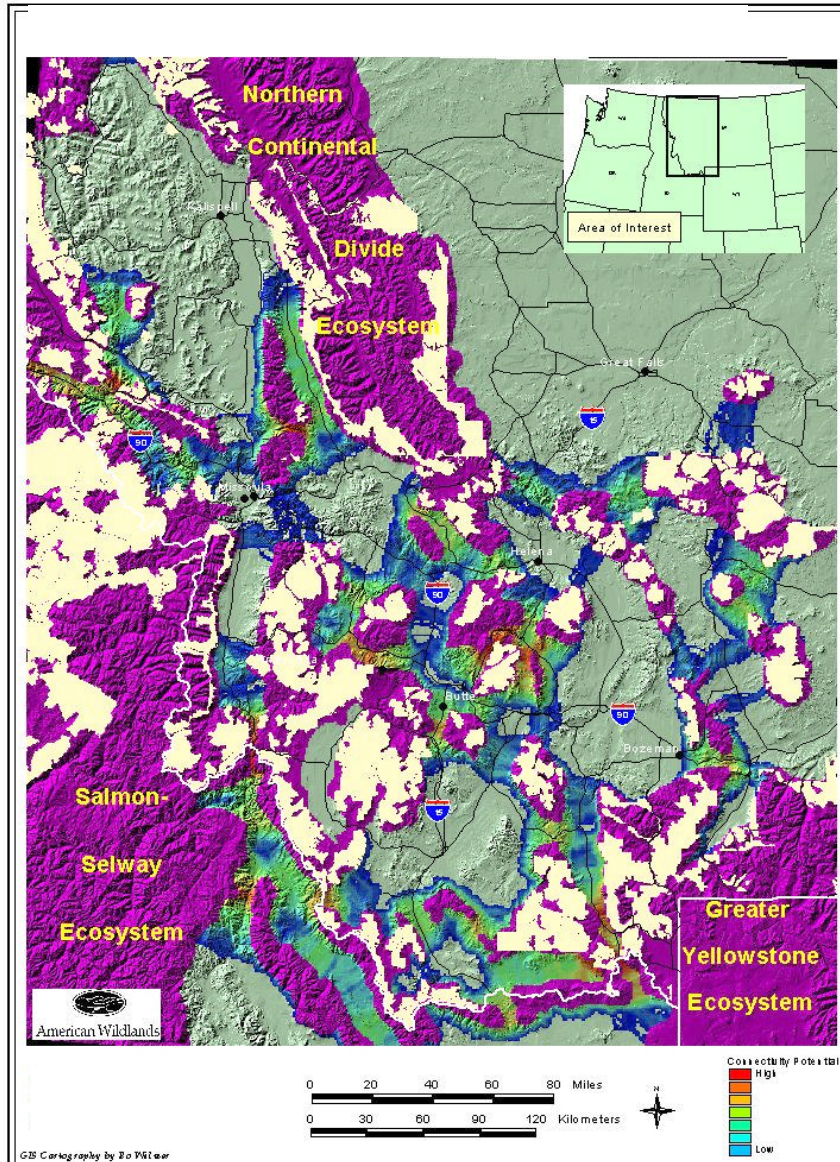


Figure 6: Major Ecosystems of the Northern Rockies Region (American Wildlands, 2002)

As such, the full complement of native aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species present at the time of Lewis and Clark’s fabled exploration continues to exist. Growth and development pressures outside these protected areas, however, bring the long-term survival of these populations under question.

Currently, the Initiative consists of over 20 local land trusts and national land conservation organizations with offices in the region. The Northwest office of the Land

Trust Alliance and hired consultants have been coordinating the group's activities thus far, but a leadership subgroup has been formed and a coordinator will be hired soon. Additionally, a name that accurately reflects the geographic area under consideration will likely be decided upon soon (currently, the fact that what participants in the United States call the "Northern Rockies" are the "Southern Rockies" to Canadian partners is causing some delay). The group meets at least twice yearly, and has been supported by the Kendall Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Wilburforce Foundation. The Duke Foundation grant, the largest at \$500,000, will "provide training, technical assistance, and matching grants to boost collaborative land protection in the region" (Land Trust Alliance, 2001a, p.1). The group has already carried out significant mapping efforts, utilizing GIS, to provide greater geographic understanding of the region to participants. In the future, it is likely that the cooperative effort will support conservation planning and stewardship projects by the individual trusts.