

NATURE

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Summer 2026 • nature.org/newhampshire



The Appalachian Mountains running through New Hampshire are part of a 2,000-mile range stretching from Alabama to Canada. © Byron Jorjorian

A new Appalachian economy

Investing in our mountains offers reward of a brighter future

The Appalachian Mountains form one of North America's most quietly powerful natural economies. Stretching 2,000 miles from Alabama to Canada, their forests, rivers and working lands sustain diverse wildlife and millions of people. Those who call these mountains home continue to shape this corridor of rich nature, cultural heritage and community resilience.

Appalachian communities are building economic futures that center nature, and The Nature Conservancy is proud to partner with them. Locally driven, nature-based solutions are redefining what's possible—from innovative forest management and clean energy development to outdoor recreation and cultural tourism. TNC works with local towns and Indigenous partners to ensure that their voices guide decisions about the region's resources.

Protecting and restoring land and water remain key to a brighter future for the Appalachians. Conserved lands safeguard traditional uses, support wildlife and draw visitor dollars that bolster local economies.

We also connect communities with public-private funding for revitalization efforts, clean-energy development and workforce training. Our 253,000-acre tri-state Cumberland Forest Project, for example, generates grants that are reinvested into community-driven, nature-based development projects such as trails, outdoor community spaces and new business opportunities.

Investing in nature also reduces long-term costs from severe storms and other climate driven events, as healthy floodplains, intact forests and restored wetlands help shield communities. A recent TNC-commissioned study, *Nature's Dividends*, shows that every federal dollar spent strengthening natural systems can save up to \$7 in future disaster-recovery expenses. State-level returns are often greater.

Investing in Appalachians conservation is one of the greatest opportunities of our time. It's a chance to honor the region's heritage, strengthen local economies and build climate adaptability for generations to come.

Appalachians

By the Numbers

36 Million

Number of people who rely on the Appalachians for clean drinking water

\$1.2 Million

Amount in grants awarded by TNC in the first round of the Resilient and Connected Appalachians Grant Program to support 27 land protection projects across the northern Appalachians

\$25 Billion

Amount that recreation and tourism generate every year for the region's economy

Learn More

Explore our work in the Appalachians here:





Critters like otters benefit when waterways are reconnected and road-stream crossings are made safer. © Ernie Decker via Canva

Follow the Otterway

A right-sized culvert on U.S. Route 3 turns a barrier into a bridge by restoring stream flow and giving wildlife a safe, dry path under the road.

In the North Country town of Stratford, a quiet but powerful transformation is unfolding along a small stream that parallels U.S. Route 3. For decades, an aging culvert there acted like a gate, blocking fish from reaching cold, upstream waters and forcing animals like otter, mink and bobcat to dash across the busy roadway. Today, that obstacle has been replaced by a right-sized structure we affectionately call the Otterway, and the result is a crossing that finally works with nature instead of against it.

The new design restores natural stream flow and reconnects 1.6 miles of headwater habitat, opening passage for Eastern brook trout and other native species. Just as importantly, it includes a dry shelf beneath the road, giving wildlife a safe corridor out of traffic's path. Replacing the undersized culvert also improves flood resilience, allowing stormwater to move through the landscape and reducing the likelihood of road flooding.

But the Otterway represents more than a single crossing. It's a glimpse of how New Hampshire's communities are shaping their future by restoring the natural systems that support them. Projects like this strengthen local economies by protecting infrastructure, reducing long-term repair costs, and ensuring that outdoor recreation, tourism and working lands continue to thrive.

The work here is rooted in partnership between TNC scientists, state transportation engineers, Fish & Game biologists, and the people who know these landscapes best. Together, we're working to solve challenges at the intersection of infrastructure and conservation by creating solutions that honor both ecological function and community well-being.

Across New Hampshire's forests and river valleys, the same spirit is taking hold: when we make room for nature to move, adapt and stay connected, our communities become more resilient too. The Otterway may be small, but it points toward a future where healthy ecosystems and vibrant local economies flow together. Follow the Otterway at [nature.org/otterway](https://www.nature.org/otterway).

NATURE NEW HAMPSHIRE



Attendees at the Grounded Growth event at Badger Balm in Gilsum © Joe Klementovich

Grounded Growth: Conversations for a stronger outdoor economy

The Nature Conservancy is proud to co-present Grounded Growth with Granite Outdoor Alliance and *New Hampshire Business Review*. This roundtable series brings together business leaders, policymakers and community partners to explore how New Hampshire can build a resilient outdoor economy—one that can adapt to shifting markets, an evolving workforce and a changing climate.

The first discussion, held at Adventure Ready Brands in Littleton, focused on workforce needs and the challenges and opportunities facing outdoor businesses today. The second conversation took place at Badger Balm in Gilsum, where participants were joined by Congresswoman Maggie Goodlander to dig into outdoor-sector policy and its role in strengthening local communities. The latest event, hosted by Life is Good in Hudson, centered on innovation and the power of mission-driven companies to inspire statewide economic growth.

Together, these conversations highlight a shared belief: New Hampshire's outdoor economy thrives when nature, community and business success grow hand-in-hand. Learn more about the series at www.graniteoutdooralliance.org.