



Q2C

The Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership

A Public-Private Partnership Conserving the Monadnock Highlands of New Hampshire & Massachusetts

Launched in 2003, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) is a collaborative, landscape-scale effort to conserve the Monadnock Highlands of north-central Massachusetts and western New Hampshire. The two-state region spans one hundred miles from the Quabbin Reservoir northward to Mount Cardigan and the White Mountain National Forest, and is bounded to the east and west by the Merrimack and Connecticut River Valleys. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the Quabbin to Cardigan region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in New England, and is a key headwater of the

Merrimack and Connecticut rivers. The Q2C region's forests collect and naturally filter drinking water for nearly 200 cities and towns, including the City of Boston. Habitat conservation in the region is a high priority for both the Massachusetts and New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plans, and the region's interconnected forests could also prove an important north-south corridor for wildlife adapting their ranges to a changing climate. Its managed timberlands are an important source of forest products and renewable energy, and are a highly-efficient carbon sink. The region contains numerous public and private recreation areas and several well-maintained long-distance hiking trails, including a portion of the 190-mile Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett Trail System.



A Forest on the Edge

The predominately rural Q2C region is a last frontier in the suburbanization of central New England (see *Forests on the Edge*, USFS, 2005). The Q2C's private forests are undergoing widespread subdivision into smaller tracts; some areas are already experiencing significant development and unsustainable timber harvesting. If present trends continue with no parallel effort to conserve large forest ownerships while they are still relatively intact, the result will be the irreversible fragmentation of the region's forests, and degradation of its exceptional habitat, watershed, recreational and economic values.

Conserving a Landscape, Working Together

The Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership is a collaborative effort of 27 private organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in the two Q2C states. The Q2C partners meet quarterly to coordinate public and private finance efforts, communications, conservation planning, and real estate transaction work—including reviewing projects seeking partnership endorsement. The Q2C Initiative does not protect land directly; its member organizations do. Land is conserved strictly on a willing-seller basis through a combination of conservation easements and land acquisitions,



managed by private owners, conservation organizations and public agencies. The Q2C partners share a vision of consolidating the permanent protection of the region’s most ecologically significant forest blocks, and key connections between them for wildlife passage and human recreation. Q2C partners worked for more than three years to develop the Quabbin-to-Cardigan conservation plan, which combines state-of-the-art natural resource science and the consensus vision of the Q2C partner organizations. Completed in 2007, the Q2C plan has identified approximately 600,000 acres of core conservation focus areas that represent the region’s most ecologically significant forests. These conservation focus areas represent about 30 percent of the two-million-acre region, and are currently 39 percent protected. An additional 400,000 acres, or another 21 percent of the region, have been identified as “supporting landscapes” that buffer and link the core areas, and are currently 26 percent protected.



What You Can Do

As a purely voluntary conservation effort, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership can succeed only with the help and support of landowners who love their land and wish to see it conserved. In some cases, tax incentives and funding opportunities may be available to help private landowners protect their land. To learn more about your conservation options, contact one of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan partners listed below. Together, we can ensure that the forested landscape of the Monadnock Highlands will be here for generations to come.

To Learn More:

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Q2C partner organizations include the Appalachian Mountain Club, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust (NH), East Quabbin Land Trust (MA), Franklin Regional Council of Governments (MA), Harris Center for Conservation Education (NH), Harvard Forest (MA), Highstead, Land Trust Alliance, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Massachusetts Dept. of Fish & Game, Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation & Recreation, Monadnock Conservancy (NH), Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MA), Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust (MA), The Nature Conservancy, New England Forestry Foundation, New Hampshire DRED - Division of Forests & Lands, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, North County Land Trust (MA), North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (MA), Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Southwest Region Planning Commission (NH), Trust for Public Land, The Trustees of Reservations (MA), Upper Valley Land Trust (NH), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

For downloadable maps and other information, visit www.q2cpartnership.org.

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