

Conservation Matters

A monthly column focused on conservation education, as the result of collaboration among several area conservation commissions and organizations. If your town's commission or conservation organization would like to contribute articles, please contact Jessica Tabolt Halm jesshalm78@gmail.com

Title: Progress with Partnerships in Newfound Watershed

Submitted by: Newfound Lake Region Association

The John Gemmill Fund: With the completion of the Kimball Hill transaction by The Nature Conservancy earlier this year, we estimate that approximately 25% of the Newfound Watershed, or about 14,500 acres, is now protected in perpetuity, up from roughly 16% only five years ago.

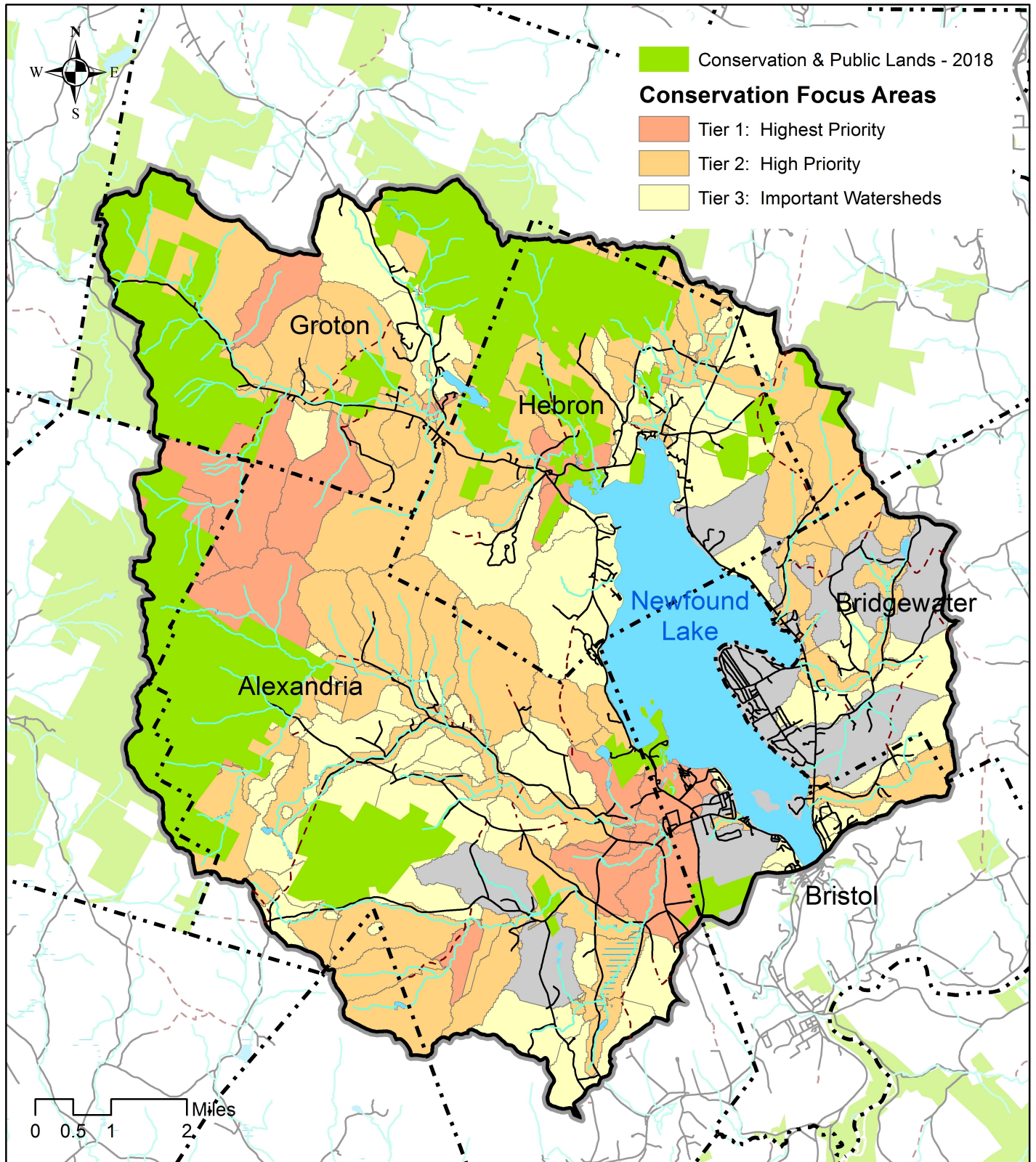
A leading catalyst for this rapid progress is the John Gemmill Newfound Fund, established in 2011 to reimburse transaction expenses for worthy conservation projects. Since 2011, the Gemmill Fund has reimbursed expenses for 11 conservation easements, including Kimball Hill, that have protected over 4,500 acres of the Newfound Lake watershed, a truly remarkable achievement.

For many landowners, incurring the legal and valuation expenses inherent in a conservation transaction would have prevented them from protecting their property. Currently, members of the Newfound Land Conservation Partnership are in conversation with a number of watershed landowners who are actively considering donating or selling conservation easements on their properties. Because we have the Gemmill Fund as a potential resource to support these landowners, we are well positioned to make further progress in protecting our watershed in the near future. In short, we all should be grateful to John's daughter Helen Gemmill for her wisdom and generosity in creating the Gemmill Fund in the first place.

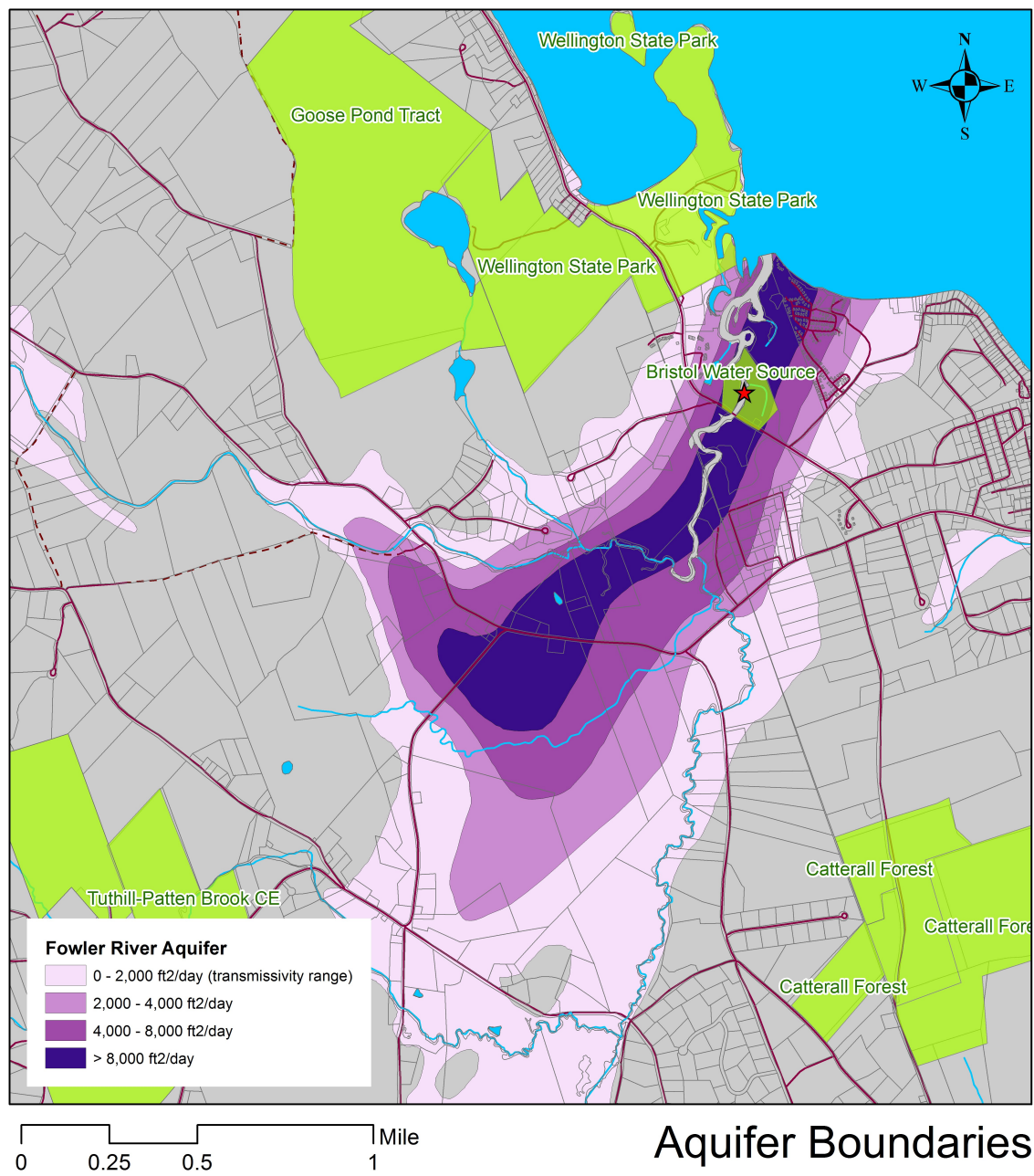
New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund: We have started work with the towns of Alexandria and Bristol to encourage them to publicize the creation of the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund. This \$270 million fund was set up to provide annual disbursements for repair of drinking water infrastructure (90% of annual funding) and for conservation easements (10% of annual funding) to protect critical drinking water and groundwater resources.

Within our watershed, the Bristol drinking water wells, which are located near Alexandria on the south end of West Shore Road, have been identified by the fund as a critical unprotected water resource. Landowners with property near these wells or within the Alexandria aquifer that feeds these wells are potentially eligible to receive from the fund up to 50% of the value of a conservation easement on their land. Our objective, with the towns' help, is to identify such willing landowners and sponsor their application to the fund in order to protect Bristol's water supply in perpetuity. Fortunately for Newfound, the Gemmill Fund is ready to help!

PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS:



CEs on CFA Base: "Conserved land in Newfound watershed – permanent protection for New Hampshire's finest forests and fields!"



Map Prepared by
GreenFire GIS

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AlexFlats Aquifer: “Alexandria, NH – one of the State’s most productive drinking water aquifers”