



## Granite State Division SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

Representing the forestry profession in New Hampshire

### POSITION STATEMENT

#### *Use of Working Forest Conservation Easements*

##### Summary

The Granite State Division of the Society of American Foresters (GSDSAF) supports the use of Working Forest Conservation Easements (WFCE) to protect the managed forestland of New Hampshire. WFCEs allow the achievement of landownership goals and objectives while protecting the full range of environmental services provided by forestland and demanded by the population of the State through their consumption of forest products, their recreational pursuits and their expectations of clean water, clean air and the opportunity to view many species of wildlife.

##### Issue

As population increases, New Hampshire's forest lands are being converted into house sites, roads and parking lots. Additionally, individual tract sizes are decreasing as land once available for forest production is subdivided into smaller pieces. As lot size decreases, so does the opportunity for forest management.

Tens of thousands of New Hampshire residents derive their livelihood from the forests of the State and from the raw materials it supplies. In addition, our forested landscape supports a vibrant tourism industry – a leading source of economic revenue to New Hampshire. Thoughtful planning to accommodate development and to maintain a productive resource base is vital to sustain our quality of life. Working forest conservation easements are one tool that can be used to maintain our quality of life and a balance of uses. A working forest conservation easement includes provisions to allow for sustainable management of the land under the easement for a variety of purposes including the production of forest products. Management activities are based upon scientifically sound, sustainable practices and are implemented by professional foresters.

New Hampshire has the opportunity to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and imported electrical power, reduce its importation of forest products from less sustainably managed forestlands and ensure the provision of basic environmental services for future generations by reducing the rate of fragmentation and forestland loss. One of the means to accomplishing these goals is through the use of Working Forest Conservation Easements. The GSDSAF can play an important role in promoting the use of WFCEs to its members and their clients.

##### Background

Conservation Easements have been in use in New Hampshire since the 1970's. The forest economy of New Hampshire has gone through many cycles of activity since colonial settlement days but never before has the permanent loss of the land base been so significant. Easements that ensure active forest management to protect the level and quality of the full range of expected environmental services well into the future are an effective means to slow the land loss and protect New Hampshire's quality of life.

##### Expiration

This position will expire five years from the date of acceptance. Accepted 2008.