

Litchfield Conservation Commission

Durocher Farm Conservation Area Baseline Conditions Report

This document provides a Baseline Condition Report (BCR) for the Durocher property, detailing existing property conditions as of June 2025

Developed By the Litchfield Conservation Commission

Original – June 2025

Section 1 – Introduction & Project Summary

The Durocher Farm Conservation Area was purchased (fee simple ownership) by the Town of Litchfield in 2025. The purchase was made possible through a combination of grant funding and Town of Litchfield Conservation Funds. Grant funding was acquired through grants from a) the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP - $225,000) and b) the NH Department of Environmental Services' (NHDES) Source Water Protection (SWP) grant funding program ($360,000). In addition, funds from the Town of Litchfield Conservation Fund were used to purchase the property.

Property Location & Contact Information

The Durocher Farm Conservation Area is located in Litchfield, NH and spans both sides of the Charles Bancroft Highway (NH Route 3A). Property Details are as follows:

Property Name	Durocher Farm Conservation Area
Property Location	160-163 Charles Bancroft Highway (NH Route 3A), Litchfield NH (approximate)
Google Maps Link	https://maps.app.goo.gl/pm1GSKEigGjPAmKw9 (west side of Route 3A) https://maps.app.goo.gl/DWW41bRP8ZKovWUYA (east side of Route 3A)
Total Acreage	60.27 Acres (20.17 - west of Route 3A; 40.1 - east of Route 3A)
Type of Ownership	Fee Simple
Property Owner	Town of Litchfield, NH (c/o Litchfield Conservation Commission)
Contact Information	Litchfield Conservation Commission 2 Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052 email: conservation@litchfieldnh.gov phone: 603-424-4045
Funding Types	Town of Litchfield Conservation Fund, NHDES SWP Grant Funds, LCHIP Grant Funds

Property Summary

The Durocher Farm Conservation Area consists of 60.27 acres of land. It is bordered by the Merrimack River to the west, existing Litchfield Conservation Land to the east, and is bisected by NH Route 3A. Of the 60.27 acres, 40.1 acres is located to the east of Route 3A and 20.17 acres is located to the west of Route 3A. The property is a mix of farmlands, forests, and wetlands and abuts existing Litchfield conservation lands.

General Location of the Durocher Farm Conservation Area

A subdivision was completed on this property to support purchase by the Litchfield Conservation Commission. The original property was approximately 65 acres. Approximately 4.6 acres will be retained by the Durocher family and the remaining will become property of the Town of Litchfield. The family homestead and a farm building exist on the property to be retained by the Durocher family.

The property abuts existing Town of Litchfield conservation lands. This will form a larger conservation area that totals approximately 160 acres.

Extent of the Investigation – BCR Details

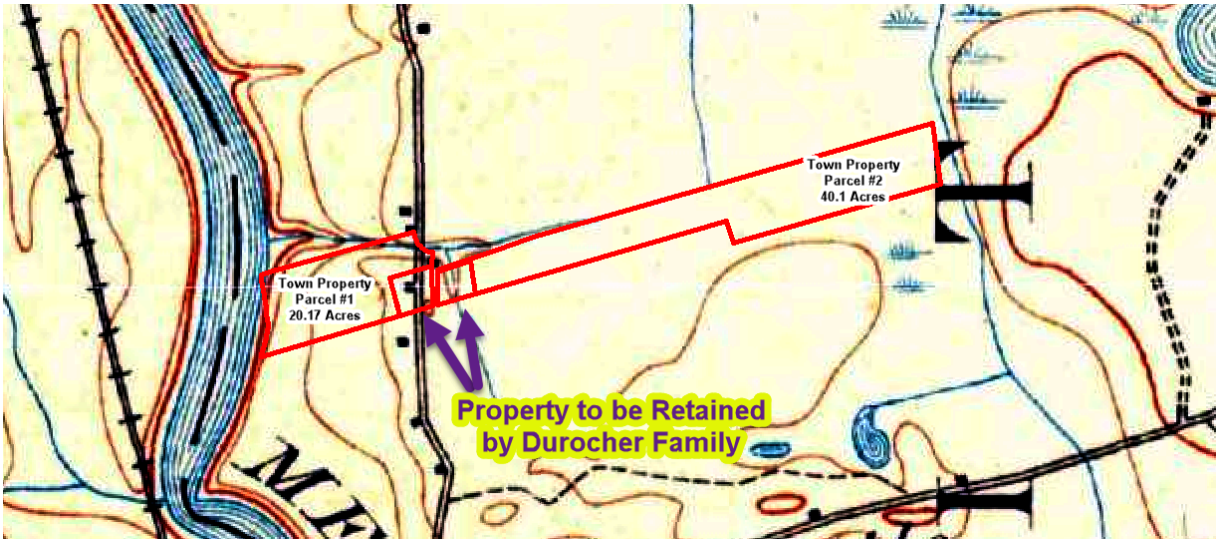
This report was developed by the Litchfield Conservation Commission, in consultation with the Durocher Family, local historians, engineers and planners, and environmental specialists. Details include:



- **Baseline Condition Report (BCR) Execution –** The BCR was completed by the Litchfield Conservation Commission in May/June 2025 and provides detailed condition information as of June 2025.
- **Schedule of Property Visits** – The property was visited on multiple occasions during May/June 2025. In addition, historical information was used to support BCR development.
- **Parties Consulted –** Parties and documents consulted to support the BCR include a) the Durocher Family; b) local historians; c) hired consultants (engineer and environmental scientist); d) UNH's GranitView GIS environment; e) GIS data complied by the Litchfield Conservation Commission; f) NWI wetlands data and USGS information; and g) previous reports and documents.
- **UNH GranitView GIS Environment** – GranitView was used to support mapping and documentation of soils, geologic information, NWI wetlands, wildlife habitat, and watershed information.
- **Town GIS Information** – Town GIS information was referenced and/or developed. This includes the acquisition of aerial imagery of the parcels to support mapping and surveying.

Historic Context

Durocher Farm Conservation Area Superimposed on the 1905 USGS Map



This Report Details the Condition of the Subject Property as of June 2025

Conservation Values Protected

The Durocher Farm Conservation Area has significant historic, cultural, natural, habitat, environmental, and drinking water resources that will be protected. These include:



- **Historic Resources –** The property of significant historic value to Litchfield, and the area. The family home on the property dates to the 1700s, the land has been farmed for hundreds of years, and key archeological site are in proximity, including the Thebodeau and Campbell sites, dating back thousands of years.

- **Agricultural Resources –** The Durocher Farm sits on the banks of the Merrimack River, has been farmed for hundreds of years, and is one of the few remaining properties of its type along the Merrimack River in southern NH. Soils are "prime farmland" soils, and some of the best in New England.

- **Natural Resources –** The land is a combination of rolling farmland, forest land, and wetlands. It is also in the following zones; a) High Priority Water Supply Lands; b) Forested Soils (Groups 1A, B, and/or C); c) Prime Farmland Soils; d) GA2 Drinking Water Protection Zone; and e) Surface Water Impairment Zone; The property is also upstream of a Pennichuck Waterworks water intake and the land is of influence to the water supply.

- **Habitat Resources –** The land is home to extensive habitat including rabbits, deer, hognose snake, protected turtles, bobcat, and other species. The land is in a "Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 – Wildlife Action Plan" area and is also within a New England Cottontail restoration area. A review from the NH Natural Heritage Bureau indicated several "hits" in the are that include rare and protected species. These are most likely Hognose snakes, Blandings turtles, Spotted turtles, Black Racer snake, and potentially the New England Cottontail rabbit.

- **Cultural and Historical Significance –** This property is very culturally significant to Litchfield. It is one of the few privately-held farmlands left in the area and was known for many years as the "Durocher Blueberry Farm". Thousands of area citizens would visit the farm to pick blueberries and explore. The land sits on the historical stretch of Route 3A and is surrounded by older homes and areas of historical significance.

- **Resource Classification –** Below are acreage estimates related to key resource classifications.

o **Wildlife Action Plan Area (Tiers 1-3)**	45 Acres
o **Forest Soils (Group 1A, B, and C)**	31 Acres
o **Farmland Soils**	29 Acres
o **High Priority Water Supply Land**	62 Acres
o **High-Transmissivity Aquifer Recharge Area**	17 Acres
o **Groundwater Classification Zone – GA2**	17 Acres
o **Surface Water Impairment Area**	18 Acres
o **New England Cotton Tail Restoration Area**	Entire Site
o **Archeological Sites in Area**	Two Documented Sites in Area

Section 2 – Project Summary & History

Provided below are key details related to the property

- **Property Name & Location** — Durocher Farm Conservation Area
  160-163 Charles Bancroft Highway (NH Route 3A), Litchfield, NH
  https://maps.app.goo.gl/pm1GSKEigGjPAmKw9 (east side of CBH)
  https://maps.app.goo.gl/DWW41bRP8ZKovWUYA (west side of CBH)

- **Total Acreage** — 60.27 Acres (20.17 - west of Route 3A; 40.1 - east of Route 3A)

- **Property Description** — Property spans both sides of Route 3A. Property to the west side of Route 3A is primarily farm fields and abuts the Merrimack River. Property to the east side of Route 3A includes a small farm field and the remainder are woods and wetlands. An Eversource power line easement exists on the east side of the property.

- **Existing Easement** — An Eversource power line easement exists on the eastern property. It measures approximately 150' by 330'

- **Grantor & Grantees** — Grantor: Cecile Durocher, Claudette Durocher & Durocher Family Trust
  158 Charles Bancroft Highway, Litchfield, NH 03052

  Grantee: Town of Litchfield (Conservation Commission)
  2 Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052

- **Project Cost & Funding Agencies** — Total Purchase Price: 1,165,000
  Funding Agency #1: NH LCHIP Grant Program - $225,000
  Funding Agency #2: NHDES Source Water Protection Grant - $360,000
  Funding Agency #3: Litchfield Conservation Fund – Remainder

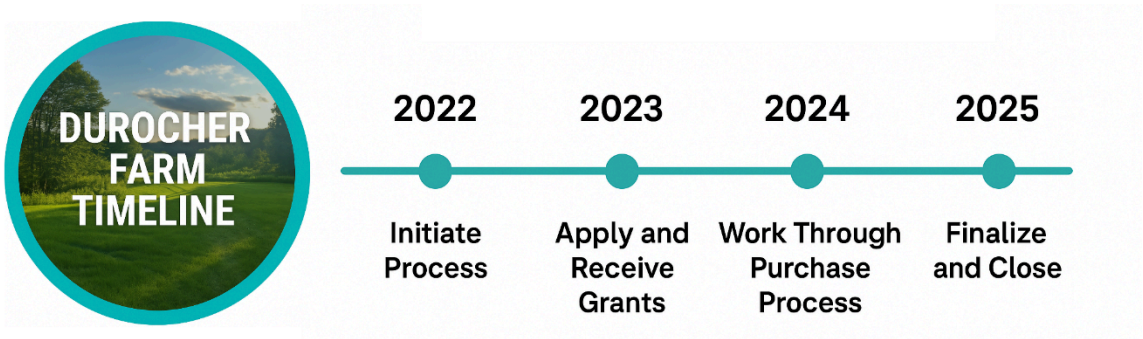
- **Land Use Types** — Total Acreage: 60.27
  Agricultural: 20 acres (approximate)
  Forested: 35 acres (approximate)
  Wetlands: 5 acres (approximate)

General Map of the Durocher Farm Conservation Area

Project History

The Litchfield Conservation Commission has been working on this project since 2022. The timeline of key events is as follows:

- **Mid-2022** Durocher Family approaches the Litchfield Conservation Commission stating that They have interest in selling their land to the Town for conservation purposes.
- **Late 2022** Conservation Commission met with the Durocher Family to discuss a potential sale and options for acquisition (grants, etc.)
- **January 2023** The Conservation Commission had an appraisal completed on the property and Researched grants. Discovered the LCHIP and SWP grant programs.
- **Mid-2023** Conservation Commission received permission from the Litchfield Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, and the Durocher Family to apply for the LCHIP and SWP grants.
- **September 2023** Received approval from the Litchfield Board of Selectmen to enter into a Purchase & Sales agreement with the Durocher Family. Vote was 4-0.
- **Fall 2023** Negotiated price for land with Durocher Family of $1,165,000.
- **Late 2023** Were notified that the Town was awarded both grants. The LCHIP Grant was for $225,000 and the SWP grant was for $360,000. A total of $585,000
- **June 2024** Finalized the Purchase and Sales agreement with the Durocher Family.
- **June 2024** Litchfield Conservation Commission voted to spend up to $700,000 from the Conservation Fund to augment grant funds to purchase the Durocher property.
- **August 2024** Updated the appraisal of the property (Stark & Webster Valuations)
- **November 2024** Completed a Phase 1 Environment Study (Exeter Environmental)
- **November 2024** Completed a site survey to support the subdivision process (Dubay Group)
- **January 2025** Subdivision approved by the Litchfield Planning Board.
- **June 2025** Final deed negotiated with the Durocher family
- **July 2025** All final paperwork submitted to LCHIP and SWP for grant distribution.
- **TBD** Property closed and transferred to the Town of Litchfield.



Section 3 – Historic Land Use and Management

The Durocher property is considered a Litchfield, and regional icon. Once home to the well-known Durocher Pick-Your-Own Blueberry Farm, this property has been visited by thousands of people over the years. It is believed that the property has been farmed for hundreds of years, and the grantee of the property (the Durocher family) has been farming the property since the 1940s, when the family purchased the property. The Durocher Blueberry Farm closed in 2018 and since that time, the property has been farmed by the McQuesten Farm and the Alvirne Farm. While the largest activity on the property has historically been farming, only approximately 33% of the property is farmland, with the remainder being primarily woodlands and wetlands. Historic land uses of the approximately 60 acres is as follows:

- **Agriculture –** Approximately 20 acres are farmland and have been farmland for many generations.
- **Forest and Wetlands** – Approximately 40 acres is forest or forested wetlands.
- **Historic Land Use** – The historic use of the property is much like as it is used today, agriculture and forest. Historic aerial imagery and conversations with the family confirm that current land use is consistent with past land use.
- **Land Management** – This land has been well maintained over the years. Agriculture land is maintained, and forestry management practices have been employed over the years.

Subdivision – The original property consisted of three parcels including tax lots 6-32, 6-35, and 6-36. There were two buildings on the properties including the family home on lot 6-36 and a storage building on lot 6-32. For purposes of the conservation purchase, a subdivision was completed to subdivide the lots from three lots into four lots (approved January 2025). The Durocher family retained two lots, which included both buildings. The Town retained two lots containing over 60 acres of property as noted on the provided maps.

The property is bordered to the west by the Merrimack River and to the east by Town of Litchfield conservation property. An Eversource power line bisects the eastern property and an easement exists. Internal roads exist on the parts of the property with farm fields and some trails exist on the wooded side of the property.

Section 4 – Baseline Condition Report & Physical Description

The following pages provide baseline condition maps as of June 2025. Aerial imagery was acquired for the property in October 2024. This was used to support the Baseline Condition Report.

The Durocher Farm property consists of two parcels, as follows;

- **Parcel #1** – This parcel is on the west side of Route 3A and consists of 20.17 acres of land.
- **Parcel #2 –** This parcel is on the east side of Route 3A and consists of 40.1 acres of land.

For purposes of this report, the requested information is provided for each parcel. Maps are provided in this document to provide detailed information on each parcel.

Attached to this document are plans, reports, and photographs that detail property condition as of 2025.

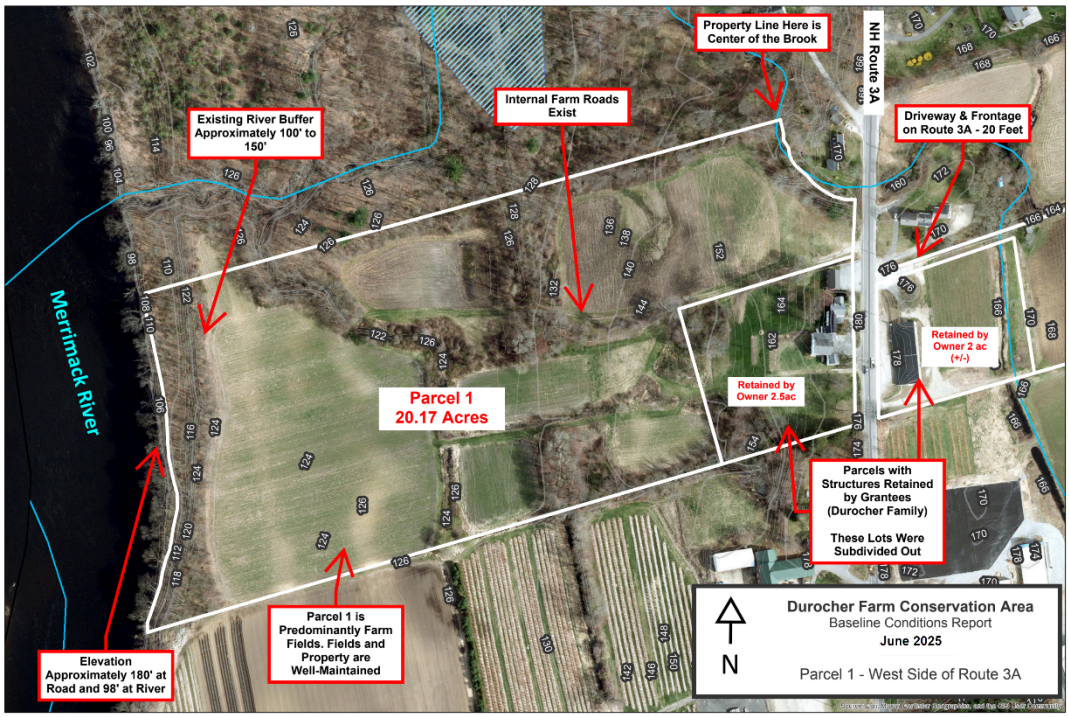
Overview of Durocher Property
Highlighting Locations of Parcel #1 and Parcel #2



Physical Description: Parcel #1 – West Side of Route 3A (20.17 ac)

- **Land Use** Land use is primarily farmland and open fields for hay.
- **General** Property contains internal roads for farming. Property is well maintained and in good condition.
- **Topography** Gently sloping from east to west. East side of property is 170' elevation. West side (Merrimack River) is at approximately 98' elevation.
- **Geology** According to USGS mapping, the site is primarily the Qal geologic type; alluvium soils; sand, silt, minor gravel along rivers and streams. No visible bedrock.
- **Soils** Soils are primarily conditional prime farmland and farmland of local importance. Per UNH's GranitView soils types include Occum fine sandy loam, Pipestone loamy sand, and Windsor loamy sand.
- **Hydrology** With the exception of the river and a small stream that runs along the northeast property line, no other wetlands are documented per NWI mapping located on NH GranitView. Watershed is the Merrimack River Watershed.
- **River Frontage** There is approximately 720 feet of frontage along the Merrimack River. Existing vegetative buffer (oak, maple, and pine) is between 100' and 150'.
- **Vegetation** Property is primarily open farmland. Wooded areas contain a mixture of hardwood and coniferous trees. Some invasive species exists, including Bittersweet.
- **Wildlife** Wildlife observed includes turkeys, rabbits, deed, coyote, bobcat, and varying types of turtles.
- **Scenic & Historical** Property offers beautiful views of the Merrimack River, plus a nice view of the Historical farmland. Land has been farmed for hundreds of years.
- **Improvements** No buildings, power lines, or any other constructed structure exist on Parcel #1. Farm fields exist, as does an internal farm road. See provided map for details.
- **Property Markers** Property markers exist for all property corners. Mostly granite bounds.

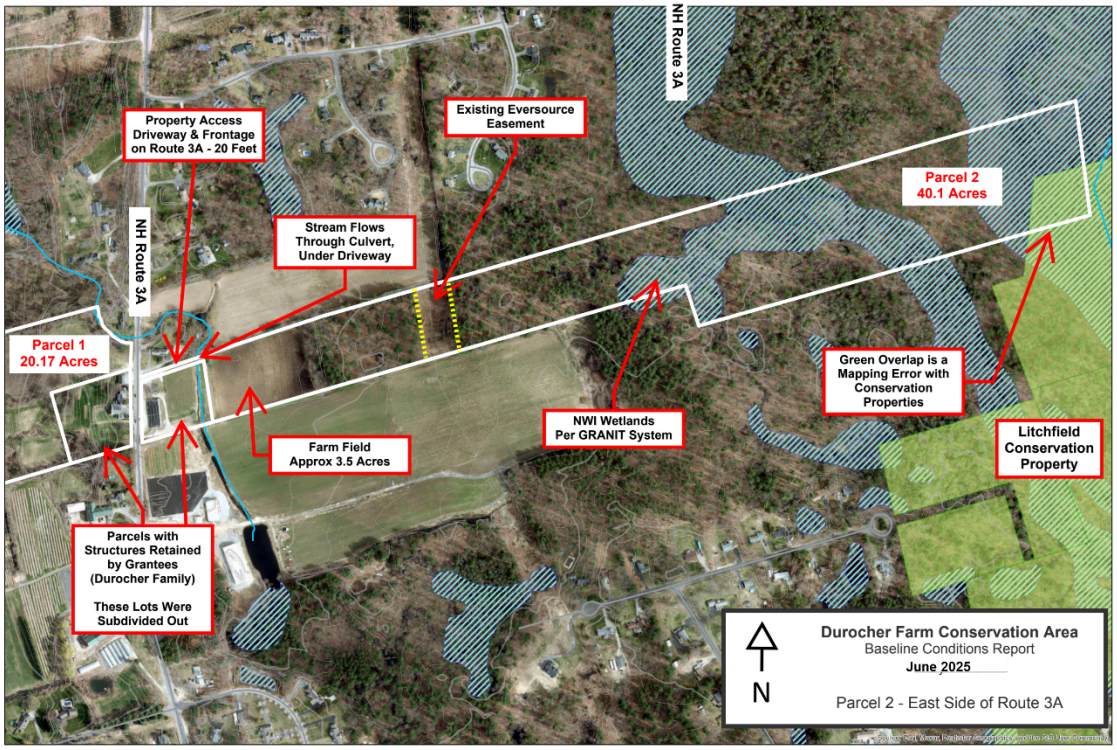
General Map of Parcel #1 – Additional Maps Provided in Attachment



Physical Description: Parcel #2 – East Side of Route 3A (40.1 ac)

- **Land Use** Total land area is 40.1 acres. This includes approximately 3.5 acres of farm field, With the remainder being primarily forest land and wetlands.
- **General** Property contains a driveway to the property and a small parking area. A farm road exists around the farm field. Property is well maintained and in good condition.
- **Topography** Parcel #2 is a long, thin parcel about 4,500' in length and between 350' and 525' In width. Topography is fairly flat ranging from 170' to 180' in elevation.
- **Geology** According to USGS mapping, the site is primarily Qmb, described as Chiefly lake bottom deposits and potentially Merrimack River bottom deposits.
- **Soils** Soils are categorized as Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance. Per UNH's GranitView soils types include Deerfield, Pipestone and Windsor soils.
- **Hydrology** The west side of Parcel #2 has no wetland impacts with the exception of a small stream that cuts across 20 feet of the property. The east side of Parcel #2 includes several wetlands that are categorized as "Forested Wetlands". It is estimated that there are approximately 7 acres of wetlands.
- **Vegetation** Wooded areas contain a mixture of hardwood (oak and maple) and coniferous trees. Some invasive species exists, including Bittersweet.
- **Wildlife** Wildlife observed includes turkeys, rabbits, deed, coyote, bobcat, and varying types of turtles.
- **Scenic & Historical** Property offers views of historic farmland, forested wetlands, and wildlife habitat.
- **Improvements** Improvements include a) a driveway from Route 3A; b) a 20' culvert under the driveway; c) a farm road around the field; d) an approximate 8'x8' open farm stand; e) existing trails in the woods; and f) an Eversource power line easement.
- **Property Markers** Property markers exist for all property corners. Mostly granite bounds.

General Map of Parcel #2 – Additional Maps Provided in Attachment



Section 5 – Property Management Plan

The following provides property management plan for the Durocher Farm Conservation Areas property. Under separate cover is a "Stewardship Plan", which provides additional detailed related to property management and ongoing stewardship.

Management Goals

The Litchfield Conservation Commission has developed and adopted a strategy for property management, maintenance, and acquisition. This strategy covers all of our properties and is detailed here -> https://tinyurl.com/LitchfieldLandStrategy. For the Durocher Farm Conservation Area, our management goals are as follows:



- Retain the cultural and historic character of Litchfield with a prime focus on preserving the historical area of Route 3A and along the Merrimack River. The Durocher Farm Conservation Area falls in this area.
- Preserve natural resources, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources, and historic resources related to the property.
- Ensure access to the property to support passive recreational activities including hiking, bird watching, and fishing. Manage recreational access, as-needed, during farming operations.
- Help support source water protection.
- Support, encourage, and sustain agricultural use of the property using best management practices.
- Maintain the property to achieve a high level of service. This includes maintaining fields, driveways, trails, and farm fields. Record maintenance activities in the Conservation Commission's "ticket system" to track progress and support reporting.
- Perform regular preventive maintenance to control invasive species, manage storm damage, and proactively manage forests.
- Link the Durocher Farm Conservation Area to the adjacent Birch Street Conservation Areas to create a large area that area citizens can enjoy.
- Improve the property by adding a parking area, kiosks, trails, and signage that details amenities on the property and property history.
- Build an environment to ensure that the management strategy is sustained for years, and generations to come.

We envision completing property checks on a monthly basis, will establish a QR Code system to allow visitors to self-report problems, and will implement a continual five-year strategy for minor and major property maintenance.

Five Year Plan

The five year plan for the Durocher Farm Conservation Area will is broken into “Years 1 & 2” and “Years 3-5”. Short-term goals are provided in Years 1 & 2, while longer term goals are provided in Years 3-5. These are as follows:

Plan for Years 1 & 2



- Define driveway and parking area to ensure proper traffic flow.
- Install kiosks with signage, maps, rules, and history of the property.
- Develop an ArcGIS Online “Story Map” highlighting property attributes and history. This will be made available to the public via a web application.
- Install a QR Code-based “ticket system” to record maintenance activities and allow users to report problems.
- Install non-invasive fencing consisting of rustic granite posts to clearly delineate the Conservation Area and the Durocher Family Homestead property.
- Clearly define a trail to the river to support safe access to the riverfront.
- Perform routine maintenance including field mowing, trail maintenance, and invasive species removal.
- Conduct an invasive species removal program on key parts of the property. Will use Conservation Commission tractors and brush hog equipment to support this process.
- Perform monthly property checks and complete boundary check every two years.
- Work with farmers to develop agriculture plan.

Plan for Years 3 - 5



- Develop a trail system that will connect the Durocher Farm Conservation Area with the adjacent Birch Street Conservation Area.
- Reroute existing trails and/or build bridges over wet areas to support proper trail system development with limited impact on sensitive areas.
- Perform maintenance to reduce invasive species, preserve farm roads, and retain areas that are currently farmed.
- Review forest management needs for the eastern parcel and address accordingly
- Develop a plan to connect the trail system to the Albuquerque Avenue Bike Path, providing access to the majority of residents and allowing connectivity to the Litchfield State Forest.
- Complete boundary checks every two years to ensure that boundary corners are marked and lines are properly blazed.

Develop long-term management strategy to ensure land management in perpetuity. This may include contacting a local Land Trust to support long-term sustainment.

Exhibit A
Baseline Condition Report Maps

Exhibit B

Property Photos

Exhibit C

Approved Subdivision Plan

(To Be Updated Upon Deed Recording)

Exhibit D

PSNH/Eversource Easement