

Levels of environmental protection for conservation and public lands

Conservation Land: Land that is protected from development to some degree by an organization or agency whose primary mission includes protection of land and where the predominate feature and purpose of the land is open space/conservation/wildlife habitat. Realizing there are many different definitions of conservation land and many different levels of protection, the table below attempts to separate these differences into logical categories. These categories are similar to those used in some other New England states.

Furthermore, these 3 additional fields in the database may be used to further refine the level of conservation:

- **DEVELOP:** Level of development allowed (e.g. 'none' or 'limited'); may be further qualified in the NOTES field.
- **PPURPOSE/SPURPOSE:** Primary/secondary purpose of the parcel (e.g. 'Conservation' or 'Historical').
- **NOTES:** Text field allows further description.

Code	Description – Level of Protection	Examples
1	Conservation Land (permanent): Land protected from development through permanent conservation easements, restrictions, or outright ownership by an organization or agency whose primary mission includes protecting land. Protection is in perpetuity. May include lands designated for limited recreation (see "ppurpose" and "spurpose" fields for further modification). May allow some development (see "develop" and "notes" fields).	Permanent conservation easements/restrictions/ownership by/to land trusts, federal (NPS, FWS, etc.) or state (IFW, BPL, etc.) conservation agencies. Also generally includes parks such as Acadia, Bradbury Mountain, Wolfs Neck, and Popham Beach where recreation may be the primary purpose but open space/conservation/wildlife habitat is secondary purpose.
2	Conservation Land (not permanent): Land protected from development through term conservation easements, or restrictions. Protection agency/organization's primary mission is protecting land. Protection is less than in perpetuity; conservation status may change when land is transferred or taken out of current use. Term of protection should be noted in "notes" field.	Less-than-permanent conservation easements/restrictions/ownership by/to land trusts, towns, or state conservation agencies.
6	Conservation Land (ME Tax Program): Land enrolled in one of Maine's "current use" land use tax programs which offer the property owner a reduction in their assessed value. Future change in use (which is allowed) would result in a penalty for the landowner. This database includes the ME Tax Program data for only a few towns. This category is basically a subcategory of the 'not permanent' category above but was separated for ease of identification.	Designated Open space, Tree Growth, or Farm Land current use.
3	Unofficial Conservation Land: Owned by an agency or organization whose primary mission is not protecting land but whose intent is to keep >50% of the land in passive/undeveloped recreation (hiking/skiing trails, etc), municipal water supply, and/or environmental educational purposes. Generally municipal or quasi-municipal lands basically in a natural state with primary or secondary purpose of open space/conservation/wildlife habitat. May include cemeteries and parcels with deed restrictions.	Undeveloped river access owned by town; developed river access (boat ramp & parking lot) but with >50% of land undeveloped for other than active recreational purposes. Town land managed by Conservation Commissions, Water District land, town land dedicated for passive recreation; housing association "common land"; etc.
4	Active Recreational Lands: Owned by an agency or organization whose primary mission is not conservation and whose intent is to develop >50% of the land for active recreation (ballfields, playgrounds, ATV use, etc.) with remaining open areas providing conservation/wildlife habitat.	Property owned by town or agency with >50% of land developed for recreational purposes such as ball fields or playgrounds, but undeveloped portion dedicated to open space/conservation/wildlife habitat.
5	Other Public Land: Publicly owned land with no level of protection.	Town/state/federal/school property not dedicated to any category listed above. May include town gravel pits, parcels containing town halls, schools, etc.
9	Unknown: Level of protection is uncertain	Miscellaneous parcels.