

Regional Context

Introduction

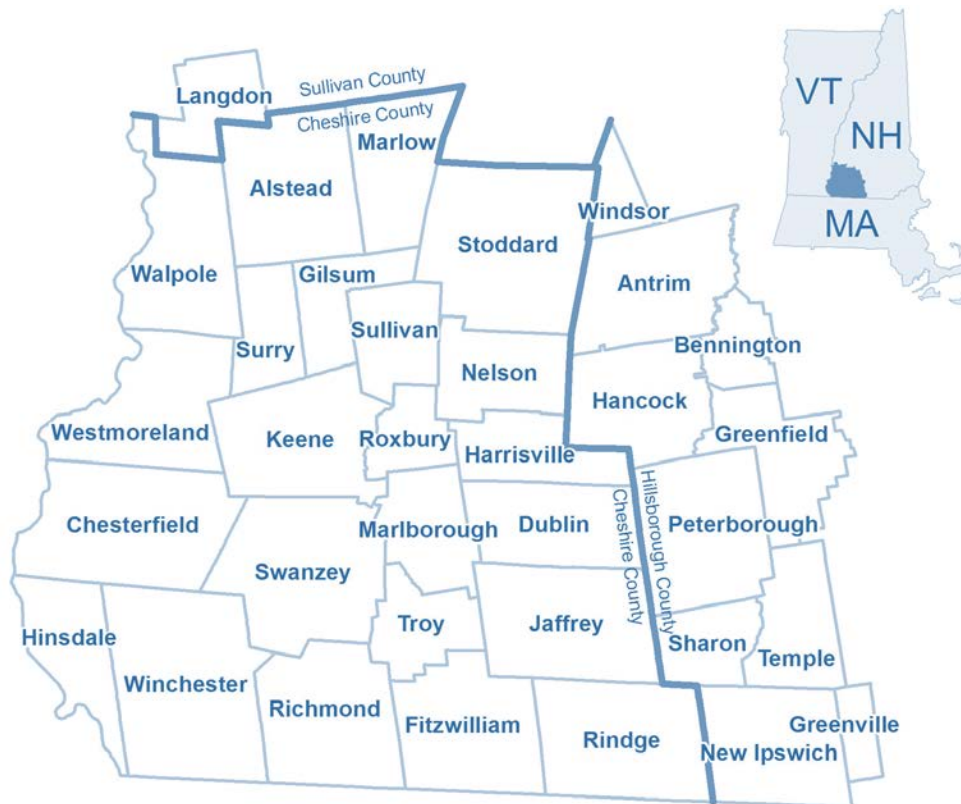
The Southwest Region of New Hampshire

The State of New Hampshire is divided into nine regions, each with a Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to assist towns with a more local approach to community planning rather than at the state level. The landscape of the Southwest Region (also known as the Monadnock Region), a 34-town area in Cheshire, western Hillsborough, and Sullivan Counties, is mostly forested with rural and suburban residential development dispersed between village centers. Approximately 100,751 people lived in 45,744 households in the 976-square-mile region in 2010. Town populations ranged from 224 in Windsor to 23,409 in Keene. Population density region-wide has grown from 64 persons per square mile in 1970 to 103 persons per square mile in 2010.

The Monadnock Region gets its name from Mount Monadnock, which rises 3,165 feet above sea level and is visible from all the towns in southwestern New Hampshire. Mount Monadnock is the most significant symbol of the entire region and is believed to be the second most climbed mountain in the world. The peak of the mountain and a large portion of its bulk lie within the borders of Jaffrey. For that reason the town has for decades accepted responsibility for safeguarding Mount Monadnock.

With Mount Monadnock as the regional identifier, it also serves as a divisional boundary by splitting the region into two smaller groupings of towns, or sub regions. One is dominated by the Connecticut River Valley's population centers of Keene and Brattleboro as employment, commercial and population centers. The other is a more linear configuration of the Contoocook River Valley's population centers of Peterborough, Jaffrey, and Rindge. The majority of the region's largest employers are located in these areas.

Below is a map showing all of the towns within the Southwest Region.



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Population (See Population & Housing Chapter for greater detail)

The trend of high population growth that characterized much of the mid to late 20th century in the Southwest Region has substantially decelerated. Although the region's population of 100,751 grew by 54% between 1970 and 2010, the vast majority of this growth occurred before 1990. Prior to 1990, the region's population growth had far outpaced that of the nation. Since 2000, the regional population has grown by only 5%, well below the national average of 10%. The growth rate in Jaffrey has remained steady over the past thirty years. Nearly 30% of the towns in the Southwest Region, including Jaffrey, have seen a decline during the same period. Jaffrey is the fifth most populated town in the region.

Population Trends 1970 - 2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	Change 1970-2010
Southwest Region	65,246	78,080	90,504	95,911	100,751	5.0%	54.4%
Jaffrey	3,353	4,349	5,361	5,476	5,457	-0.3%	62.7%
Peterborough	3,807	4,895	5,239	5,883	6,284	6.8%	65.1%
Rindge	2,175	3,375	4,941	5,451	6,014	10.3%	176.5%

Source: US Census

According to the most recent projections from the NH Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI), this trend of slow growth is anticipated to continue into the future. These 30-year projections indicate both dramatically lower population growth and some declining populations over the short and long terms. OSI estimates that there will be a 6% increase in the region's population between 2010 and 2040, an average growth of 0.2% per year. Jaffrey is one of ten towns in the region that is projected to see a decline or no growth in population during this time period. The projected period of decline however, is short-lived and then is expected to maintain a gradual increase after 2020 in all of these towns.

	Population in 2010	Population Projections 2015-2040						Change 2010- 2040
		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	
New Hampshire	1,316,470	1,330,834	1,359,836	1,388,884	1,412,041	1,425,357	1,427,098	8%
Southwest Region	100,751	101,233	102,886	104,447	105,630	106,368	106,473	6%
Jaffrey	5,457	5,326	5,257	5,326	5,379	5,414	5,420	-1%
Peterborough	6,284	6,405	6,595	6,734	6,840	6,896	6,898	10%
Rindge	6,014	6,175	6,411	6,496	6,559	6,602	6,609	10%

Source: New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives

Additional information on population trends and characteristics in Jaffrey are included in the Population and Housing chapter of this Master Plan.

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Housing (See Population & Housing Chapter for greater detail)

The trend of the growth rate in housing has been declining in the region. Compared to 2000 figures, the region as a whole added 4,370 units by 2010, an increase of 10% which was similar to the state's increase of 12%. The towns of New Ipswich, Troy, Rindge, and Peterborough experienced the greatest change with increases ranging from 18% to 32%. The towns of Harrisville, Greenville, and Sharon had much smaller increases in housing growth rates with 0% to 3% increases. The number of housing units in Jaffrey was slightly below the regional increase with an 8 % increase. Almost half (48%) of the total increase in the region's housing units came from five towns: New Ipswich (467), Peterborough (447), Keene (424), Swanzey (387), and Rindge (361)

Total Housing Units 1970-2010

Source: US Census

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 1970-2010
New Hampshire	235,529	347,758	503,904	547,024	614,754	12%	161%
Southwest Region	20,829	29,592	39,381	41,670	46,040	10%	121%
Jaffrey	1,223	1,770	2,426	2,352	2,547	8%	108%
Peterborough	374	1,952	2,242	2,509	2,956	18%	690%
Rindge	493	985	1,781	1,863	2,224	19%	351%

Additional information on housing characteristics in Jaffrey are included in the Population and Housing chapter of this Master Plan.

Economic Development

In 2015, the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire](#) (CEDS) was updated as a component of the Monadnock Region Future (regional plan). The development of the CEDS brought together various stakeholders to discuss issues, impacts, and opportunities for economic development in the Southwest Region. The CEDS process provided an important forum for facilitating regional cooperation as a collaborative advantage by working together for economic development in the region. Economic development initiatives were identified and prioritized such as industrial building restoration, commercial and industrial park development, and infrastructure expansion, in an effort to improve the regional economy and have a significant impact on job creation and retention. The vision states that creativity, innovation, effectiveness, accountability, and adaptiveness will be the hallmarks of both private and public enterprise in the Southwest Region¹ The Plan also indicates that the weaknesses and threats of the Region include the loss of high-paying manufacturing jobs, challenges related to affordable housing, local business control and access to investment capital, regional thinking and perspective, adequate water and sewer, local zoning, a research institution, and the cost of doing business in the Region.

¹ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire, January 2015

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Employment

According to the information contained in the CEDS, the employed civilian population over the age of 16 increased from 50,058 to 53,287 between 2000 and 2011 which represents an increase of approximately 6.5%. This rate exceeded the rate of population growth over a similar time period, 5.1% between 2000 and 2010.

Some shifts in the types of jobs in the region overall included the following: The largest employment industry in 2000 remained the largest in 2011 with educational services, health care, and social assistance increasing in size from 10,907 jobs to 14,790 jobs (an increase of 36%). The second largest employer in 2000, the manufacturing sector, decreased 16% from 9,499 employees to 7,936 employees. Employment in the retail trade sector held relatively steady, decreasing from 6,816 to 6,669, or -2%. The construction sector increased employment from 3,704 to 4,259, or 15%. The arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services sector increased in size by about 35% from 2,887 to 3,906 employees. Jaffrey was similar to the Region in total percent change overall, but differed in the various industry types as shown in the table below.

2000-2011 Percent Change of Employed Population by Industry

Industry Type	Southwest Region NH	Jaffrey	Peterborough	Rindge
Total	6%	7%	20%	12%
Agriculture., Forestry, Fishing, Mining	-28%	-48%	43%	-46%
Construction	15%	51%	18%	-37%
Manufacturing	-16%	-17%	11%	-24%
Wholesale Trade	1%	6%	67%	-70%
Retail Trade	-2%	-34%	-10%	3%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	12%	81%	89%	58%
Information	-28%	-88%	-14%	-74%
Finance/Insurance, Real Estate, Rental/Leasing	-8%	110%	40%	-20%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management	9%	-57%	-13%	-9%
Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	36%	51%	54%	122%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation	35%	129%	135%	167%
Other Services except Public Administration	-12%	-26%	-55%	-23%
Public Administration	4%	-19%	-16%	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2007-2011

Note: Includes Employees 16 Years of Age and Over

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The City of Keene, which serves as an employment, commercial and population center for the Southwest Region, contains the highest concentration of job opportunities in the region. On the eastern side of the region, Jaffrey, Peterborough, and Rindge also have significant concentrations of employment. Seventeen of the Region's 20 largest employers are located in Keene, Peterborough, Jaffrey and Rindge.

Top 20 Largest Employers in Southwest New Hampshire

# Employees	Industry	Business	Town
1000 +	Health care services	Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Hitchcock-Keene	Keene
500 - 999	Wholesale foods	C & S Wholesale Grocers	Keene
500 - 999	Brain injury rehab. center	Crotched Mountain	Greenfield
500 - 999	Education	Keene State College	Keene
500 - 999	Education	Keene School District	Keene
500 - 999	Industrial filters	Millipore Corporation	Jaffrey
500 - 999	Health care services	Monadnock Community Hospital	Peterborough
500 - 999	Hospital supplies	Smith Industrial Medical Systems	Keene
500 - 999	Precision Bearings	NH Ball Bearings	Peterborough
500 - 999	Insurance services	Liberty Mutual/Peerless Insurance Company	Keene
250 - 499	Industrial marking equipment	Imaje Corporation	Keene
250 - 499	Education	Monadnock Regional School District	Swanzey
250 - 499	Insurance services	National Grange Mutual Insurance	Keene
250 - 499	Mini & precision bearings	TimKen Super Precision	Keene
250 - 499	Medical tubing	TFX Medical Inc.	Jaffrey
250 - 499	Food warehouse	United Natural Foods	Chesterfield
250 - 499	Education	Franklin Pierce University (Rindge campus)	Rindge
250 - 499	Supermarket	Market Basket	Rindge
250 - 499	Education	Peterborough Public School System	Peterborough
250 - 499	Education	Jaffrey-Rindge School District	Jaffrey

Source: New Hampshire Employment Security

The average unemployment rate in the region has consistently remained lower than the state and national rate during the past 10 years. Jaffrey's unemployment rate has remained below the national unemployment rate during the same period and has been below the state unemployment rate from 2013 to the present.

Unemployment Rate 2007-2016

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Average
United States	4.6	5.8	9.3	9.6	8.9	8.1	7.4	6.2	5.3	4.9	7.0
New Hampshire	3.5	3.9	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.5	5.1	4.3	3.4	2.8	4.6
Southwest Region	3.5	3.7	5.8	5.4	5	5.3	4.7	4.0	3.2	2.7	4.3
Jaffrey	4.1	4.5	6.8	7.2	5.5	5.9	4.8	4.1	3.2	2.5	4.9
Peterborough	3.6	3.9	5.8	5.9	5.0	5.1	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.3	4.2
Rindge	4.7	5.1	6.7	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.5	6.5	4.4	3.8	5.9

Sources: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, New Hampshire Employment Security Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau

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Transportation (See the Traffic and Transportation chapter for greater detail)

The Southwest Region has had challenges for transportation options due to the rural nature of the area. For most people living in the region, the only safe or practical way to access destinations is by automobile. Having safe and convenient options for accessing employment, goods, services, social and recreational activities is integral to maintaining a healthy, vibrant community. While maintaining adequate roadway infrastructure is critical to enhancing safe access, it is also important to improve the travel options available for getting around the region. These options are especially important in rural areas, where low population density, hilly terrain, greater distances between service centers, and limited public transportation contribute to the challenges of mobility. Some communities including Jaffrey, Keene, Peterborough, and Swanzey, have been establishing multiuse paths that can accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians for recreational and daily trips. These pathways, are integral components of the region's transportation system and provide safe alternatives for travel between places and to downtown areas. They also promote opportunities for physical exercise and tourism. Currently, there are 45.4 miles of hard-pack or paved multiuse trails in the region.

As a whole, 65% of the working population (23,267 people) live and work in the region. Almost half of all commuters travel less than 10 miles from home to work, but there are approximately 4,000 workers that travel greater than 50 miles on a regular basis. The majority of trips that Southwest Region residents make for shopping, services or medical appointments are local or regional in nature depending on the town of residence. Major supermarkets are distributed around the region in Walpole, Keene, Swanzey, Hinsdale, Peterborough and Rindge, and just outside of the region in places like Hillsborough and Brattleboro, VT, although there are several smaller business food stores distributed throughout. Small clothing stores are distributed throughout the region, with larger stores located in Keene, Rindge and Hinsdale. In the Southwest Region there are two medical hospitals located in Keene and Peterborough, as well as a hospital in Brattleboro, VT, all of which provide medical services including some medical specialization services. Access to basic services depends on each town's geographical location, but most services are within a 20 mile drive. Urgent care facilities have also recently been added in several locations. Information on rail and air transportation, can be found in the Transportation Chapter.

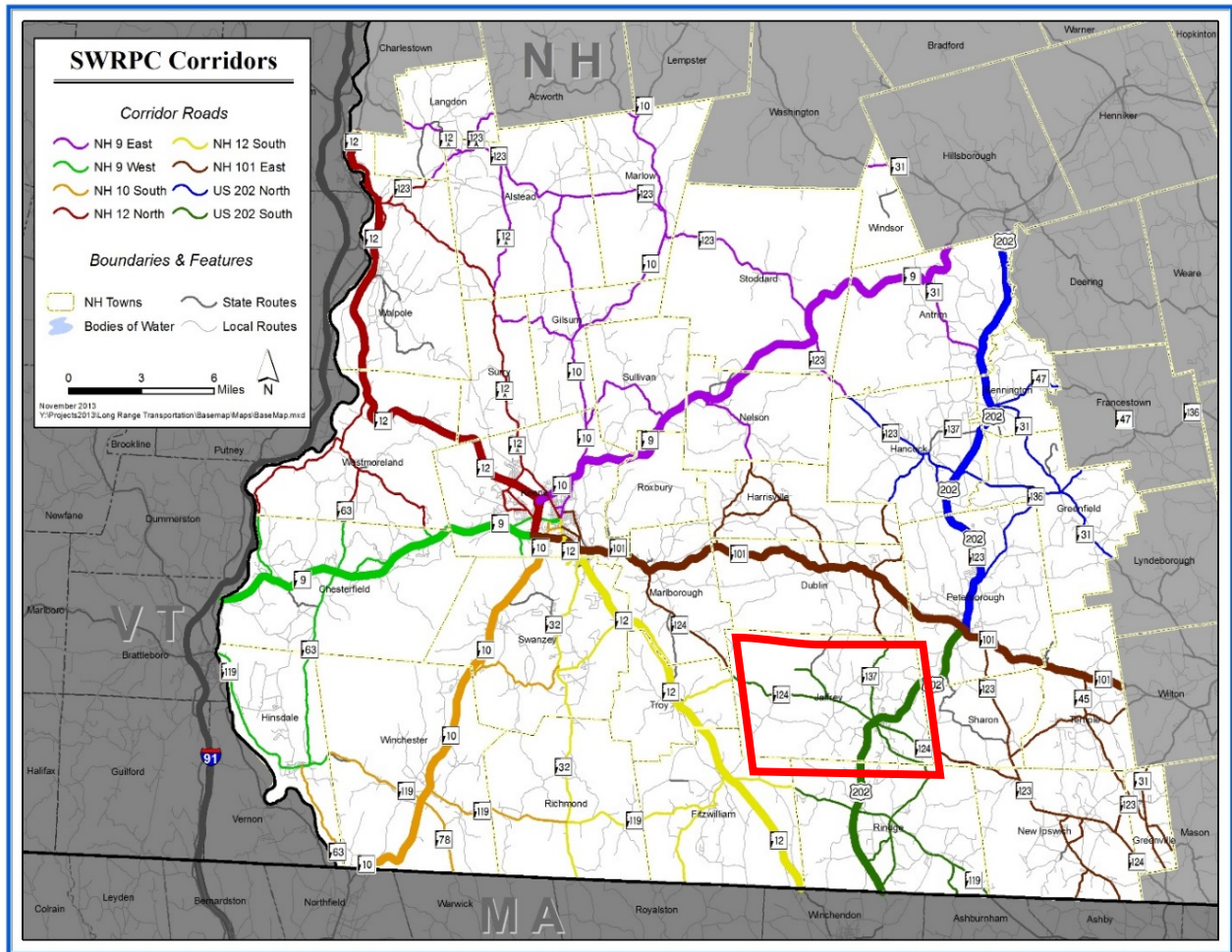
Transportation Corridors

Transportation planning in the Southwest Region heavily relies on the studying of the New Hampshire Corridor Systems. There are eight transportation corridors in the region and three of those which impact the greater Jaffrey area. These include:

- The NH 101 East Corridor (Dublin, Greenville, Harrisville, Keene, Marlborough, New Ipswich, Peterborough, Sharon and Temple);
- The US 202 North Corridor (Antrim, Bennington, Greenfield, Hancock and Peterborough); and
- The US 202 South Corridor (Jaffrey, Peterborough and Rindge).

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This is a map from the [Southwest Connects](#) that shows the eight corridors and gives a perspective on the interrelatedness to the communities and destinations beyond the region. The Regional Transportation Plan,



Southwest Connects, identifies priority challenges and opportunities for the NH 202 South Corridor. Here is an excerpt from the plan:

- The Jaffrey dog-leg area in downtown Jaffrey remains a significant challenge for this corridor. The intersection has a number of issues including high delays at traffic lights, limited maneuverability for trucks negotiating the intersections, extra wide streets making it difficult for pedestrian crossings, a lack of parking, confusing routing, and other concerns.
- The Rail Trail breaks up between Peterborough and Jaffrey. Yet there are a number of potential users of a recreational rail trail in the connecting area including residents of Rivermead and employees of NH Ball Bearings and Staff Development for Educators.
- There are a number of bus/shuttle-like transportation services that use this corridor, however they do not market themselves to the general public. There may be an opportunity to connect people to Downtown Jaffrey, Downtown Peterborough and shopping in Rindge.

Natural Resources (See the Open Space Plan for greater detail)

There are many natural resource areas that are enjoyed by residents and visitors to the region. Most notable is the regions' namesake, Mount Monadnock. It is the largest mountain in the region and it has six major trailheads that provide hiking access to the mountain with parking at each area. Some areas of the mountain

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have year round hiking and camping. All trails are open during the spring, summer and autumn months. During the winter there are sixteen miles of backcountry skiing and hiking at the park headquarters.

A natural and cultural resource as valuable as Mount Monadnock requires the volunteer support of local citizens from the surrounding communities, in addition to the park rangers based at the Mount Monadnock State Park in Jaffrey, to ensure the mountain's trails and terrain are safe for travelers and protected from the impact of frequent use.

This table highlights several of the highest mountains within the region offering recreational opportunities, as well as valuable habitat for wildlife.

In addition to mountain trails, there is a growing network of rail trails scattered throughout the region. There are several abandoned railroad lines throughout the region, which are slowly being converted into multi-use recreational trails. There are

Mountain	Peak Elevation	Access
Mount Monadnock	3165'	Jaffrey
Pack Monadnock	2288'	Peterborough
North Pack Monadnock	2276'	Greenfield
Pitcher Mountain	2162'	Stoddard
Crotched Mountain	2066'	Greenfield, Bennington
Temple Mountain	2048'	Temple, Sharon
Bald Mountain	2037'	Antrim, Hancock
Skatutakee Mountain	2002'	Harris Center, Hancock
Gap Mountain	1940'	Fitzwilliam, Troy
Thumb Mountain	1920'	Harris Center, Hancock
<i>Source: Southwest Region Natural Resource Inventory</i>		

six lines right now that are either completely or partially purchased for such use. Each line that was purchased was paid for with federal transportation money in order to keep the rail lines protected. The NH Department of Transportation purchased the land, and turned over management of the corridors to the Department of Resources and Economic Development. The Jaffrey Rails to Trails begins at the Rindge line and extends to the Monadnock Plaza. Like so many others in New Hampshire, it is now being used as a multi-use recreational trail for horseback riding, snowmobiling, mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and other forms of recreation.

Another asset to the region is the abundance of water resources. Approximately 21,696 acres in the Southwest Region is surface water (lakes, ponds, perennial streams), with waterbodies ranging in size from less than an acre to 715 acres (Nubanusit Lake in Hancock and Nelson). Among the region's water bodies, there are 164 great ponds (water bodies 10 acres or larger) and 5,869 miles of shoreline including all rivers, lakes, ponds, and perennial streams.

Town	Acres of Waterbodies
Rindge	1,810 acres
Stoddard	1,535 acres
Hinsdale	1,372 acres
Chesterfield	1,299 acres
Jaffrey	1,196 acres
Harrisville	967
Walpole	949
Hancock	925
Fitzwilliam	919
Nelson	858

The towns with the most acreage of waterbodies in the region are listed here. Jaffrey has the fifth most acreage of waterbodies in the Southwest Region.

Two major drainage basins, the Connecticut River and the Merrimack River, encompass the Region. The Connecticut River is the largest river in New England and runs along the border of New Hampshire and Vermont. Its watershed, which spans 11,250 square miles, drains 3,063 square miles in New Hampshire, about one-third of the state. This basin covers approximately 60% of the Southwest Region. The Merrimack River Watershed covers 40% of the Region and encompasses a total 5,010 square miles in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. However, 75% of the watershed is located in New Hampshire.

Source: Southwest Region Natural Resource Inventory

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While the surface water provides recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat, groundwater is another essential resource. Approximately 98% of the region's population is dependent on groundwater for their drinking water supplies. The majority of residents (56%) rely on private wells to access water. Groundwater is closely connected to surface waters, replenishing rivers, lakes and wetlands during dry periods. It provides an estimated 40% of total flow in the state's rivers, which in turn feed the state's lakes, reservoirs, and estuaries. Maintaining the high quality and availability of groundwater is important to protect public health and the environment.

Additional information on natural resources in Jaffrey can be found in the [Jaffrey Natural Resource Inventory](#).

Regional Planning Reports and Studies

The Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) publishes studies and reports to provide a more developed regional perspective for use by municipal governments. Several of the Commission's reports and research, which are available on the SWRPC website (www.swrpc.org) or by contacting the Commission, are described below:

Monadnock Region Future: A Plan for Southwest New Hampshire (2015)

SWRPC developed the [Monadnock Region Future](#) to provide information and guidance to anyone with an interest in planning for the future of the Southwest Region. This Plan maps out a vision for the future based on an understanding of the Region's assets and opportunities, ongoing initiatives and current challenges. It encourages the reader to think broadly about the Region and the factors affecting its success, and presents strategies that can enhance current efforts, as well as promote new and emerging opportunities. It is intended to promote regional thinking, coordination, and action.

Southwest New Hampshire Housing Plan (2014)

The [Southwest New Hampshire Housing Plan](#) provides a detailed analysis of housing trends and housing cost burdens by income level based on US Census data for the Southwest Region. The report highlights housing needs and trends in the Southwest Region and its counties, as well as statewide totals. The report uses Census data to analyze changes in population, households by tenure, vacancy rates, and housing cost burden for renters and single family homeowners, and estimates the range of and demand for housing production.

Southwest New Hampshire Broadband Plan (2015)

This [Southwest New Hampshire Broadband Plan](#) contains recommendations oriented around a central vision and four primary goals, which respond to broadband challenges and needs specific to the Southwest Region at the time of release. The objectives and proposed strategies identified in this Plan are viewed as realistic measures for improving the landscape of broadband in the Southwest Region over the next five years and beyond. They are directed at regional organizations, municipalities, community anchor institutions, broadband providers, policy and decision makers and others to consider, pursue, and/or support their efforts to increase access to and the utilization of high quality broadband in the Region.

Southwest New Hampshire Natural Resources Plan (2014)

The [Southwest New Hampshire Natural Resources Plan](#) provides an overview of the significant conditions and trends, issues and challenges and opportunities facing the Region's diverse natural resources, and the infrastructure we rely on to safely access and utilize these resources. It highlights strategies for communities, organizations, and others to consider in addressing natural resource, water infrastructure, energy, and climate challenges at the regional and local level. Additionally, it addresses opportunities for

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regional coordination and action, and outlines some of the many resources communities and others can use to advance certain objectives.

Southwest Region Natural Resources Inventory (2003)

The [Southwest Region Natural Resources Inventory](#) provides a basic analysis of natural resources and landscape fragmentation on a regional scale that can be used “as is” by municipalities as their first edition NRI, or used as a template to be enhanced with original local research and local knowledge. This inventory includes a set of topographic maps annotated with information by residents about the character of the forests and ponds, movement of wildlife and viewsapes that define their town. This inventory can provide a common point of departure for the development of municipal NRI’s in the Southwest Region and a starting point for conservation planning.

Southwest Connects: Southwest Region Transportation Plan 2014 – 2035 (2015)

[Southwest Connects](#): Southwest Regional Transportation Plan presents policy and technical information relevant to local, regional, and state activity of the planning and management of the transportation system. The Plan facilitates a regional approach among local and state decision makers to planning and decisions regarding transportation, land use, and community development.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire (2015)

The purposes of the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) for Southwest New Hampshire are to promote greater coordination among communities and economic development interests and to establish eligibility for federal assistance through the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The current CEDS was developed through the coordination of regional economic development stakeholders and municipal officials through the CEDS Advisory Committee as part of the Monadnock Region Future: A Plan Southwest New Hampshire. The Committee reviewed and analyzed existing trends and developed goals and objectives to help the Region manage its destiny and protect its competitive advantage in New England and the global economy in the coming years. The CEDS will be updated annually and revised every five years.

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The following regional and state groups, organizations and agencies are key resources for implementation of the Master Plan:

Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Local Advisory Subcommittee (CNBRLAC)

The [Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Local Advisory Committee](#) is one of six in Southwestern New Hampshire convened by the Rivers Management and Protection Program of the NH Department of Environmental Services. The main responsibilities of this citizen advisory committee is to develop and implement a local river corridor management plan and advise local, state, and federal governing bodies and agencies of activities which may affect the water quality or flow of the protected river or segment. The DES offers the committee technical assistance in developing and implementing the management plan. This local advisory committee includes representatives from Antrim, Bennington, Boscawen, Concord, Deering, Greenfield, Hancock, Henniker, Hillsborough, Hopkinton, Jaffrey, Peterborough, Rindge, and Stoddard.

Monadnock Conservancy

[The Monadnock Conservancy](#) is a regional non-profit land trust that assists land owners and municipalities with protecting land through easement, donation or purchase of land. Preservation efforts may include farmland; productive forest; open space; recreational trails; water supply; wildlife corridors; scenic ridgelines above the City of Keene and the Ashuelot River Valley; floodplain, aquifer and wetlands along the Contoocook River; and, scenic forests along the Wapack Trail and the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway.

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Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The [Monadnock Economic Development Corporation](#) leads the region in the enhancement of its industrial and business base to improve the standard of living, quality of life and economic vitality of our communities.

NH Department of Environmental Services

The goals of the [NH Department of Environmental Services \(NH DES\)](#) are to protect and promote wise management of the State's environment. The Department's responsibilities include ensuring high levels of water quality for water supplies, regulation the emissions of air pollutants, fostering the proper management of municipal and industrial waste, and managing water resources for future generations.

NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs

[The Department of Business and Economic Development \(NH BEA\)](#) consists of two divisions: the Division of Economic Development and the Division of Travel and Tourism Development. Promoting New Hampshire as a travel destination is the mission of Travel and Tourism Development. Similarly, Economic Development promotes businesses and the expansion of existing businesses. This department was formerly part of the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development.

NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

[The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources](#) consists of three divisions: the Division of Cultural Resources, the Division of Forest and Lands, and the Division of Parks and Recreation (includes NH Bureau of Trails). This department was formerly part of the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development.

NH Municipal Association

[The New Hampshire Municipal Association \(NHMA\)](#) was established in 1941 to serve member cities and towns. NHMA has evolved into a service and action arm for New Hampshire local governments. The Association prides itself on its ability to meet the ever-changing educational and training needs of municipal officials and employees, as well as the flexibility to develop new programs designed to meet the needs of local governments. Today, NHMA offers legal and technical assistance, legislative representation, training, workshops, and personnel services.

NH Office of Strategic Initiatives

[The NH Office of Strategic Initiatives \(NH OSI\)](#), formerly known as the Office of Energy and Planning (NH OEP), is based in Concord and is legislatively required to plan for the orderly development of the State and the wise management of the State's resources. NH OSI compiles, analyzes, and disseminates data, information, and research services to advance the welfare of the State; encourages and assists with planning, growth management, and development activities of cities and towns; administers select Federal and State grant-in-aid programs; and, participates and advises in matters of land use planning regarding lake and river management programs.

Southwestern Community Services

[Southwestern Community Services, Inc. \(SCS\)](#) is one of six community action agencies throughout New Hampshire, and part of the larger network of 70 agencies in New England and nearly 900 agencies nationwide. SCS advocates for and assists citizens in need through a variety of program areas including Head Start, fuel assistance, developmental services, economic development, elderly services, weatherization, homeless services, housing rehabilitation, affordable housing, health and nutrition, and workforce development.

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Southwest Region Planning Commission

[The Southwest Region Planning Commission \(SWRPC\)](#) currently serves 34 member-municipalities in Cheshire, western Hillsborough, and Sullivan Counties. SWRPC provides local assistance on a wide range of planning issues to member municipalities through activities including community master planning, site plan review, capital improvement planning, subdivision reviews, ordinance preparation, interpretation of state and local planning requirements, grant administration, cartographic support, and geographic information system (GIS) applications. The agency has a diverse work program made up of six major program areas: Local Planning Assistance, Natural Resources Planning, Community and Economic Development, Transportation Planning, Hazard Mitigation Planning, and Regional and Geographic Information Systems.