



*Client Success Story*

# Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust



*Denny Beach—Little Sunapee, NH*

## Overview

The Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust preserves the rural landscape of the Mt. Kearsarge/Lake Sunapee region in central New Hampshire through conservation easements and land acquisitions. These deeded restrictions protect land, limit future development and offer tax benefits to land donors. In addition to protecting the farms, forests, streams and wetlands of the region now and forever, the trust’s mission includes educating local communities about land preservation.

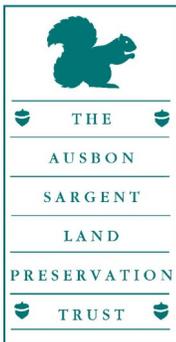
*“ESC has a very practical business approach. They helped us focus on membership and increasing resources so we could protect more land.”*

*Debbie Stanley,  
Executive Director,  
Ausbon Sargent*

## Challenge

In 2004, Ausbon Sargent set a difficult goal of protecting up to 25% of the land in the region by 2025, increasing preserved land from 3,420 to 24, 545 acres. This goal aligns with guidelines set by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests in the [NH Everlasting Initiative](#). To meet this challenge they knew they needed a larger staff, increased contributions and a larger membership base.

The organization operates within the twelve-town Mt. Kearsarge/Lake Sunapee region of central NH. Donors are highly concentrated in New London, where their offices are located. An additional goal was to increase donor penetration from other local towns.



## How ESC Helped

Ausbon Sargent engaged ESC for three projects:

- *Market study* (2004) to understand the core market (potential donors), the competition for donations, and population growth trends in the region.
- *Strategic planning retreat* (November 2005)
- *Updated market study* (2009) to analyze improvements and changes.

ESC's market study analyzed census data, population and growth projections, patterns of charitable giving in NH, a member survey and comparative data on membership contributions from other land trusts. This data was used to understand the organization's growth capacity and as input to the strategic planning exercise facilitated by ESC.

The ESC and Ausbon Sargent team set these strategic goals:

- *Protect* 800 acres per year in 2006-08 and 1300 acres in 2009-10.
- *Increase membership and contributions* from major donors.
- *Increase outreach* to the twelve communities.
- *Hire additional staff* including a land protection specialist.

## Results

In 2009, Ausbon Sargent again engaged ESC to update the 2004 study and to analyze improvements and changes that have occurred.

- *Total donations* per year have increased 152% and the average donation amount increased by 130%.
- *The number of donors* has increased by 19%.
- *The amount raised from major donors* – donating over \$1000 – has increased significantly.
- The increased budget *funded a land protection specialist* in 2005 and a second specialist in 2008, allowing the trust to preserve more of New Hampshire's scenic beauty for future generations.
- A *newly formed "Outreach Committee"* has greatly improved awareness of Ausbon Sargent in the twelve-town region.

## Summary

Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust has aided in the preservation of 6,287 acres in 102 properties for future generations since their founding in 1987. With increased contributions and two full-time land protection specialists, they are well on their way to the goal of protecting 25% of the land in the central NH region by 2025.

*"ESC knows how to analyze data. The market study is very useful — we refer to it regularly."*

*Debbie Stanley,  
Executive Director,  
Ausbon Sargent*



*The Hersey Family Farm*

## About ESC

Executive Service Corps equips nonprofit organizations in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont with the insight, knowledge and capacity they need to thrive financially and better serve their clients. ESC volunteers bring a wealth of experience from both business and nonprofit management to provide low-cost services such as strategic and business planning, board development, fundraising, marketing, financial management and human resources to small and medium-size organizations throughout northern New England.



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