



Forest Stewardship

Situation:

UNH Cooperative Extension motivates private landowners to actively manage their land for long-term stewardship of natural resources. Extension programs in forestry and wildlife, agriculture, and water resources bring a comprehensive approach to solving problems and protecting resources through an extensive network of partners within the natural resources community.

Long-term memoranda with the NH Division of Forests and Lands and NH Fish and Game recognize Extension's lead role in educational programming. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, NH Timberland Owners Association, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, U.S. Forest Service, NH Office of State Planning, Conservation Districts, NH Department of Environmental Services, regional planning commissions and county governments are all active partners.

There are approximately 216,000 acres of forested land in Belknap County, of which 90% is under private ownership. Cooperative Extension's Forestry and Wildlife Program staff is available to work with these landowners and help them maximize the economic, educational and ecological benefits of the land, which include direct and indirect benefits to the landowners themselves and the communities where the land resides.

UNH Cooperative Extension's Response:

Andy Fast, Belknap County Forest Resources Educator, provides assistance to forest landowners regarding land stewardship and management of forest resources.

- An estimated 527 individuals were directly contacted through telephone calls, publication distribution, one-on-one visits and group educational meetings. Approximately 98 people attended 13 group educational meetings on a variety of forestry, wildlife and conservation-related subjects.
- 366 landowners received assistance through email and telephone conversations on a wide variety of forest resource and wildlife subjects. In addition, 63 landowners participated in 44 woodland examinations covering 2,370 acres. Fact sheets and literature were distributed, and a wide variety of forestry and wildlife-related topics discussed, including:
 - wildlife habitat enhancement
 - silviculture
 - selling timber
 - forest management planning
 - the Current Use program
 - forest harvesting laws
 - conservation easements
 - forest ecology
 - recreational trails
 - how to find a logger or forester
 - cost-share programs
 - chain saw safety
- Fifty-three referrals were made to consulting foresters for forestry services including stewardship plan preparation, timber stand improvement, timber sale preparation and administration, wildlife habitat enhancement, cost-share activities, boundary line identification, Current Use maps, and road layout.
- Andy continues to provide technical assistance, outreach, and project review for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Belknap County through a new MOU between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Forestry and Wildlife staff.

- The Belknap County component of the NH Forest Stewardship Plan Implementation Monitoring Project for 2008 was completed. This is an effort by the U.S. Forest Service to better understand how cost-share assisted stewardship plans result in on the ground management.

How We Made a Difference:

- Andy reviewed and approved three cost-shared forest stewardship plans covering 247 acres. The EQIP stewardship plan cost-share payments were \$5229. He also reviewed and approved three acres of cost-shared timber stand improvement (TSI). The EQIP TSI cost-share was \$165.