



Forest Stewardship

Situation:

Sixty percent of the approximately 537,848 acres of forest in Carroll County is privately owned. In one year alone, Carroll County residents received over \$3,124,700 dollars of income from selling timber and other wood products and towns received over \$312,470 in timber tax (2005, NH DRED). Healthy, sustainable forests are critical to New Hampshire's forest products industry and the forest-related tourism and recreation industries which contribute more than \$2 billion annually to the state's economy.

UNH Cooperative Extension's Public Value:

Educational programs and technical support to land owners and community-owned forestland improve the health and aesthetic value of forested lands and provide financial resources to the industry. In turn, property values, tax revenues and opportunities to promote tourism increases, providing a stronger economic base and quality of life for people who live in and visit the county. Cooperative Extension's Forestry and Wildlife Program staff work with landowners to help them maximize the economic, educational and ecological benefits of the land.

UNH Cooperative Extension's Response:

UNH Cooperative Extension helps private landowners and communities 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.

Assistance regarding land stewardship and management of forest resources is provided to forest landowners by Wendy Scribner, Carroll County Forest Resources Educator. Almost 1,200 Carroll County landowners were contacted through on-site visits, phone calls, emails and 30 separate educational events this past year. Workshops covered a range of topics from selling timber, land protection, forest health, choosing trees to cut for firewood, 75 years of research at Bartlett Experimental Forest (highlighting findings regarding northern hardwood management), identifying trees, and using global positioning systems.

In July, 2008, a tornado touched down in New Hampshire causing damage to houses and property along a 49-mile path, affecting residents and landowners in the Carroll County towns of Wolfeboro, Ossipee, Effingham and Freedom. Twenty-five landowners received direct assistance. An informational session in Ossipee, attended by over 50 people, provided information about wood salvage and removal, New Hampshire timber tax and timber harvesting laws, working with professionals, timber sale contracts, shoreland and wetland issues, and safety and fire considerations.

Carroll County Extension Foresters provided management recommendations to nearly 250 landowners and family members involving over 10,000 acres, over the past five years. Management recommendations included timber harvesting and forest improvement practices, wildlife habitat considerations, working with natural resource professionals, cost share programs, construction of forest access trails, erosion control, timber sale agreements, timber markets, water quality protection, recreational opportunities, taxation, and land protection techniques.

Ninety referrals were made to consulting foresters for services including forest stewardship plan preparation, timber sale preparation and oversight, timber stand improvement, boundary line identification, and timber appraisal in the past five years.

The NH Coverts Project trains volunteers to promote wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship. Almost half of all Coverts volunteers serve on their town's Conservation Commissions, extending knowledge of wildlife and habitat to these local decision-making bodies. There are currently 21 active Coverts Cooperatives in Carroll County.

The Community Tree Steward Program educates volunteers in community and urban forestry. The goals are to strengthen communities, promote social change, and enhance urban ecosystems. In return for their 11 weeks of training, Tree Stewards spend 40 hours volunteering in their communities, although most volunteer many more hours than the required 40.

How We Make a Difference:

- Following the 2008 tornado, many people who may have never envisioned themselves selling timber were put in a position of having to make a number of decisions rather quickly. Much of the wood on the ground was snapped off and otherwise damaged, leading to a reduction in the potential income they could receive from harvesting the trees. UNH Cooperative Extension provided information to landowners about the importance of getting estimates from several loggers and viewing samples of their work, potentially saving them money and improving the quality of the work completed. In addition, UNH Cooperative Extension provided recommendations for replacing trees and shrubs to ensure their suitability to the site and soil.
- Carroll County Extension's Forest Resources Educator, in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Carroll County Conservation District, implements the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) in Carroll County. These federal programs provide cost-share dollars for practices that improve and protect forestland, wildlife habitat and water quality.
- Carroll County landowners received over \$720,000 in cost-share dollars from EQIP from 2004 through 2008 to implement conservation practices on their forestland. These practices include long-term stewardship plans, timber stand improvement, wildlife habitat improvement projects, access roads, invasive plant control and water quality improvement projects.
- Over the past five years, the Carroll County Extension Forest Resources Educators reviewed and approved nearly 50 cost-shared forest stewardship plans covering over 8,500 acres. Stewardship plans describe actions to protect, manage, maintain and enhance resources on a property.
- UNH Cooperative Extension provides extensive training to Community Tree Steward volunteers and Coverts Cooperators, in return for their continued involvement in local projects. Carroll County Community Tree Stewards and Coverts Cooperators devoted a total of 539 hours last year, presenting workshops, serving on conservation commissions, landscaping at public facilities, and volunteering at local exhibits. Their time, when calculated at the 2007 value of \$19.51/hour for volunteer time (independentsector.org) represents \$10,516 in contributions to local programs.

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