

2000-2001 Biennial Report

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Forestry and Wildlife Program

Since 1925, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Forests and Lands have worked together under a Memorandum of Understanding to address issues in natural resources through a joint educational program. Through this agreement, the two organizations cooperate to develop and implement research-based educational outreach programs in forest stewardship, urban and community forestry, economic viability and natural resource conservation.

Chapter 227-I of the NH RSA's recognizes that, "...the public welfare is served by educating the citizens of this state about the value of forest resources and [the] benefits of forestry."

Cooperative Extension's educational efforts include direct contact with landowners and others, workshops, tours, seminars, and the dissemination of forestry information.

Ten Forest Resources Extension Educators and four statewide Extension Specialists (Forestry, Forest Industry, Wildlife, and Biodiversity) provide technical expertise and information about managing forest and community resources to people in each county across the state. Target audiences include forest landowners, natural resource professionals, communities, volunteers, NH forest-based industries, and the public.

Education	22,800 people reached over 600 natural resource programs 71,000 participant hours
Technical Assistance	3,600 forest landowners 125 communities 260 volunteers 375 contacts with NH forest industries through workshops and direct assistance

A web site and a Forestry Information Center are used to disseminate natural resource information to interested individuals.

Natural Resource Assistance Following the 1998 Ice Storm: In January 1998, a severe ice storm caused damage on approximately 700,000 acres of forest land in New Hampshire. Federal disaster areas were declared in nine of New Hampshire's ten counties. The 1998 ice storm continues to have implications on forest health and forest products utilization. Programs held during 2000 and 2001 focused on providing technical assistance to landowners, resource professionals and communities dealing with forest lands effected by ice damage.

Forest Stewardship: Each year, NH loses approximately 13,000 acres of forest land to

development. As population growth and development decrease the amount of forest land available, pressure intensifies on the remaining lands to continue to provide the benefits that we have come to expect. Comprehensive planning and management for the future is critical to sustain a healthy, productive resource base.

During this biennium, Extension Educators provided on-site technical assistance to approximately 3,600 forest landowners influencing approximately 90,000 acres of forestland.

Extension Educators also encouraged over 900 landowners (owning approximately 67,000 acres) to continue or expand their management using the assistance of a licensed forester. Assistance was provided to guide people through the process of choosing a forester to help them pursue their management goals.

The UNH Cooperative Extension Forestry and Wildlife Program encourages long-term comprehensive planning and management on NH's private forest lands. In the past two years, over 365 forest stewardship plans were written by public and private sector foresters. These plans cover over 85,000 acres providing long-term guidance for forest landowners. Stewardship plans are based on the landowners objectives and include recommendations for activities to improve forest health and productivity, prevent soil erosion, enhance and protect wildlife habitats and improve recreational opportunities.

Over the past eleven years, 2,000 comprehensive forest stewardship plans have been written for NH landowners. These plans cover over 450,000 acres, which represents approximately 12% of NH's private forest land.

Approximately 60 workshops were offered for natural resource professionals (reaching approximately 3,000 participants) to broaden the application of good stewardship to lands managed by these professionals. Workshop topics included: flood plain forest ecology and management, tree investment, geographic information systems, best management practices for forest roads, estate planning, integrating wildlife habitat into community planning, woodcock ecology and management, the life cycle of beaver ponds, and business management. A series of workshops were held for natural resource professionals around the state focusing on using technology such as global positioning systems and color infrared photography in resource planning and management.

Wildlife habitat education and outreach programs were provided by the Extension Wildlife Specialist through a partnership between UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Fish & Game. In the past two years, nearly 50 volunteers have been trained as NH Coverts Project Cooperators bringing the total number of Coverts Cooperators to 141. These volunteers promote wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship on their own lands and in their communities through activities such as serving on local boards, implementing conservation actions in their towns, and giving presentations focusing on forest stewardship and wildlife habitat improvement. During the past year, these volunteers held over 150 tours and programs reaching nearly 3,000 adults and 1,500 youth.

Urban and Community Forestry: Half of NH's population lives in large cities or towns in the southern part of the state. Natural resources within these cities and towns include residential yards, parks, wetlands, estuaries, river corridors, and other undeveloped areas. Extension helps communities protect and enhance open spaces and maintain healthy community trees.

Each year, assistance is provided to improve and enhance community forest resources in over 125 NH communities. Extension Educators provide natural resource assistance to communities upon request via workshops, publications, telephone responses, community meetings, and technical project assistance. Topics include natural resource inventories, land use planning, community tree assistance, and town forest management.

Thirty-two new Community Tree Steward volunteers have been trained in the past two years, bringing the total number of active Community Tree Stewards to 125. These volunteers work in their communities to maintain and enhance local natural resources. In the past two years, Tree Steward volunteers have logged nearly 5,000 hours working in over 60 communities. Highlights of Community Tree Steward activities include: creating Manchester's first inner-city community garden, revitalizing neighborhoods through community landscaping, discovering four previously unknown endangered species, and rehabilitating vacant lots into parks and green spaces.

Through the UNH Cooperative Extension Community Conservation Assistance Program, coordinated, sustained assistance has been provided to 54 NH communities (including seven conservation and watershed groups) to help them with natural resource inventories and conservation planning projects.

Economic Viability: NH's forest industries represent \$1.7 billion employing over 16,000 people. UNH Cooperative Extension assists NH forest industry, primarily loggers and the 100 commercial sawmills, with information and technical assistance to improve the utilization and marketing of wood products, minimize environmental impacts, enhance community relations, and increase economic vitality.

During the past two years, the Extension Specialist, Forest Industry, provided direct technical assistance to approximately 110 businesses. Specific assistance was provided regarding expansion/ retention (6 businesses), improving efficiency (10 businesses), establishing new businesses (3 businesses), and improving marketing (5 businesses). The Specialist also provided input to numerous feasibility studies, business plans and procurement programs. Business development materials and information regarding markets were also distributed.

Extension worked with the state to interpret and communicate policy and regulations by developing and revising publications such as the *Guide to NH Timber Harvesting Laws*, *NH Best Log Scaling Practices Guide* and *NH Timber Harvesting Law Fact Sheets*.

Activities targeted to the logging community include program support for the NH Timber Harvesting Council Professional Logger Program (PLP). Of the estimated 1,500 loggers working in NH, 1200 have participated in professional development workshops and over 600 of them have been certified through the NH PLP. Basic workshop topics include safety, first aid,

law, forestry, business, and trucking. Following a comprehensive evaluation of the PLP, programming has been expanded to include a series of optional courses such as business management for loggers, landowner objectives and wildlife habitat for loggers, stand analysis and prescriptions, and log scaling.

During the past biennium a number of safety and OSHA related workshops were held for loggers, sawmills and landowners. A Hardwood Grading Workshop was held for Utilization and Marketing Specialists from the seven state area.

Extension developed and disseminated the *Guide to the Perfect Sawmill Tour* publication which provided the logistical information to help 10 sawmills conduct successful open houses around the state.

Approximately 375 businesses and individuals receive assistance each year either directly through individual contact or through workshops. Industry workshops improve technical skills, efficiency, and employment opportunities. Programs targeting the communication between industry and the local communities have improved the business climate and economic opportunity. All programs and workshops have a safety component to positively influence work environment.

The Extension Specialist, Forest Industry participates on the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Economic Development Business Review Committee and the NH Industries of the Future Steering Committee.

Natural Resource Conservation Education: Over 600 natural resource related seminars and workshops were offered to citizens throughout the state - *nearly one program a day in this biennium*. These programs reached over 22,000 people. Workshop topics included: forest ecology and management, long-term planning, selling timber, Christmas tree management, chainsaw safety, land protection and estate planning, forest history, creating wildlife habitat, forest practices, bats, birds, tree farming and deer yard management. A series of workshops (23) were held around the state to help people understand the recent revisions in the current use criteria. Extension also provided training for teachers through numerous NH Project Learning Tree Workshops.

Information about the value of NH's resources and the importance of caring for our forests was provided at events such as the NH Farm and Forest Expo, Festival NH, fairs, field days, and other events. Information was distributed through County Extension newsletters, which collectively target 35,000 to 40,000 people. Extension also publishes an integrated resources newsletter, "Habitats", 2-3 times a year that reaches over 4,000 natural resource professionals, landowners, volunteers and educators. Recent themes have included the ice storm of '98, water resources, natural resources and roads, and community planning and natural resource inventories.

The Forestry Information Center (FIC), originally established by UNH Cooperative Extension in June 1998 to help people respond to the natural resource problems created by the ice storm, has

expanded to provide information on a variety of natural resource topics. Through FIC, UNH Cooperative Extension responded to 2,700 requests for information and distributed over 19,000 publications to nearly 2,000 people. The Center produced over 100 news releases and articles since it started in June 1998.

Many other people received information by contacting the Extension Forestry and Wildlife Program web site to reach the numerous publications and the statewide calendar of events which are available to viewers. (<http://ceinfo.unh.edu/forest.htm>). The website receives approximately 5,400 hits each year.