

New Hampshire Living Legacy Project News

Conserving the Biological Diversity of the Granite State

January 24, 2003

The New Hampshire Living Legacy Project is a public-private partnership among the Fish and Game Department, Division of Forests and Lands, The Nature Conservancy, NH Audubon, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Department of Environmental Services, UNH Cooperative Extension, local land trusts and communities.

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Important Bird Areas

The UNH Cooperative Extension, NH Audubon, and Fish and Game Department are working in partnership with the state's avian researchers and birders to identify and conserve "Important Bird Areas". New Hampshire joins one of 103 countries and 45 other states to launch an Important Bird Area (IBA) program. The IBA program is an international bird and habitat conservation initiative created by BirdLife International (www.birdlife.net). National Audubon Society oversees the program in the United States. The goals of the program are to identify and conserve areas that are critical to one or more bird species for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration and to avert population declines of common and uncommon birds.

To qualify as an IBA, an area must meet one or more scientific criteria. Potential IBAs include areas that support threatened or endangered bird species, bird species of high conservation priority, significant concentrations of birds, or representative, rare, threatened, or unique habitats. The New Hampshire IBA program has developed a Preliminary Nomination Form (available on the Web--see below) that people can submit to recommend an area for review and possible identification as an IBA. Potential IBAs may include private or public land and are typically based on ecological rather than ownership boundaries. Educational information on the significance of a given area for birds will be shared with landowners that may fall within a potential IBA. This includes guidance on voluntary stewardship and conservation options. The IBA program creates an opportunity for avid birders, landowners, and conservation organizations to join together to conserve and manage habitats to protect rare species from further declines, to keep common species common, and to restore populations where possible. A copy of the NH IBA criteria and a preliminary nomination form are available at the UNH

Cooperative Extension website: <http://ceinfo.unh.edu> (go to “Forestry and Wildlife Resources”, then “Bird Areas”).

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG) is embarking on a three-year Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Planning initiative using new federal funding. Congress appropriated money to each state to develop a conservation strategy for the wildlife species in greatest need of conservation.

A set of principles is guiding each state in its development of a comprehensive plan. The guiding principles stress broad public-private partnerships, shared responsibility, efficiency and effectiveness, dynamic strategies, and effective communication. Fortunately NHFG is already engaged in a comprehensive approach to conservation with the Living Legacy Project (LLP). The LLP endorses a well-coordinated, comprehensive system of lands dedicated to protecting the full spectrum of biological diversity.

The LLP identified a suite of wildlife species and critical wildlife habitat in greatest need of conservation. This provides a foundation for gathering all known information about these species, mapping core habitats for species at risk, identifying monitoring and research needs, and developing tools that aid landowners in protecting and managing critical areas for wildlife.

The comprehensive plan will instruct land trust, communities, and agencies on the location of New Hampshire’s most critical habitats and on strategies for conservation. The plan will help focus the efforts of the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), Forest Legacy Committee, Town Open Space Committees, and landowners toward critical habitat areas in need of permanent conservation. In addition, the plan will enable NHFG to establish a baseline for tracking progress in conserving wildlife and their habitats over time and to evaluate the impacts of development, road projects, and other land uses on wildlife.

Events

January 29, 2003 at 8 PM *Livable Landscapes: Chance or Choice?*

A documentary to air on New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont Public TV

Livable Landscapes: Chance or Choice? explores the transformation taking place in five communities across northern New England where townspeople are struggling with tough choices about how their towns grow and change. This is a production of Cross Current Productions in collaboration with New Hampshire Public Television and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. For more information about the program, visit www.nhptv.org or www.crosscurrentproductions.com. To order a copy of the video, contact Bullfrog Films at (800) 543-3764 or www.bullfrogproductions.com. To get a copy of the promotional brochure go to www.spnhf.org/what/sprawlfilm.html.

February 7-8, 2003 Farm and Forest Expo

Center of NH – Holiday Inn, Manchester. Visit their website at www.nhfarmandforest.org

Resources

GRANIT Conservation Lands Viewer

The UNH Complex Systems Research Center's GRANIT website hosts a web-based tool that provides public access to interactive maps about the state's protected lands. Click on "Create A Map" at <http://www.granit.sr.unh.edu/>.

Saving Special Places: Community Funding for Land Conservation

A guidebook published by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) and the Center for Land Conservation Assistance. Printed copies of the guidebook are available by sending a check for \$15.00 payable to SPNHF to: Anne McCullough, SPNHF, 54 Portsmouth St., Concord, NH 03301. The guidebook is also available on the website www.spnhf.org.

New Englanders' Attitudes Toward Forests of Northern New England

Findings from a survey conducted by Belden, Russonello and Stewart for a collaboration coordinated by the Henry P. Kendall Foundation. Available online at www.brspoll.com (click on "Reports").

Vermont's Natural Heritage: Conserving the Biological Diversity in the Green Mountain State.

A 48 page color report from the Vermont Biodiversity Project. To obtain a copy go to www.snr.uvm.edu/sal/vbp.

ConserveOnline <http://www.conserveonline.org>

ConserveOnline is a "one-stop" online, conservation toolbox, created and maintained by The Nature Conservancy in partnership with other conservation organizations. The library makes conservation tools, techniques, and experience available to a broad community of conservation practitioners. This site is intended to foster learning and collaboration, and provide information and support to anyone making conservation-related decisions, from the staff of conservation organizations to land managers at government agencies to local land trusts and private landowners.
