

The New Hampshire Coverts Project



In Their Own Words: NH Coverts Cooperators Provide Program Feedback

1995-2002 Program Evaluation

October, 2002

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Introduction

The New Hampshire Coverts Volunteer Project is a program coordinated by UNH Cooperative Extension to train volunteers in promoting wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship. The Coverts project began in New Hampshire in 1995, and has trained approximately 25 participants each year during an intensive 3 1/2-day training workshop held each fall.

In 2001, after seven years of the workshop and over 160 trained volunteers working in all parts of the state, UNH Cooperative Extension embarked on an evaluation of the Coverts Project, funded by a grant from the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Program.

Program Background

Funding and other support for the NH Coverts Volunteer Project comes from program partners: the Ruffed Grouse Society, NH Fish & Game, NH Department of Forests and Lands, and the US Forest Service State & Private Forests Program.

The long-term goals of the Coverts Project are twofold:

- 1.) To enhance, restore, and conserve habitat for the rich diversity of native wildlife in New Hampshire, and
- 2.) To increase the amount of New Hampshire's public and private land managed with a stewardship ethic.

Based on the number of calls and queries the UNHCE Wildlife Program receives, the interest in wildlife habitat and management by New Hampshire landowners far exceeds the capacity of our limited staff to reach every interested person. Helping to spread the message of wildlife habitat management and good land stewardship to a wider circle of interested people, the trained volunteers of the Coverts Project help the Forestry and Wildlife Program achieve the long-term outcomes described in the goals of the program.

The message about the benefits of good stewardship and wildlife habitat management is meant to influence others' decision-making on the land, be they friends, neighbors, colleagues, or community decision-makers. Chosen through a selective application process, participants in the Coverts Project training workshop are already invested in either their own land or their community (ideally both), and usually have some level of knowledge or experience with wildlife before they attend the training. They are also chosen for their ability and interest in community outreach - we look for not only good land stewards but also effective "message-spreaders."

The 3 1/2-day training workshop is offered free to participants (expenses are paid by program sponsors), and in exchange, participants agree to return to their communities and motivate others to become stewards of the state's wildlife and forest resources. Participants agree to 40 hours of volunteer service towards the Coverts Project during the year following the training workshop, and most continue to be involved in the program beyond the first year.

Existing Research

The model of training and empowering individual landowners and community members to educate others is based on research showing that contact with a "knowledgeable peer" is very effective at influencing the actions taken by other private landowners¹. More specifically, a study of the Connecticut Coverts Project (upon which the NH Coverts Project is closely modeled) shows that the Coverts model makes a difference "on the ground." This study showed that landowners who had contact with a Coverts Cooperator were much more likely to implement management practices that benefit wildlife than those landowners who had not².

Based on this existing research, we took as a given the fact that the Coverts Project in New Hampshire is based on a sound model. If operating effectively, the NH Coverts Project will likely benefit wildlife in the state and help to increase the amount of land in NH managed with a stewardship ethic.

In addition, the NH Coverts Project already measures several program outcomes through a series of updates from Coverts volunteers ("Coverts Cooperators"). At the end of the Coverts training workshop, participants are asked to fill out a brief survey where they indicate their immediate reactions and comments on the preceding 3 1/2-day workshop. These comments are most helpful in planning for subsequent workshops, but do not reflect the long-term effects of the training on participants' actions or attitudes.

Secondly, all Coverts Cooperators are sent a yearly "Accomplishments Survey" where they list volunteer activities related to wildlife habitat, forest stewardship, and community outreach. Although this form has a space for comments on the Coverts Project itself, virtually all remarks that are made relate to Coverts' volunteer activities. The Accomplishment Survey data are very useful in assessing how the Coverts volunteers contribute to the goal of the Coverts project, "to enhance, restore, and conserve habitat for native wildlife." However, the data provide little feedback on the program itself -- what part of the program has been most valuable to participants? Has the program changed their attitudes or actions? What they would like to see from the program in the future?

Finally, Coverts volunteers send in news of their activities to the Coverts Project newsletter, *Making Tracks*. These essays, updates, and photos help volunteers stay connected with each other, and likely provide some inspiration for their volunteer work, but again little information is gained about the efficacy of the Coverts program itself.

¹ Covell, Darrel F., R.L. Ruff, and S. R. Craven, 1997. "Private Lands Management: Adapting a Premier Woodland Cooperator Program to Restore and Manage Wetlands," in *Trans. 62nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference* (1997), pp. 84-92.

² Broderick, S.H., F. F. Milici, L. B. Snyder, G. R. Goff, J. C. Finley, 1999. "Reaching Private Woodland Owners Through the Coverts Project: How Well Are We Doing?" Unpublished report, Univ. of Connecticut Cooperative Extension, Brooklyn CT.

Program Evaluation

The existing research on the Coverts model, and the data we already possess on Coverts' volunteer activities still leave several questions unanswered about the NH Coverts Project. Figuring out how to operate the NH Coverts Project effectively to insure that our goals are met, how to inspire our trained volunteers to action, and how to best serve their on-going needs all point towards the evaluation conducted here.

The purposes of this evaluation were:

- To learn about the impacts of the training workshop on volunteers
- To understand the relationships with and between volunteers as a result of the program
- To solicit ideas from existing volunteers for improving the program and creating future workshops

The evaluation process was especially important at this juncture due to turnover of Coverts Project staff (Extension Wildlife Specialist & new Coverts Project Coordinator) during 2000-2001. As staff members change, knowledge of individual volunteers who have gone through the program - and thus the anecdotal conversations about improving the program, ideas for the future, thoughts about the program's impacts on different individuals - is lost over time. A more formal inquiry on these topics would help new and future staff understand the strengths and weaknesses of the program and will help them to better respond to the needs and interests of the volunteers.

In this light, staff of UNH Cooperative Extension conducted a program evaluation in the form of a survey sent to all active Coverts volunteers during the fall of 2001 and winter of 2002.

Evaluation Methods

Working with UNH Family Studies professor Michael Kalinowski (who also teaches a course in program evaluation) over several months, we drafted a series of 12 survey questions focusing on three aspects of the Coverts Project:

- Impacts and usefulness of the Coverts Training Workshop and related materials
- Communication with and between Coverts Cooperators
- Continuing Education for veteran Coverts Cooperators

A final open-ended question was also included. Copies of the survey form and accompanying mailing materials are located in the Appendix.

Following an initial postcard announcing the program evaluation, we mailed the survey to seven year's worth of Coverts Cooperators totaling 160 volunteers, including the most recent class of 2001. At the suggestion of Dr. Kalinowski, all mailed materials were color-coded (bright green card stock and mailing envelopes) to provide a consistent visual cue about the contents. We mailed the surveys in early January 2002, and followed up with a second mailing one month later to non-respondents (reminder card). A self-addressed, stamped return envelope was included in the mailing to allow for an easy return.

Respondents were not asked for their names on the survey, although a large number signed their form or included their name on the reply envelope. The survey forms were coded to allow for analysis of responses by Coverts class, land ownership size, and other characteristics tracked on our volunteer database.

Results and Discussion

Survey Sample

Response to the program survey was high compared with the response rate to our annual accomplishments survey. The program evaluation received a response rate of 45% after the first mailing, and a final rate of 63% after the follow-up mailing. This sample consisted of 101 surveys returned from 160 mailed out.

Several tests discerned that the sample received was representative of the Coverts group as a whole. The following graph of survey respondents according to the year they took the Coverts training (Fig. 1) shows that at least 50% of the trainees in each class responded to the survey, and that response by year is relatively evenly distributed between early and later training years.

It also appears that the size of land ownership of respondents and the Coverts group as a whole is comparable. The average size of land owned by survey respondents is 229 acres and the average for all Coverts Cooperators is 215 acres.

Finally, survey respondents were asked "How do you perceive your involvement as a Coverts Cooperator?" It might be expected that the most active Coverts volunteers would be the ones to return the survey, while those not very involved would not respond at all. However, responses to this question included 6% answering "not involved," and the graph of responses displays a standard distribution only slightly weighed towards the "very involved" end (see Fig. 2).

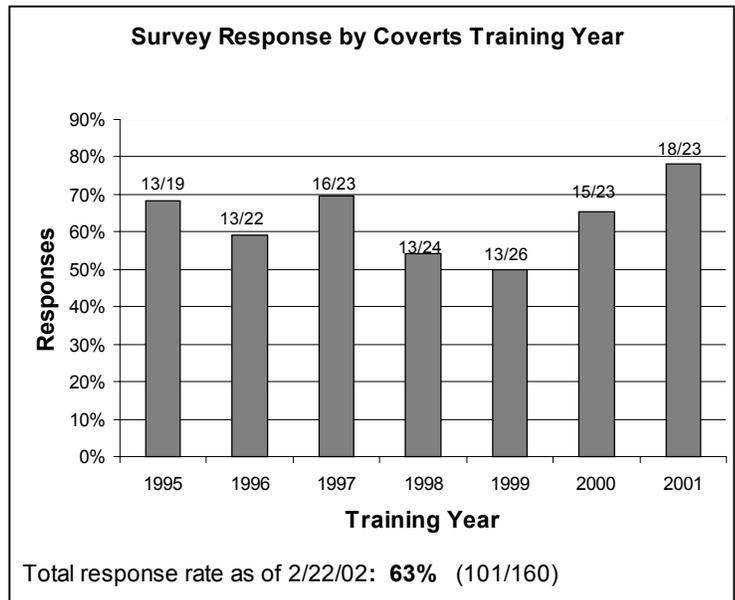


Figure 1 - Survey Response by Training Year

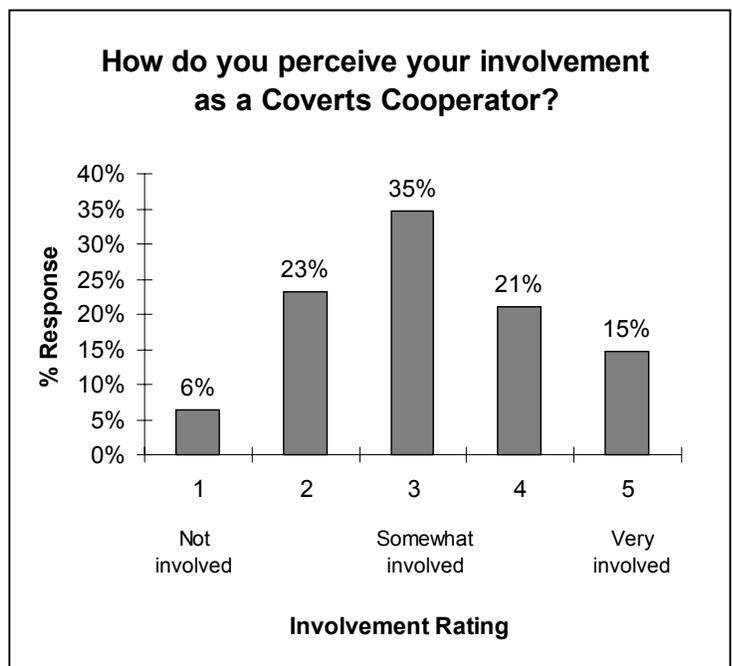


Figure 2 - Perception of Involvement as a Coverts Cooperator

Based on these analyses, it appears that our results reflect a variety of perspectives of representative types of Coverts volunteers - from different training years, sizes of land ownership, and levels of involvement in the program.

Impacts of the Coverts Training Workshop

Three questions on the survey focused on the Coverts Training Workshop and reference materials provided at this session. This information was sought in order to discern which topics and materials have provided the most benefit in the years since participants went through the training, with the aim of refining the focus of future workshops and reference notebooks.

In ranking the top 5 most useful topics presented at the Coverts Workshop, respondents rated Wildlife Habitats highest (by a large margin), followed by Forest Management Techniques and Forest Ecology (Fig. 3). Mid-ranked topics included (in order) Biodiversity and Threatened Species, Wetlands and Riparian Areas, Directories of Natural Resources Professionals, Community Conservation Planning, and Voluntary Land Protection & Easements. The other seven topics received lower rankings, but still reflect some level of interest -- if a topic made it onto the chart, it indicated someone included this topic as a "top 5" choice. All fifteen topics received at least 10 ranked votes.

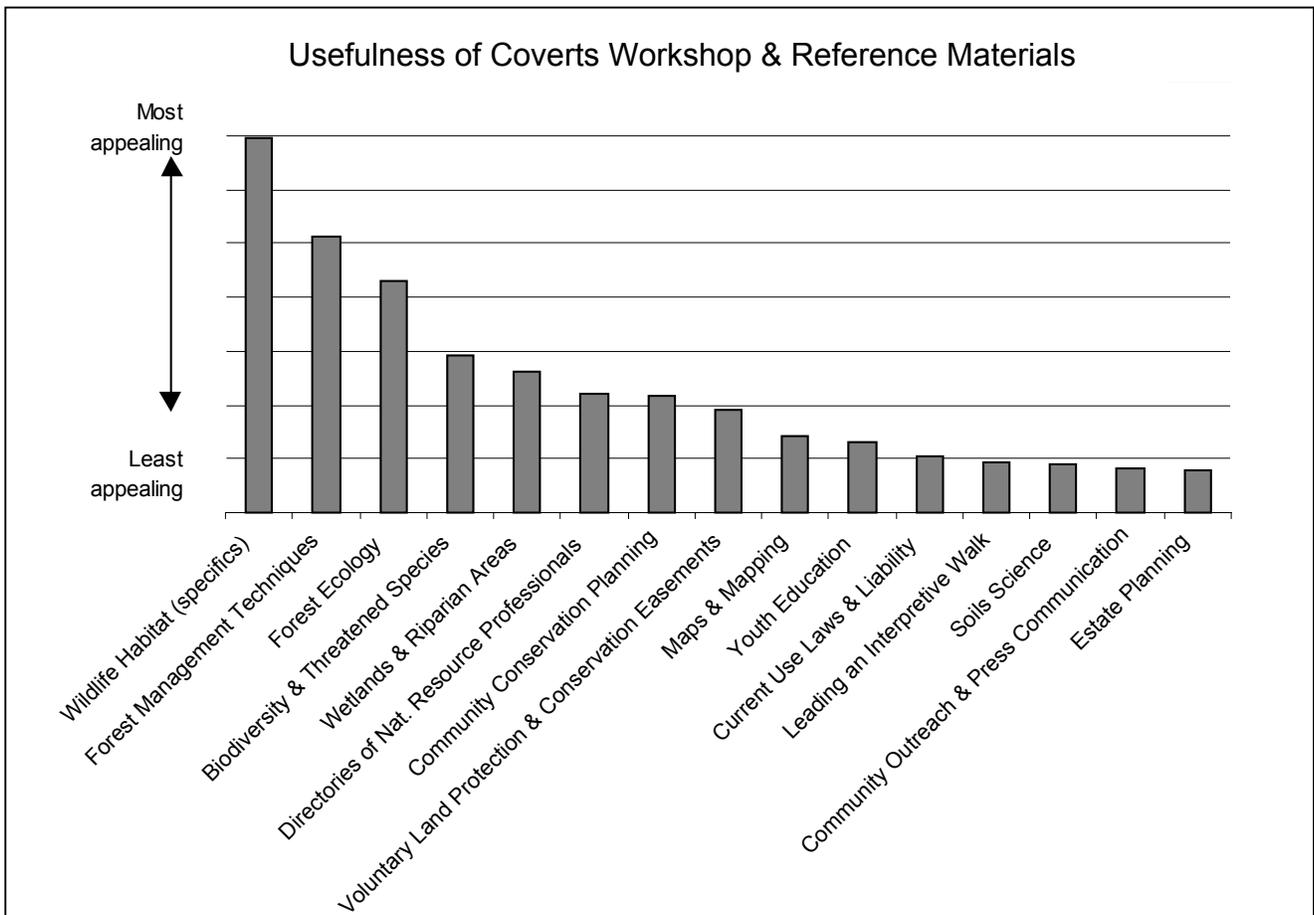


Figure 3 - Coverts Workshop Topic Preferences

Almost all respondents said that the quantity of Coverts reference materials was fine, with a slight lean towards "too many materials." Nobody gave the opinion that there were too few materials. When asked "Approximately how often have you used the materials from the Coverts Resource Notebook since the workshop?", a surprising 53% said they used the materials "about once a month," and 29% said "about once a year." For the effort required to research, compile, and provide funding for these materials, it is reassuring to find that so many Coverts Cooperators use these materials on a regular basis.

Communication with and among Coverts Cooperators

Results from three questions concerning communication with and between Coverts Cooperators show that Coverts Cooperators adequately connected with the Coverts Project office, but do not feel sufficiently connected to each other. 82% of Coverts Cooperators are happy with how often they hear from the Coverts office ("about the same"), while 6% would like to hear less, 4% more often, and 5% much more often. Currently, Cooperators hear from the office through the *Making Tracks* newsletter, periodic mailings, email postings, and a newly created email discussion forum ("listserv"). Almost all respondents also feel the 40-hour volunteer requirement for the Coverts program is "about right."

On the other hand, response to the question, "How often would you like to hear from other Coverts Cooperators" shows that volunteers are interested in more opportunities for communication with other Coverts volunteers (see Fig. 4). This indicates that current project efforts to link Coverts Cooperators to each other are likely to be beneficial. These efforts include fostering county-based Coverts groups through a "county liaison" Coverts volunteer, administering the Coverts listserv discussion group, and assisting Coverts Cooperators in hosting local woodlot field tours.

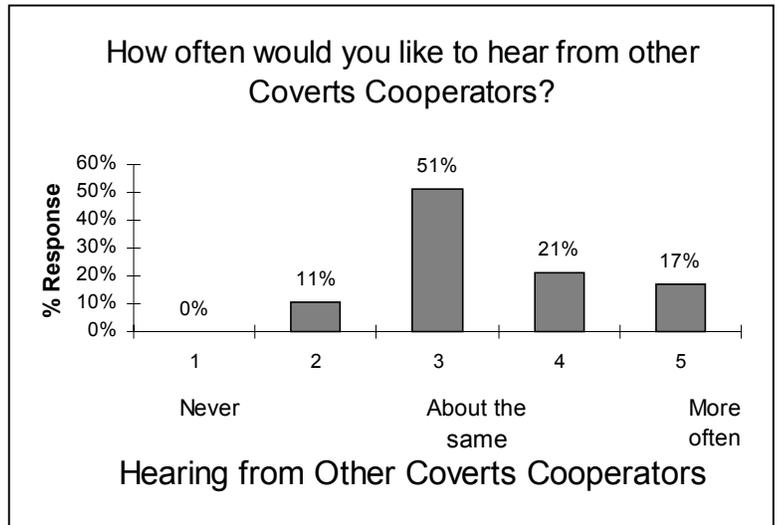


Figure 4 - Communication Among Coverts Cooperators

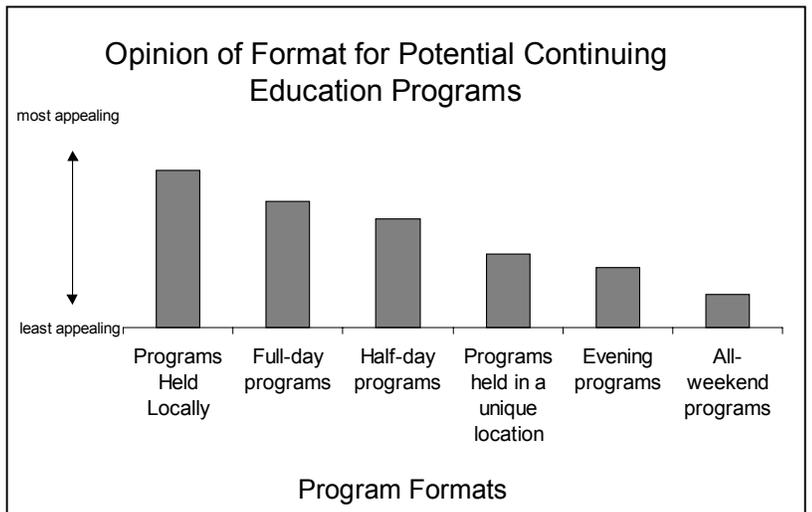


Figure 5 - Continuing Education Formats

Continuing Education for Veteran Coverts Cooperators

Results from questions on the format of continuing education programs for Coverts volunteers will help UNH Cooperative Extension plan future workshops. Coverts volunteers are most

interested in field tours on other Coverts Cooperator's lands and Alumni Workshops, although all listed types (overnight workshops, returning to Coverts Workshop Dinner, and Other) were ranked by some people, thus indicating interest in a variety of workshop types. Seasonal preferences for continuing education programs did not show large variation, but programs in fall were most preferred followed closely by spring, winter, and summer.

The last two questions relating to continuing education programs provide particularly useful information for program planning. When asked to rank their preferences for the format of continuing education programs, results show that Coverts volunteers find local programming most appealing (see Fig. 4). This again suggests that our current efforts to foster local (county-based) groups of Coverts Cooperators should serve the needs and interests of Coverts volunteers. In response to the question "Rank the top 4 topics for continuing education programs that you would be most likely to attend in the coming year," the results show that "Wildlife Habitat (specifics)" again tops the list by a very wide margin (Fig. 5). Other promising topics include Forest Management Techniques, Biodiversity & Threatened Species, Community Conservation Planning, Forest Ecology, and Wetlands & Riparian Areas. These results suggest that we should maintain an emphasis on our traditional Coverts focus - wildlife, habitat and stewardship - in order to respond to the interests of our constituents.

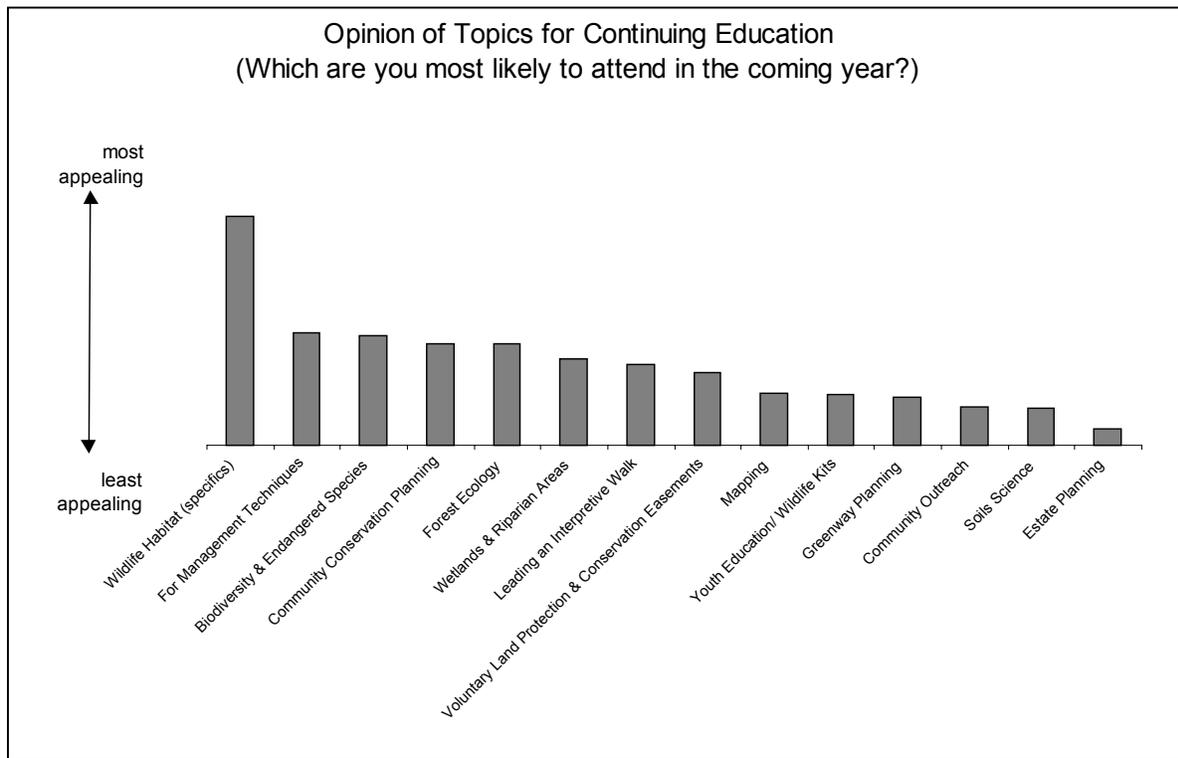


Figure 6 - Continuing Education Program Topics

Open-ended Comments & Suggestions

Perhaps the most important feedback from this program evaluation came in the responses to the final, open-ended question in the survey, which read:

Use the following space to comment on the Coverts Program. For example, what are the benefits you've gotten out of the Coverts Workshop? Has your experience with the Coverts Project changed you, your activities or your views? (Please comment)

The complete responses to this question are provided in the Appendix. Although a summarization of these responses is difficult, there are some consistencies among responses.

Reading through each response, general themes emerged which allowed us to tally the number of similar comments (most responses had several comments), and group them into three categories: benefits, critiques, and suggestions for the Coverts program.

A summary of the top 10 benefits of the Coverts Program as described by Coverts survey respondents is as follows:

Top 10 Benefits of Coverts Program According to Survey

1. Networking - Coverts connected me to other Coverts Cooperators with common concerns and interests (26 responses)
2. Coverts connected me to resource professionals (24 responses)
3. Coverts motivated me with the management of my own land - apply new practices, do more, etc. (20 responses)
4. Coverts made me more effective in my town Conservation Commission and/or helped me communicate more effectively in my community (18 responses)
5. Coverts connected me to additional programs and workshops, and/or motivated me to learn more, take additional workshops (11 responses)
6. The content of the Coverts workshop contributed to my general knowledge (9 responses)
7. The Coverts resource notebook helped me answer on-going questions (9 responses)
8. Coverts reinforced/strengthened my views, but did not change them (8 responses)
9. Coverts changed my views of (and/or provided greater understanding of) forest management (7 responses)
10. Coverts helped focus my stewardship and/or conservation activities (7 responses)

These comments provide insight into the importance of the 3 1/2-day format of the Coverts workshop, which allows for intense interaction among participants, thus encouraging the "networking" function. In seeking a wide variety of speakers and presenters for workshops, we also help connect people to more resource professionals. And in maintaining an emphasis on both land stewardship and community conservation, the Coverts program remains relevant to both landowners and community conservation-minded individuals, both of whom are recruited and accepted into the program every year. While these results are not a surprise, it is again reassuring to find that Coverts Cooperators themselves articulate the same benefits as we, as program designers, are aiming for.

There were fewer critiques overall, and almost no consistency between these types of comments. For example:

Critiques of Coverts Program According to Survey (Examples)

1. I had a hard time finding opportunities to use Coverts training (2 responses)
2. Coverts sends out too many mailings on paper (2 responses)
3. Coverts did not help me gain sufficient confidence or real understanding to become an effective advocate (1 response)
4. Coverts had too much emphasis on forest management for people from the southern part of NH where all the cutting is done to develop the site (1 response)
5. I used the resource notebook very little (1 response)

Suggestions for improving the Coverts project also varied widely, including everything from presentation style to continuing education workshops, to communication recommendations. For example:

Suggestions for Improvement According to Survey (Examples)

- Rethink the use of Power Point in presentations
- Provide more information on public land management and backyard stewardship for people in southern part of NH
- Revise or update the resource directories in the Coverts resource notebooks for alumni
- Have a program on trail-building
- Have county meetings of Coverts Cooperators for collective action on projects
- Provide help in applying for grants for community (how to write, availability, etc.)
- Have different levels of Coverts Cooperators according to their level of involvement
- Provide more information about other Coverts Cooperators efforts - longer stories in the newsletter, etc.

Conclusions

The results of this program evaluation will help improve the Coverts Project in many ways, and will help us design programming and communication strategies that match the interests and needs of our ever-growing number of Coverts Cooperators. Some of the results may help shift the program in subtle ways - for example, keeping programming focused on wildlife habitat and land stewardship. Other results suggest more concrete alterations such as emphasizing local interaction among Coverts volunteers, or adding a stronger wetlands component to the Coverts training workshop.

A summary of general findings from this program evaluation includes:

- Wildlife Habitat (specifics) and Forest Management are topics of primary interest to Coverts Cooperators
- Coverts volunteers are interested in wetlands issues, though the current Coverts program does not emphasize this ecological component
- The labor and expense of providing a extensive resource materials to Coverts Cooperators through a resource notebook is a worthwhile practice, as most use the materials at least once a year, many as often as once a month
- Coverts volunteers want to hear more from each other, so anything we can do to promote or enhance communication among Coverts Cooperators will be appreciated - the listserv, county-based Coverts groups/meetings, local field tours, etc.
- Coverts volunteers are interested in a variety of types of workshops, but programs in their local area, on other Coverts Cooperators' lands are most appealing
- The networking function of the Coverts workshop is one of the most valued aspects of the program; this function is enhanced by the intense nature of a 3 1/2 day workshop format, by the newsletter, and by the other venues that encourage communication among Coverts volunteers
- Making connections to resource professionals is important to many Coverts volunteers, so exposing them to as many different speakers and presenters as possible during the training helps "put names with faces" and helps make those connections
- The Coverts Project is motivating volunteers to manage their own land with a stewardship ethic, one of the primary goals of the program, and an important benefit of the project
- The training provided by the Coverts Project is helping Conservation Commissioners and others communicate more effectively in their communities on behalf of wildlife and land stewardship.

NH Coverts 1995-2002 Program Evaluation

APPENDIX

Copy of Program Survey & Mailed Materials

Complete Text Responses to Open-Ended Question (#12)

[cover letter on letterhead]

[DATE]

Dear Coverts Cooperators,

After seven years of the New Hampshire Coverts Project, we would like to take the time to evaluate the whole program. In this evaluation, we seek your opinions to help us improve this program, making it more meaningful for both new Coverts volunteers and veteran volunteers like you.

It is very important that your opinions are expressed in this survey. We want to know how you feel about the program – what you like, what you don't like, and how the program can better serve your needs and interests. Even if you have never sent in a Coverts survey before, please take the time to fill out this one.

Directions:

This 12-question survey takes approximately 15 minutes to fill out. If you have comments on any of the questions, please feel free to write your thoughts in the margins next to the question. When you are finished, please return the survey to the Coverts Project office by __ (date) _____ in the pre-paid envelope enclosed.

Thank you for helping to improve the Coverts Project by providing your input! If you have any questions about the evaluation process, please feel free to contact me at 862-2166 or malin.clyde@unh.edu.

Sincerely,

Malin Ely Clyde
Coordinator
NH Coverts Project

The New Hampshire Coverts Project is coordinated by UNH Cooperative Extension in cooperation with NH Fish and Game Department, NH Division of Forests and Lands, the Ruffed Grouse Society, and the U. S. Forest Service.

4. How often would you like to hear from the Coverts Project office?
(Circle the most appropriate number)

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
never about the same more often

5. How often would you like to connect with other Coverts Cooperators?
(Circle the most appropriate number)

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
never about the same more often

6. How do you perceive your involvement as a Coverts Cooperator?
(Circle the most appropriate number)

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
not involved somewhat involved very involved

7. Rate your opinion of the 40 hours of volunteer time requested by the Coverts Project during your first year as a Coverts Cooperator (Circle the most appropriate number)

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
too little time about right too much time

8. Rank your **top 3** choices of types of continuing education programs (*1 = most appealing*)

- Alumni Workshops (example, July 2001 in Whitefield)
- Reunions
- Field tours on other Coverts Cooperator's lands
- Returning to the Coverts Training Workshop dinner
- Overnight workshops (example, North Country Workshop in June, 2000)
- Other _____

9. Rank your **top 3** choices of potential formats for continuing education programs (*1 = most appealing*)
- Evening Programs
 - 1/2 day programs
 - Full-day programs
 - All-weekend programs
 - Programs held locally (i.e. in my town or county)
 - Programs in a unique or special location, such as _____
10. Rank the following seasons according to their appeal for continuing education programs (*1 = most appealing*):
- Programs held in Fall
 - Programs held in Winter
 - Programs held in Spring
 - Programs held in Summer
11. Rank the **top four (4)** topics for continuing education programs that you would be most likely to attend in the coming year (*1 = most likely to attend*)
- Forest Ecology
 - Forest Management Techniques
 - Soils Science
 - Wildlife Habitat (specifics)
 - Biodiversity & Endangered Species
 - Mapping
 - Leading an Interpretive Walk
 - Wetlands & Riparian areas
 - Community Conservation Planning
 - Greenway Planning
 - Youth Education/Wildlife Kits
 - Estate Planning
 - Voluntary Land Protection /
Conservation Easements
 - Community Outreach
 - Other (please list):

12. Use the following space to comment on the Coverts Program. For example, what are the benefits you've gotten out of the Coverts Workshop? Has your experience with the Coverts Project changed you, your activities or your views? (*Please comment*)

Original text responses from Coverts Program Evaluation

Question 12 (open-ended question)

I work daily with this training as a landscape consultant and then as an environmental educator at [x environmental education center]. The Coverts Project helped me transition from CA to NH. I also advise on the [x] Conservation Commission.

I think the Coverts Project is great. I have received a wonderful gift from the program. The programs' section on biodiversity answered many intuitive questions I have had. The section on forest ecology and Wildlife/Forestry management worked well together because they answered the multitude questions of how, why and where? I have enjoyed my first 3+ months of being a Coverts & have spent numerous hours talking to friends and co-workers about the program. I have had a number of conversations with a gentleman at work who owns some property in the town of [x] (17+ acres). It turns out he wants to increase the wildlife potential on the property by doing a selection cut. While the volume of material that was presented at the Coverts Workshop was enormous, I have found it tremendously useful. I was able to talk intelligently about forestry management objectives and goals, different techniques to achieve those goals, and direct a co-worker, now a friend, in the direction of a local forester to help him achieve his goals. It feels great to be able to have a positive impact on the Great North Woods.

I have become much more involved in conservation efforts in my town.

Although I have tried to influence land-use decisions as a land surveyor, attended numerous follow-up workshops and reunions, considered habitat when harvesting on my own woodlands, and remained active with a local environmental education program called [x], I have never felt sufficiently motivated or knowledgeable to get out and preach to the masses about wildlife conservation. And, I have effectively lost my sense of community and bonding with the Coverts group as these feelings have grown and time has passed, while other pursuits and demands increasingly have my attention. I enjoyed the training and definitely have benefited in many subtle ways, but I do not feel that I gained enough real understanding or confidence to become an effective advocate. Something just hasn't clicked with me personally, and I have drifted towards other real pre-occupations, through no fault of the Coverts people or programs.

The event was "rich" - I knew it would be. It had to be digested over time. The experience has made me more able to explain conservation processes, practices, and needs to the public. It has made me more effective on my own conservation commission in [x], more effective dealing with the Selectmen. Most of my Coverts time has been taken up by coordinating work on our grant to study the [x] portion of the [x] River waterway and preparing to begin work on our first NRI. But the net effect of the Coverts training has been to make me more useful and effective in these activities.

I invite all of you to rethink the heavy reliance on Power Point. I believe (based on 27 years teaching public communication and mass media at University level) that too much TEXT material is being presented visually. It flies against research on retention rates, and people can read & re-read the same text material in printed form, before and after the training. Why not focus PowerPoint on illustrations, examples, graphs, charts, photos, and drawings with more extended interpretation and discussion per slide. Think about it! More illustration, better interaction, better retention, less passive "learning."!

I believe that the Coverts Workshop reinforced my views and gave me a lot more knowledge to attempt to influence other people. As we begin and get seriously into the management of the [x] Community Forest, I expect that the Coverts experience as well as all of the material provided at the workshop will be very valuable. We have 3 new members of the [x] Con Comm that I expect will attend the next workshop.

The program gave me new insight into wildlife management and helped me to alter programs that I present on that subject.

The Coverts Program was very helpful to me in terms of connecting with resources. I appreciate reading the discussions on the website even though I haven't been directly involved. I have recommended the program to others

(who have since attended) and will continue to do so. I interpret the 40 hours requirement to apply to any type of conservation volunteerism. I spend at least that much monthly between my [local land trust] activities, conservation commission and 3-4 other related committees. I appreciate all the work [Coverts staff] and others invest in the program and feel the results are well worth it. Thank you for your commitment to this important issue.

The Resource Notebook for us first (95) years was much smaller and we did not have all the course content included now. Hard to answer some questions without being familiar with the current books. I am a great reader and constantly add articles and information to my book and virtually always have a book on nature on my "working" pile beside my sofa. My goal is to have more and more detail about species that live in New England. As a former tree farmer, I was familiar with most of the material on forest ecology, conservation, management techniques, etc. But the workshops and materials from Coverts Program, the wonderful people who have joined, and the inspiring teachers and leaders we have had. I realize that I have been far less involved with community/environmental activities since moving to [x] and should make more of an effort to become involved with the parks volunteers, etc. [UNH Cooperative Extension staff] got a Backyard Tree Farm notebook for me - a great supplement to our Coverts materials.

Changed Me - I now feel obliged to do more to assist my community and others to understand our role in the stewardship of This Place (where we live) in the Here and Now. Coverts informed me, broadened my views in most cases - and helped me focus on my goals for stewardship of my own land.

Changed the World Around Me - Now I see areas of potential I never would have seen, because of my knowledge gained at Coverts. Now there are doors opening, because at Coverts I learned upon which doors to knock. In a nutshell, I know now the many avenues I can try to learn, to achieve more - the people who are there to help. By that I mean the agencies and individuals who either unite to support Coverts or serve as agencies to support state or federal programs - And, not the least, the networking with other cooperators is of terrific importance.

I try to encourage others to join the Coverts program whenever I meet someone who I feel has something to offer the program OR that the Coverts Program can assist in their goals of land stewardship and wildlife management.

I understand even better than before, that forests require maintenance and care for its overall health and increased biodiversity.

I got a better understanding of the natural environment of the state and the community in which I live. The information has since been useful in my conversations with residents in my community and in helping me to make better decisions as a Selectman in my community. I have worked with the Planning Board and Conservation Commission and I feel better informed on some issues because of my Coverts training.

My intention, after Coverts, had been to spend more of my time on local conservation activities but decided I could best use what talents and knowledge I had by returning to the Board of Selectmen.

While I have always been conservation minded, I have a better understanding of the natural environment than I did before Coverts. I have referred to the things I learned about easements to feel confident in discussing them. When developers question the need for certain habitat preservation, I feel better equipped to answer, or I know where to get the answers. I still refer to my handouts and notebook from time to time.

In my community, there is such continuing development that forest management and related issues are not something I can really apply. The only wood being cut here is pretty much to clear for house lots. Thus, those aspects of Coverts, while interesting, have no applicability to me. We do have 1000 acres of public lands in town and I certainly appreciate the need for stewardship of those lands (and worry about who will continue to do it, as well).

It may be useful to have some more emphasis on backyard conservation and public lands stewardship as part of the workshops. All people attending live in communities with public lands that doubtless do not get the attention that private lands do. Town Forests and parks are often not cared for with attention to good forest management or wildlife conservation.

Terrific program. Format provokes personal initiative in areas of interest - this suits individuals while the sum of those in each class promises activities in a broad range.

Enjoy meeting cooperators - mostly a decent bunch pulled together by common interests.

Very impressed with the professionals who work in NH. Great attitude. When I needed input for various projects, several were very helpful. It seems information sharing is in the way they operate. Coverts certainly has been broadening to me.

1. Access to specialists as a resource, 2. Information that will help protect and keep our land as good forest, field, and wildlife habitat, 3. Knowledge of forestry management techniques and how this can be combined to maintain good wildlife habitat and good healthy forest, 4. My views on cutting of forests have changed - with some reservations, 5. The project has excited me to convey this information to those around me.

The Coverts Workshop was the motivation that I needed at that time to go on to do all the things I have accomplished over the last 3 years. The list is endless and on-going, but most significantly as of this month I probably will start monitoring easements professionally.

The classroom presentations were informative and field trips very worthwhile. I've used the information in the booklets in my Coverts manual weekly for reference. It has helped me with the work I do on the Con Comm and in working with the newly established group in [town of x], opposing race track noise. I've been able to share with them methods of communicating with the media and writing letters to the editor. We (Con Comm) are currently working on developing an interpretive trail map at the conservation land at [x] Pond and repair of the access road to [x] Pond. I've just completed an application for a grant to fund the project from the moose plate conservation grant. We'll be working with Antioch NE to create the interpretive nature trail and with the [x] schools to use the conservation land for field trips to augment nature studies. The Coverts Program has opened the door for me to realize the opportunities to work in partnership with other agencies. The information that I received has been a GREAT resource. And at the other end of that phone is advice and assistance.

I have been very happy with the Coverts Program. Since I was trained in the wildlife field, I can't say that Coverts has changed me, my activities, or views. But, I am still learning from it. I think it helped me as a member of a conservation commission. I have used materials from Coverts to two CLL [College of Lifelong Learning] courses I have taught. I also enjoy the contacts I have made with fellow Coverts and natural resource professionals. Unfortunately, I have missed many of the reunions, workshops, mostly due to timing conflicts or travel. I intend to attend more in the future. I feel that 40 hours/year of volunteering is adequate - not too much or too little. Thank you for giving me (us) the opportunity to comment.

Benefits: knowledge of how nature works and what we can do to enhance and work with nature; Changes: my views on land protection have changed - I'm more aware of the impact of my actions, and therefore, attempt to change detrimental behaviors; Suggestions: Regularly scheduled (2-4 times/year) County meetings sessions/gatherings of Coverts Cooperators to share ideas, work together on projects, take advanced workshops, just have lunch together and socialize - perhaps hosted by a different cooperator each time as well as a once/year meeting at the county office with the county forester, Coverts Coordinator, wildlife specialist, Forestry specialist. Establishing contacts around the state, a way to recharge and get refocused, a chance to get a glimpse of the conservation community, exposure to new ideas and to old practices that work, it is also a chance for the presenters to be challenged, questioned.

The major benefit of this program, for me, has been to meet a group of non-professional people that share many of the concerns and problems that I have. I was particularly pleased to find that I was not alone, for example, in trying to convince town fathers that conservation efforts need support and that an NRI might be of some value. Another benefit for me was to understand forest management. I'm a Sierra Club member and they are not always appreciative of the lumbering industry. It was helpful to me to understand what is and in fact that there are indeed ways to minimize logging's impact on forest plant/animal communities. The resources supplied have had little use. I'm presently working on a wetland resource map and was particularly interested in the legalities of various types of wetlands, including a legal description of a wetland. For example, I wanted to know specifically what statute covered protection of land surrounding wetlands (buffers). I gained little from this material. I finally went through

a series of phone calls to get this information. From this I learned that there is a maze of different departments, offices and sections that have divided areas of responsibility. Perhaps a state directory of these types of facilities along with a short summary of their responsibilities would be more helpful. If one exists please let me know. The material handed out has a finite life and in most cases one wants to know what is the latest version of an issue. Again, perhaps a directory of materials along with a short description and availability might suffice. I would indeed be very interested in further classes. The quality of instructors in the course was excellent. Having them available for one day on a weekend for refreshers would be most helpful if the driving time was not too long. Thanks for your interest in our comments.

I've gained much knowledge, enthusiasm and so many resources and networking avenues to provide education or direction to children, landowners, and the general public on how to protect habitat for wildlife.

Most of what I have learned I have applied to my own property as wildlife habitat/forestry management practices. However, I have done very little outreach, unfortunately. Now it appears that I will be moving shortly, so you should probably take me off the list. I will take the materials I have and what I have learned and look for opportunities to apply to wherever I go.

First let me say that my ratings above don't indicate the importance I attach to land protection, which I consider paramount. Coverts hasn't changed my views - my heart's always been in the right place - but it has changed my activities. Aside from the value of many new friendships, it has taught me how better to manage my land, and equipped me to guide others.

There was so much information imparted to us at the workshop that I had a hard time. For ME it would have been more beneficial with a longer session (say about a week) with more hands-on for most topics covered. By the time the weekend was over, I was excited but also confused. It was too much information in too short of a time without enough practical, hands-on application, for me to fully understand. I very much enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to participate in the program, then and now. I do think that the Coverts program is very worthwhile and appropriate for the times. We would probably be more useful and involved if we were required to introduce ourselves to the Selectmen and the Conservation Commissions in the towns where we live.

A great deal of info for resource material, ideas for programs. People to use as resources. My experience w/Coverts has been very positive. It has helped in my everyday job, also volunteers who help us have taken the course and expanded their knowledge.

Coverts Program gives me the base from which to do the outdoor things I've decided to do at this stage of life. It has not "changed" me, my activities, or my views; but it has helped to focus them. It also has provided a great network of people with similar goals, even though reasons, skills, and ideas may differ.

Excellent Program! It would seem appropriate to have levels of involvement and education, I.e. Coverts Cooperator I, II, III, trainer (in specialized areas), Master Cooperator. Changed me in that I intensively see the need for further education (hands-on) for youth and community. Sounds like additional funding is necessary - grants?

I feel the Coverts program has been useful to me. I have gained practical knowledge on wildlife habitat that I have used on my own land and shared with many others.

The Coverts Program opened up a new world for me in natural science and forestry. I had always been involved in Land Trusts, but Coverts gave me better focus. I have pushed for Coverts attendance in NH and other states, MA & Maine, for those in all areas of conservation.

We became educated on many issues of forestry and wildlife habitat that were concerns of ours. After our experience with the program we have pushed for further knowledge which has helped us on our recent project to restore our boss's 80 acres, primarily the sugar bush. All the materials we were given are wonderful tools to have, they will help us with decisions on our 124 acres we have in [town of x]. Watching the people who instructed us throughout the program was inspiring. They all had passion and true commitment with what they are doing. We hope the program continues and we welcome anyone who wants to come see our projects in the works to contact us.

The most beneficial part of Coverts to me is the networking gained for me in my role as Director of a Nature Center. It has helped me direct people to the appropriate person when I get a question/problem I can't solve. It has made me more aware of what this state has to offer! Sometimes you feel you are the only one who cares and then you hear what other Coverts are up to and you realize you aren't! There are some FANTASTIC people involved in the Coverts Program!

Our notebooks need to be updated, especially the directories and any newly published handouts for active cooperators. Workshop subjects should be balanced and include material on all subjects. We feel that when presenting programs and leading field trips, we focus on wildlife habitat because we have usually said in our introduction that we are Coverts Cooperators. On our own land it is a focus, so we always have examples of practices to use for demonstration should the occasion arise. When we receive information on new programs concerning wildlife habitat management, we make sure we keep it and know the source to contact and often incorporate it in our walks or programs. It is very good to have programs like Tree Farm and Coverts which allow people from all areas of the state to gather and become acquainted. The Coverts program has served to make us more aware of wildlife concerns around the state. It is a great program.

As you know, my occupation is much different than that of the cooperators who are educators and private landowners. Nonetheless, I am very involved in forestry and wildlife habitat management. My previous schooling and experience in the forestry field has been augmented by the Coverts program. Much of the wildlife habitat education I have acquired is a result of the original Coverts Workshop and subsequent field days and workshops. One thing I have come to realize is how interconnected the different areas of management are and that occasionally compromises are necessary. Personally, I would attend more Coverts outings if they were during the week as I usually have weekend commitments. We have 5 miles or more of recreation trails on our land, which require ongoing maintenance. We have constructed trail bridges - some well made and some very crude. This may not be within the scope of the Coverts program but I would welcome some hands-on experience and training with trail and bridge construction. I know some of our cooperators have land with trails open to the public and this topic should be of interest to them as well. I have also been working with the town of [x] to create trails in their town forest, which is in need of at least two bridges. I would love to see a workshop on this - maybe on a fellow cooperator's land or public land. This fall I helped a volunteer group, sponsored by TNC, cut trails in Sullivan, NH and had a good time. I don't know if they construct bridges or have someone on their staff that is knowledgeable and would work with others or not. We are currently applying for a permit to construct a 30' bridge over an area of "prime wetland" on [land I manage]. We will hopefully be granted the permit and be able to build the bridge this summer. We also have other bridges, which need to be replaced. If you know of anyone that could help me with the design please let me know. I think the Coverts Program is very worthwhile and should help improve, maintain, and protect our valuable forests, wetlands and undeveloped land as well as our endeared wildlife.

One of the best benefits of Coverts has been meeting other people from throughout NH who share the same interest in protecting wildlife habitat and natural areas. There is certainly a diversity of viewpoints within the membership of Coverts. I have used the Coverts training on my own NH land and extensively in my Maine home community. I hope to use that training to influence protecting the landscape at my NH home during the coming years and look forward to working with other Cooperators in my county. A lot of the benefits of Coverts occurs outside the mainstream of the organization and may not be reflected in your statistics.

I own 100 acres in [x]; I have had a management plan made, I have met with their Conservation Commission, and Selectmen particularly regarding elimination of ATVs from my property. I have had regular contact and support from Fish & Game and from the Coop Ext. group. I am frustrated by slow progress but could not be as involved were it not for the Coverts Program. I have an interest in contributing to a Greenway Program which is inspired by Coverts. It's great!

Knowing there are a lot more people familiarized with the project in general. It has given me great satisfaction to meet and talk with the experts in their field. It gives me great pleasure to meet the incoming Coverts members.

Met/re-connected with other volunteers that I continue to see and interact with through other venues, such as conservation commission and land trust activities. 4-day training was excellent and fun, but most of my current volunteer work represents needs of other "organizations" such as Con Comm, land trust, local sanctuary activities, field trips led for conservation organizations, etc. As such, Coverts does not get much recognition or credit. Coverts

reminded/reinforced to me that there are a lot of good people out there interested in the same things, and that is heartening. An environmentalist is often in an uphill battle, or arguing an "unpopular" position, so knowing of others, and connecting with them, is important.

[Benefits include] information and the print resources we were given. Access to accurate technical information has been valuable as we start our NRI

Because the Coverts program focused on education and training, the experience proved to be invaluable in my volunteer conservation efforts in my community. I feel my effectiveness and influence improved as a result. I am busier than ever, with more critical projects that have resulted in success. I look forward to continuing to develop with training and I see an even more expanded role of influence in my community in the future. Thank you for this great program.

Terrific program - More emphasis needs to be placed on doing (improving wildlife habitat). Too much emphasis on education/outreach. We need to walk the walk not just talk the talk. Adding political correctness to what species of fruiting shrubs should be planted or avoided was a wrong move.

While I greatly enjoyed the original Coverts Program, I have not had the time either the Coverts Program or I anticipated to advance Coverts' work. One problem is my time. Another is seeing opportunities where I can contribute.

Coverts Cooperators are my kind of people!

The Coverts Workshop and subsequent activities have given me lots of knowledge about forest management and wildlife habitat. More importantly, it gave me additional impetus to apply conservation principles while undertaking management of town forests and to spread the message to family, friends, and neighbors. Coverts underscored the importance of community involvement and local action. Coverts jump-started my involvement in Conservation Districts in [x] County, NH Assoc. of Conservation Districts, and Conn. River Conservation Dist. Coalition (19 CD's in 4 states). I've become really aware of what I think is a big picture of conservation in NH. The downside is that I'm less focused on a local level.

I can't thank you enough for the information. Am now more involved than ever in conservation and wildlife management efforts.

I think the strengths of this program are that it encourages and supports private land conservation and management efforts. It's a great way to network and make contacts with people who share common interests. It's a great way to learn about what others have done or are doing to manage their land and share ideas about management practices. I have found the biggest challenges are learning ways of sharing the information learned through the Coverts program. It would be good to get more ideas on how to reach out to my community. It might help to hear more success stories about projects that other cooperators have done in their communities (expand beyond the newsletter notes - maybe give cooperators the opportunity to make presentations or exhibits at Training sessions or reunion - perhaps more input from Extension educators about what community needs are). More opportunities to communicate with nearby cooperators would be good. It might be possible to form local Coverts "teams" to work on community projects. Another challenge has been knowing what is appropriate to put on the list-serve. Over all, A GREAT PROGRAM!

I am a landowner and have been involved with your program for 4 years. The info I received initially was great, I learned a great deal. Since my workshop, new information and hands-on has been hard to get. Evening and weekend events would keep me informed and active. Land ownership, taxes, and the cost of conservation projects leave little time and money.

I still feel relatively new to the whole project, since I attended this past September. I feel it's given me a lot of confidence and motivation to speak to others about wise land management. I've used a lot of the info at our local conservation com. meetings. I look forward to helping out at the F&F Expo, plus going on a land tour of a Covert's property. So I feel I've yet to experience many of the things this survey is assessing. Thanks! I think this is a terrific program and I hope you plan to continue it!

My experience with the Coverts Program has not changed my views and I do not believe it has changed me. There have been many occasions over the years where and when I have proudly proclaimed that I am a Coverts Cooperator, and then had to go on and explain what the Coverts Project is all about. IN FACT, JUST TODAY I as talking with a state of NH employee (who is employed by an agency that deals with our state of NH natural resources) who did not know what the Coverts Program in NH was about. So I briefly explained to this person what the CP was/is all about. The CP is a very important program that is of great benefit to NH. Unfortunately, the CP has NOT involved every person who lives and/or works in NH, and as a result we still have our valuable NH woodlands and agricultural lands being "developed" and our wildlife habitat degraded. There is still so much to be done, and apparently not enough time or concerned people to do what must be done. Respectfully submitted.

It has been my experience since attending this project that I have used said acquired knowledge and practices (to a limited extent) upon my land - as a steward; and with my town Conservation Commission (identifying resources, develop a long range plan for non contiguous parcels, mapping, etc.) The desire to do more is there, yet the constraints of elected duties and work load hampers this desire.

Finding out how large the committee of active concern is. Suggestion: Course on availability and procurement of grants/grant-writing (where, how, why)

I think for me, the Coverts Workshop changed my view of forests (their ecology and wildlife), and began my education about management techniques. I find I walk through forests with new 'eyes" now, and can begin passing some of what I know on to others. I regret I haven't stayed in touch with other Coverts (although I did attend alumni day at Whitefield and found it very stimulating!). I know there are many resources available to us, but so far I haven't taken much advantage of them. I do not own a large parcel of land, so my activities within the community have remained largely the same since attending Coverts. But, I do feel a growing sense of self-confidence while participating in community environmental work, in part due to my attendance at Coverts 2000. It came at a good time for me as I was becoming involved in conservation commission work. It definitely was a watershed experience for me!

Other people to do things/exchange and share ideas with.

I have a better grasp of how to write (I'm a natural resources reporter) about the topics covered by Coverts and met professionals in the field from across the state. For me, it's been a terrific background and a current resource.

I appreciate the "once a Coverts Coordinator [sic] always a CC." I attended the UNH Coop. Ext. Woodlot and Wildlife Management in Sept. 2001. Only 9 of an estimated 20 attended. Of those 9, 3 were Coverts and "some" used their CC badges for name tags. I was so sorry I hadn't brought mine! I feel Coverts has fostered a feeling of responsibility in its membership. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. Benefits: Material received at the 97 workshop, have you added any new materials since? Maybe a list on email so we could pick and choose any we would/could use, possible regional meetings/gatherings of members in addition to the state-wide reunions (chapters? We could swap tales and advice easier). In retrospect: I'm not good at returning "tracks" and the like. Doesn't mean I'm not active. Sometimes when I'm involved in a community project I know Coverts is influencing my actions.

I really really enjoyed my Coverts training (1998), but I for some reason have never felt the urge to become very involved since then. I don't know why. Perhaps, being self-employed and being a landowner it's just that I'm too busy but that seems like too easy an answer. Being a landowner also can mean being a little remote and the idea of going out for an evening is a commitment. I don't know! Maybe I'm simply not interested enough in the program. A lot of times I do feel like the sessions being offered are "more of the same" of what we got at the training session instead of being the next phase - if they are a continuation rather than a repeat, that isn't made clear. Maybe instead of an intensive weekend to become a "cooperator", the program would be better if it consisted of one seminar/month for 12 months, or something. Then maybe for the 2nd year, the "graduates" would be required to sign up to work once/month on a specific project or location. Just some ideas!

My views were not changed by Coverts, only strengthened and confirmed. The 2001 program at Sgt. Camp was a con__?__ experience and definitely gave some solid background and pertinent information of our natural world. Examples (both field and class) of how, when, why to manage certain ecosystems. The scope and depth of

organizations, tools, and partnerships that are available and amiable to helping the private landowner, conservation comm. Or community planner is a premier benefit of the coverts "experience" is invaluable and inspiring...nice to see and hear folks talk so fondly and passionately about their work. That was confirmed recently when attending the "landscape scale" conference...great synergy, and so much available to help wrangle some protected land ecosystems and wildlife. Putting it all together for a purpose is the challenge, and then interpreting it to our neighbors and decision-makers. We're working at it now!

We have yet to meet each other but I hope to shake your hand soon. One of our/my gripes is that not many programs are given in the southwestern part of the state. When I get a notice of a program I turn it down because it's a long ride home - perhaps there is/are places which are more centrally located - perhaps Pillsbury State Park or the Harris Center for Conservation Education. Best Regards

First, I was amazed in the range of conservation activities diverse groups used. Second, I decided I would have to choose - and limit - the range and scope of conservation activities I would use: because I need to focus on a few in order to be effective, intellectually; because of time limits; because of priorities in the conservation groups I work in. Coverts helped me discover these needs. It might have been the weekend away or the range of materials. It WAS the experience range of the people. I don't have any suggestions for your program needs. Thanks for asking.

Yes it has changed me. Got me involved in CC because of "obligation" to use my training. Was impetus to volunteer. Met lots of nice, concerned people with similar, yet still divergent, interests. Provided base to build additional layers of knowledge upon. Gave knowledge, contacts, and confidence to tackle forest management project of own, better knowledge of outdoors, and diversity. Gave purpose at a time was looking for project of interest. VERY POSITIVE!

As a resource professional, I use a lot of what I learned during my Coverts training during the implementation of USDA Wetland /Wildlife programs. I don't think my Coverts Experience has changed my views, but has changed some of my activities on my own land. I did think the emphasis on forested ecosystems and forestland management was all-consuming. What about the importance/management of early successional/grassland habitats? It would be very beneficial to touch on more than forested ecosystems. I found one of the greatest benefits to be the excellent reference materials provided as part of the program. I would like to be more involved in the Coverts networks, but find it difficult with 2 children involved in after-school and weekend activities. Much of my time (after hours) is spent with my family or managing my own land. We are in the process of reclaiming +/-6 acres of field land that was clear cut (as part of an overall forest mgt. TSI harvest) last year. We plan to seed a portion of the field to native (warm season) grasses. Once established we would like to use prescribed fire as a primary management tool. If all goes according to plan, it would be a nice stop on a coverts training program or field tour.

Although I haven't participated in Coverts as much as I had anticipated, I have been very impressed with the program and the broad range of topics that it covers (I.e. forest ecology to community outreach). I had only moved to NH from VA a few months before my Coverts training, and it has been confusing figuring out the "conservation climate" up here, particularly residents' attitudes and just how the "town" system works. Coverts helped in this area, but I still feel confused, especially what seems to be ingrained resistance to anything "new" such as the idea of conservation. This is probably because I live in a very small town [x]. Coverts is an excellent program, but I don't feel I have gotten as much out of it as I could have if I was a "local." Having seen a few programs like this, I am very impressed, however!

Meeting different people who share a common goal of practicing good land stewardship. I think it has been and is a good program of neighbors or peers sharing ideas. My views and activities are much the same as when I first met with Sam Doyle and Ellen Snyder a number of years ago when they were first discussing a Coverts Program. I believe there is no better way to spread the word about good land stewardship in NH than by Coverts Cooperators.

The greatest benefit to me has been in meeting other folks with similar interests and in meeting the many professionals that served as presenters.

A lovely program - very informative and thoughtful.

Networking has paid off for all; Coverts allowed me to focus on certain aspects of wildlife habitat restoration and forest management; Coverts background is an aid in local con comm. (chairperson) work. Networking has helped with Upper Valley Land Trust, state people, and other Coverts people; The Coverts Project has been a positive influence and continues to be a good foundation for all people involved with the program; There should be a concerted effort to educate the public as to the terrible drain on all wildlife that is of a catchable size by house cats allowed to roam free; Again, Coverts of NH should have an official sign like "Tree Farm" program - Thank you

My Coverts workshop experience was extremely valuable in opening my eyes to all the other conservation and natural resources projects going on around the state. The contacts I made there have been very valuable since. I wish I could do it again! The one overall thing that I took away from Coverts is the understanding that a regional approach to planning and conservation is increasingly important, especially here in the southern part of the state. Programs like Coverts are incredibly valuable in bringing together conservation-minded people and enabling them to work on a larger scale.

Much more aware of the benefits of proper forestry for wildlife management; liked the hands-on approach, learning from knowledgeable people in the field; enjoyed not as much emphasis on theory; great networking; realized that you do need to "preach to the choir" in order to revitalize those ready to move forward as activists; getting emails on workshops, other info. is great. I forward them to all conservation commission members.

The Coverts Project sends a lot of paper, only some of which is interesting or of use. The workshop itself was great, but as I already was an environmentalist, it didn't much change me.

I was totally lost before the program. Not only did it give me basics, but a feel for how to begin once I got home. Those ideas are still with me. I just ran out of time before winter. I now feel I have a direction to go, a list of priorities, and certainly plenty of references and contacts. Thank you. P.S. One comment - You could save a significant amount of paper if you printed on BOTH sides. Would that be so difficult?

I have bought a house and 6 acres of pine forest along the [x] River in [x]. I am planning to clear about 1 acre for a field. [The county forester] has come and marked trees for a thinning cut. A have yet to choose a logger, but I know now what to look for in a good one! In the spring, after the stumps are pulled, I will plant fruit trees and other wildlife habitat enhancement plants. There are fox and deer prints in my woods, and otter tracks along the river. I am really looking forward to working on my little corner of the world! At the [x] Museum, I have applied for a grant from the Moose Plate program so that [x forester] can come and do inventories on all of our properties, in preparation for developing a nature trail system and interpretive programs. I am also working on new signage for an interpretive trail along the [x] River. The subjects will include lotic ecology, as well as field and forest ecology, and what makes good wildlife habitat. I have lots of good reference materials from the Coverts program that I am using. See you at the Farm & Forest Expo!

The greatest benefit has been contact with other cooperators and leaders and opportunities to expand experience and knowledge. Our recent modest timber harvest have me an opportunity to understand and apply multi-use forestry principles. Thank you.

I had little knowledge of wildlife and forest management issues when I bought my home in the country (4 ac). My neighbor, [x], introduced me to the Coverts Program and I attended the 97 workshop. Since then I have participated in various 1-day seminars and have continuing interest in activities on his Tree Farm; hopefully I have become more helpful with his projects. Also, I made myself known to the local Con Comm to learn something of its activities and responsibilities but I did not find a role for myself at that level. On my own property, my projects include many on the Back Yard Tree Farm activities - sugaring, orchard care, wildlife food plots, meadow maintenance, trail clearance, etc. Looking back, I can assure you that I value the Coverts experience and information. The workshop was a crash course, unavailable otherwise, that prepared me to look after and enjoy my property. I would have (and would now) be glad to pay for it. Perhaps similar workshops could be made available for a fee to other novice property-owners like myself.

[x] and I find it hard to do justice to your questionnaire. We do have property up in [x] and go up four or five times a year, but not being full-time residents, we are unable to do the many very detailed and outreach things that in-state cooperators are expected to do. We have found our relationship with Coverts to be very rewarding and have

benefited in many ways: from our experiences at the initial workshop, where we made new friends who live in NH; from the Manchester annual affair; from field meetings we occasionally are able to attend; from the resource notebook and other materials and contacts Coverts provides us with, etc. Above all, our Coverts connection gives us a very important Statewide perspective relative to wise forest management and sustained biodiversity, instead of our having only a limited, north-country, Great North Woods experience. Hearing about what is being done by Cooperators throughout the State of NH is very important to us, and although we don't have the opportunities to get deeply personally involved statewide with what is going on, hearing about activities definitely keeps us "in touch."...."I could continue on and on listing the Coverts-suggested activities in which we are involved. In stead, may I suggest you join Ellen sometime when she comes up to spend a few days with us. We'd love to have you see what we are up to. Finally, and most importantly, [we] want to tell you, without hesitation, that you folks in Coverts are doing a wonderful job in spreading the "gospel" of wise forest-land husbandry throughout the state of NH. Keep it up, and if we can help in any way our limited time permits, let us know.

The Coverts program is the best thing I have been involved with. I do know that I should do more to help out. Almost every time I go hiking with AMC groups I comment on wildlife habitats and the diversity of the forest. People really find this interesting and I enjoy educating them about the "good" aspects of logging and its place in today's forest.

We have timbered our land, using a forester and good loggers. We attend many sessions at the Science Center to learn about habitat, animal identification, and ecology. Coverts has definitely enhanced our knowledge. I would like to do more if it is needed.

Stimulated by our Coverts program, we, with assistance from a forester, had a wonderful logger from Portland Maine thin a 4 acre stand of pine and perform a biomass operation on an additional 78 acres. Since then I have been reestablishing our trail system and expanding it. We have many new trails that have to be developed and have found a number of apple trees, which I am releasing. Spent this afternoon cross-country skiing on the expanded trail system - what a delight. We have seen moose on the property many times and look forward to attracting more wildlife. We have particularly enjoyed the reunion weekends or day programs. Summer is not a good time as I am busy trying to cut and bale hay on the hayfields part of our property. (p.s. I think you should list the Coverts program as sponsors of the NH Stewardship Program in the "Picture your Forests" brochure.)

It has been great and I love all the information I was given. I have used it for my own land and also for my parent's land holdings. Mostly information on forest management and things pertaining to wildlife habitat. These are the things that interested me most for myself. I am also a member of my local con. Comm and was very interested in the easement process. The commission was asked to take on an easement, but because of the things I learned at the Coverts program, myself and fellow Coverts member turned it town due to restrictions in the easement (basically an impossibility to enforce and possibly very costly). The project has not changed my views, only strengthened them with information to back what I felt all along. My only regret is that I am not a very outgoing individual, so unless I happen upon someone seeking information, I am not out there actively pushing the ideas of the Coverts Project. I thank the program for the opportunity to participate and hope that in the future I will have more time to take a more active role.

It is an excellent program and a great group of people, both staff and other cooperators. I have used the web-site a few times and always enjoy the newsletters. As the group gets larger, the e-mail broadcasting might become less useful. It might be better to save the messages in a discussion log that people can access directly on the web, instead of filling everyone's mailboxes. Keep up all the great work.

The benefits have been many and have changed as my experiences within the program have changed. At first, mainly did a lot of "hands-on" projects like clearing trails, building bird houses, monitoring the bluebird trail - allowed for invaluable teaching opportunities for my 2 daughters. Then I moved into the classroom to do some "wildlife" presentations and from that I now have requests each year to speak to certain groups (I.e. girl scouts, science classes, etc.). Now I find myself moving into the area of land protection and community development and my Coverts training is clearly an asset. It's been awhile though, so I think I need some more training in several areas (I.e. greenway planning, wildlife habitats, voluntary land protection., to name a few!). Thanks! Also, my views on hunting changed. Now I realize the benefits and how hunters are some of the best caretakers of the land.

The workshop was a great experience and set me on a direction to help preserve open space

Coverts Program helped me look at the big picture regarding our environment. The Coverts workshop was an incredibly beneficial experience for me and has helped me help care for 200+ acres - responsibly - In addition, I've talked to a lot of people about the program which I hope has had positive results.

Coverts is a valuable program that not only reconditions seasoned naturalists, it ignites the hidden flame in greenhorns and turns into a lifetime of learning (and teaching others) how we are tied into the web of life.

Benefits include information and access to more; Basis for learning about choices in managing woodland/Tree Farm; Changes in me: Gave impetus to start very low key effort to interest adjacent landowners/town conservation commission members in land protection so nearby land in three towns will not see further development and remain contiguous forest/fields.

The experience with the Coverts Project didn't "change" me so much as intensifying my interest. I learned that there was a good support system for what I wanted/needed to know. I learned that there was value to others (that is, besides me and my small group) to what I was doing. Since the workshop, I haven't done as much active participation as I would have liked because of health limitations. Nonetheless, Coverts Workshop encouraged me in learning about areas that did not involve (necessarily) tromping the woods.

Please forgive me for not returning this questionnaire sooner. I lost it in a pile of mail in the hall and finally came across it Friday. So thanks for all you do for the Coverts Project. It was an inspiration to meet all your people. [x] has visited my land and my sons and a friend. She is to make me up a management plan as a result of my review as a Tree Farmer. I have tried to manage my property by weeding, thinning, and selective cutting. A man (logger) from Sweden I met in the Masons looked the place over and said I was doing a good job. I am working to improve my trails and also a [x] Conservation Committee Duck's Pond Trail. I have shown the notebook materials to the Conservation Commission. Thanks for all you do. I love this part of the world and believe we all need to work together to solve all the world's problems. One thing I do is to meet at the Audubon Center in Concord once a month for the Board meeting of the "NH Citizens for Sustainable Population." I believe the human species must learn to work together to wisely control its numbers or we will become another extinct species.