

# New Hampshire Coverts Project

## *Volunteers Working for Wildlife*



## 2010 Annual Report

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March 15, 2011



UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



The New Hampshire Coverts Project is sponsored by UNH Cooperative Extension, New Hampshire Fish & Game, New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, Quality Deer Management Association, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Additional funding in 2009 was provided by a grant from the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation.

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## **Introduction to the NH Coverts Project - 2010**

The New Hampshire Coverts Project is a program that trains volunteers to promote wildlife and habitat conservation and forest stewardship.

This report details Coverts Project programs in 2010, and summarizes efforts made by Coverts volunteers to bring the message of wildlife stewardship to a wide range of people across New Hampshire. A brief summary of this report, “Coverts Project - Program Highlights 2010” is included in the Appendix.

The New Hampshire Coverts Project continues to be one of the most effective ways to broaden the outreach efforts of UNH Cooperative Extension and its partners. The NH Coverts Project is a flagship program for Extension that expands with each year’s trained class of Cooperators.



## **The Coverts Project – 2010**

### **Project Background**

Since 1995, the New Hampshire Coverts Project has promoted wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship through volunteer education and outreach. The goal of the NH Coverts Project is to enhance, maintain, and conserve habitat for the rich diversity of native wildlife in NH through sound land stewardship.

### **Funding**

Funding and sponsorship of the New Hampshire Coverts Project comes from UNH Cooperative Extension (UNHCE), the NH Division of Forests and Lands, and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department including funds from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Landowner Incentive Program.

In 2010, the program also applied for and received over \$35,000 in private funding from the NH Charitable Foundation, the Davis Conservation Foundation, and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative’s NH Implementation Team. A part-time staff person coordinates the program (Malin Clyde), while the UNHCE wildlife specialist oversees the project (Matt Tarr). The project also receives assistance from a network of 10 county foresters, the Extension specialist in forest resources (Karen Bennett), and the Wildlife Program Assistant (Emma Carcagno).

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

Each spring, the application period opens, with prospective participants applying online or by mail for the fall Coverts training workshop. Potential applicants are recruited by Extension staff, project partners, Coverts alumni, town decision-makers, press releases, and through events. Selection criteria include the applicant’s enthusiasm for wildlife and natural resources, a willingness to commit to outreach, and a recognized leadership role within their community. A copy of the 2010 application form is included in the Appendix.

### **The Training Workshop, 2010**

Twenty-four new Coverts Cooperators were accepted and attended the 2010 training workshop. The 2010 Coverts Workshop was held at the Barbara C. Harris Conference Center in Greenfield,

NH on September 22-25, 2010. The Appendix includes a copy of the 2009 workshop agenda, which includes a list of instructors and field trip hosts who assisted with the 3 ½-day training workshop.

Upon completion of the workshop, each Cooperator completes an evaluation of the workshop, used to gain feedback on both the workshop as a whole and on topics, materials, and speakers during the 3 ½ day training. Feedback on the facility and the contents of the workshop was excellent. A copy of the workshop evaluation form is included in the Appendix.

The cost of the workshop, including food, lodging, transportation, and reference materials, is funded by grants from our partners. This “debt” encourages strong allegiance and commitment by the volunteers: in exchange for the workshop opportunity, participants agree to become Coverts volunteers and spend 40+ hours volunteering on behalf of the program during the following year. Each Cooperator develops an outreach plan on how they will share their experiences and motivate others in their community. This year, we established a \$50 registration fee to reserve a place in the workshop. This cut back dramatically on rescinded attendance commitments.



## 2010 New Coverts Volunteers: Action Plans for 2011

Below is list of the new 2010 Coverts Cooperators, the town where they own land, and a brief description of some of the outreach ideas they are planning to execute as a Coverts volunteer:

**Carol Andersen-Botsford** of Bedford is looking forward to sharing what she learned at the workshop with her school classroom, where they'll be taking field trips to town conservation properties.

**Chris Bogard** of Epping is passionate about turtles, and hope to incorporate information from the workshop into outreach presentations about the importance of wetlands, land conservation, and vernal pools.

**Marilyn Brock** of Bedford wants to increase the public outreach of the Bedford Land Trust, where she is a board member, perhaps by writing newsletter articles or hosting presentations using materials gathered at the workshop.

**Lorraine Cline** of Andover would like to lead tours on her property, including snowshoe, x-c skiing, and walks in the woods.

**Brian Dubois** of Wentworth will be hiring a consulting forester (within 30 days, he says!) who will help draw up a forest management plan for their 56-acre property. When work gets underway, he'd also like to invite the local school to a Field Day.

**Jean Eno** of Greenland is excited to use her writing skills on a new series of articles for her local newspaper on conservation, wildlife habitat, grasslands, and forest stewardship.

**Clint Furnald** of South Hampton would like to join his town's Conservation Commission and get involved in doing outreach about invasive plant species, using his own property as an example.

**Tressa Gaffney** of New London wants to create a new trail system at the Fells, where she works, to focus on habitat features and wildlife.

**David Govatski** of Jefferson plans to lead a series of birding field trips and deliver wildlife-themed presentations, as well as write a magazine article and create a Facebook page.

**Carol Irvin** of Greenfield looks forward to leading walks on properties the Conservation Commission is hoping to protect, and will also work towards developing a management plan and a conservation easement for her own property.

**Kim Kelley** of Antrim is looking forward to getting involved in the “Speaking for Wildlife” program to deliver wildlife presentations in her community.

**Leon-C Malan** of Bradford will be developing outreach for Northeast Organic Farming Association related to the link between wildlife and agriculture.

**Ian McSweeney** of Weare plans to create a forest management plan for his property, and to complete the restoration component of the Wetland Reserve Program project on his land.

**Jill Montgomery** of Sunapee looks forward to getting involved in Speaking for Wildlife, especially programming on Gardening for Wildlife and also working with the Lake Sunapee Protective Association on shoreland and upland habitat conservation.

**George Montgomery** of Sunapee will incorporate Coverts lessons about conservation planning in the field trips he and Jill lead for the Fells.

**Kristen Murphy** of Dover (and Exeter) liked what she heard from Betsy Hardwick about sponsoring after-school walks on conservation lands. Kristen plans to do the same with Woodman Park Elementary in her hometown of Dover.

**David Outhouse** of Greenland is looking forward to working with Greenland Elementary School to host a field trip on his property focused on habitat diversity and land stewardship.

**Joseph Oyer** of Roxbury will be requesting a site visit to his property by County Forester Steve Roberge and perhaps a wildlife specialist too, with an eye towards creating management goals and a plan for the land.

**Beth Penney** of Lyndeborough wants to work with her own Conservation Commission and those of neighboring towns on land conservation and trail building, and also looks forward to getting involved with Speaking for Wildlife.

**Janet Renaud** of Greenfield also likes the idea of Speaking for Wildlife, and also hopes to get involved with stewardship of the Greenfield Town Forest.

**Joseph Warner** of Unity would like to reach out to several of his neighbors to discuss things he learned at the Coverts workshop and how they could develop complementary objectives for their properties.

**Nick Wrighton** of Brentwood wants to invite his company to an “off-site” event at his property to both talk science (the company’s technology) and share some of the things he learned at the Coverts workshop.

**Robin Wrighton** of Brentwood wants to work on having their land be a demonstration forest for others interested in wildlife and habitats. She also wants to see a moose in her backyard!

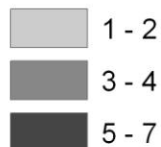
**Sherry Young** of Contoocook will be incorporating many of the wildlife messages from the Coverts workshop into her work on several conservation newsletters that she writes or edits.

# Coverts Cooperators 1995 - 2010

Location of Volunteers  
&  
Location of Land Stewardship

## Coverts Participation

Number of Coverts Cooperators by Town  
(total active volunteers: 296)



## Coverts Land Stewardship

Acres Owned or Managed, by Town



Total Acres Owned: 50,621ac.

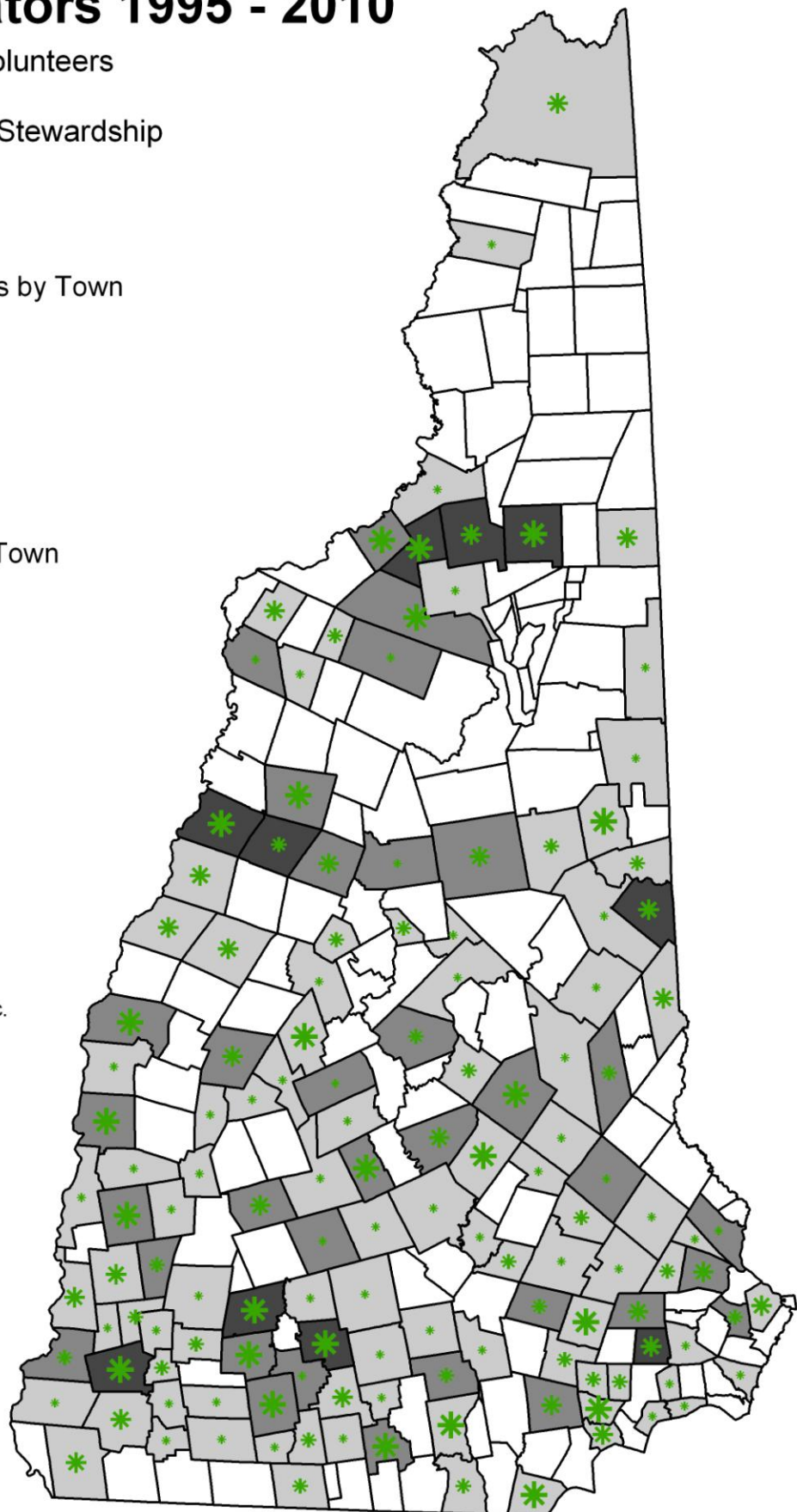
Avg. size of Ownership: 171 ac.

Total Acres Managed: 65,239 ac.

Avg. Size of Management: 220 ac.

Total Acres in Stewardship: 111,200 ac.

*Due to data collection constraints, actual land stewardship information may be located in more than town, but is shown as being in one town.*





## Active Coverts Cooperators

Cooperators become part of a volunteer network connected through newsletters, the internet, field tours, and continuing education workshops. After some attrition (due to dropouts, re-locations, deaths, etc.), we have 297 active volunteers today, working in over 130 different communities around the state – see map on page 4. A list of all active Coverts volunteers (by County) is included in the Appendix. A yearly summary is as follows:

### Total Coverts Trained: 1995 – 2010

Training Year	# Coverts Trained
1995	23
1996	23
1997	22
1998	26
1999	28
2000	23
2001	23
2002	26
2003	25
2004	23
2005	26
2006	24
2007	23
2008	26
2009	23
2010	24
<b>Total Trained Coverts Volunteers</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>Total Active Coverts Volunteers as of 12/10</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>Number of NH Communities with Active Coverts Volunteers as of 12/10</b>	<b>130+</b>





## 2010 Coverts Events and Continuing Education Programs

The Coverts Project connects Coverts Cooperators to many events and workshops throughout the year. Through these activities, they build on their knowledge of natural resource topics, often with more in-depth material and presentations than is possible at the Coverts training workshop. Many of these workshops are a result of UNH Cooperative Extension partnering with other natural resource volunteer programs, thereby broadening our training audience and offering more continuing education opportunities to all of our natural resource volunteers.

**Coverts Blog, “Volunteers Working for Wildlife”** – Begun a few years ago, the Coverts Project continues to host a blog on the Coverts webpage. A sample page is shown below. The direct address for the blog is: [http://extension.unh.edu/blogs/volunteers\\_working\\_for\\_wildlife/](http://extension.unh.edu/blogs/volunteers_working_for_wildlife/)

The screenshot shows a blog post titled "Volunteers Working for Wildlife" with the sub-header "Coverts Project Updates". The main content is a "December 2010 Archives" entry dated "Dec. 21, 2010 Update" by Malin Clyde. The post is about "VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES" for the "Discover Wild NH Day & Farm and Forest Volunteers Needed!" event. It details the need for volunteers at two family-oriented events and provides the schedule for the NH Farm & Forest Expo on February 4 and 5, 2011, in Manchester. The right sidebar includes a search bar, a link to "About this Archive", and a list of links to other resources like the NH Coverts webpage, newsletter, and various extension programs.

The blog functions as an on-going bulletin board of Coverts announcements, workshops, and volunteer opportunities. The blog postings are also sent directly to Coverts Cooperators through email, but the blog allows volunteers to view past postings from any computer, any time, including historical posts. New formatting for 2011 allows comments by volunteers and the public and due to the lengthy content of the Coverts Updates, it allows for categorizing post into such groups as:

- Volunteer opportunities
- Workshops
- Wildlife Sightings
- News
- Publications



## Coverts Volunteer Activities in 2010: “Taking Action for Wildlife”

Coverts Cooperators are selected to participate in the program based on their commitment and enthusiasm for wildlife conservation and forest stewardship. It is therefore no surprise that Coverts volunteers are involved in a wide range of natural resource-related activities, putting the knowledge and skills gained or refined at the annual training workshop to work in their communities.

We present the following summary of Coverts volunteer accomplishments for 2010 based on the results from our **annual survey**, which Cooperators are asked to complete each year (a copy is included in the Appendix). We received surveys from 56% of active Coverts volunteers, a rate up from 36% last year, and an average of 47%.

**Coverts Survey Responses in 2010** are summarized as follows:

	<b>Total 2010 Survey</b>
# Cooperators surveyed	297
# Cooperators returning surveys	167 (56%)

### Summary of Coverts Cooperators Volunteer Activities

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of Volunteer Hours</b>
Time spent working to conserve my own land	6974
Time spent working to conserve land of another landowner/town/land trust	5090
Serving on a conservation commission	3450
Talking with other landowners or neighbors about stewardship or conservation	2723
Serving on open space group, land trust board or conservation group board	2700
Writing and providing information to media about natural resources or conservation	2531
Helping a community with a master plan or natural resource inventory	1950
Time spent helping to manage town forest or other conservation land	1747
Attending forestry or wildlife conferences, workshops or seminars	1326
Serving on a selectboard, planning board or town council	1252
Serving on a watershed assoc., river coalition or other water resources group	993
Volunteered for a wildlife monitoring programs	907
Leading or hosting natural resource tours in the field	771
Staffing natural resource exhibits or working at events	560
Giving presentations to adult groups (such as "Speaking for Wildlife" talks)	544
Distributing written resource materials to others	490
<b>TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS, 2010</b>	<b>44,328</b>
<b>Value of Volunteer Hours, 2010</b>	<b>\$924,238.80</b>



## New Opportunities to Volunteer – “Speaking for Wildlife” Project

The Coverts blog helped facilitate many new volunteer opportunities for Coverts Cooperators. Along with notices about volunteering for other conservation groups, the Coverts Project also embarked on a new volunteer project called “**Speaking for Wildlife**,” with support from a new grant from the NH Charitable Foundation’s Wellborn Ecology Fund. This pilot project in the Upper Valley Region (Sullivan & Grafton counties) provided training, support, and equipment so Coverts volunteers can deliver wildlife presentations and field walks to local groups in their communities. A brochure about the program is provided in the Appendix, and a copy of our final grant report to the Wellborn Ecology Fund is included in the Appendix. Details about the program can be found on a new website developed for the program at: <http://extension.unh.edu/Wildlife/SFW.htm>.

<b>Speaking for Wildlife Accomplishments 2010</b>	
# of presentations given by volunteers	36
# of volunteer hours	500+
# of new audience members contacted	500+

Based on the success of the pilot project, Coverts Project staff sought additional funding in 2010 from the NH Charitable Foundation and the Davis Environmental Foundation, both of which were successful (total new grants total \$35,000). In anticipation of expanding *Speaking for Wildlife* statewide in 2011-2012, we also held a volunteer training in December 2010, where we trained 15 new volunteers from non-Upper Valley towns.

## Land Stewardship

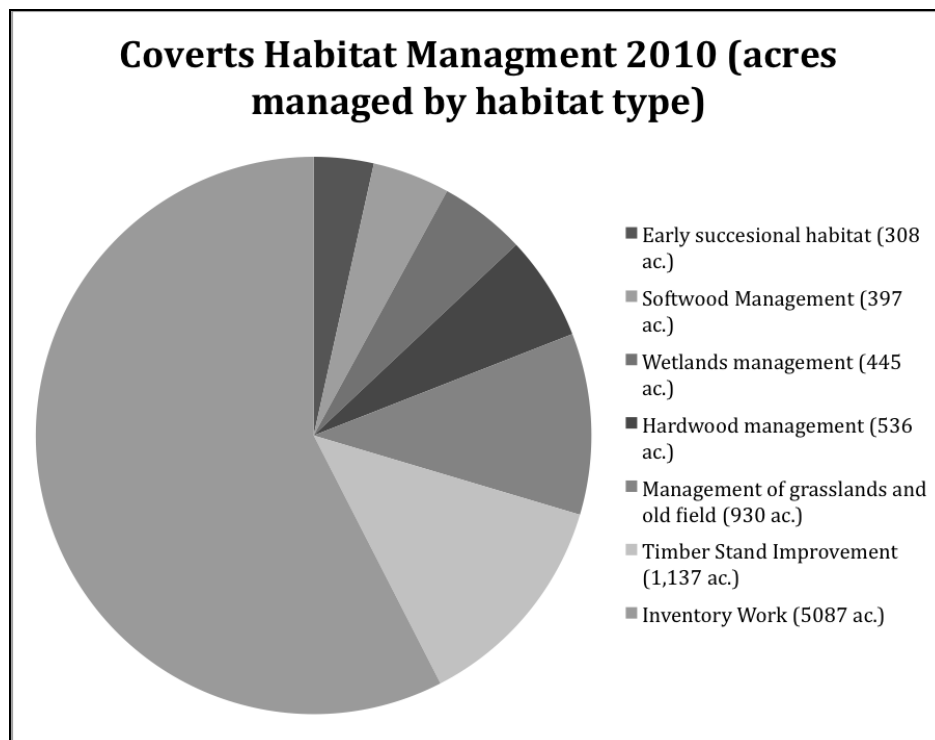
Many Coverts Cooperators own or manage land and incorporate wildlife habitat management and good forest stewardship into their land management. One volunteer wrote this year:

*“Having seen a spectacular increase in animals using our early successional habitat plots, we will continue to maintain them on a periodic basis and likely create new patch cuts.”*

### Land Stewardship Statistics:

	Total 2010 Survey Respondents
Acres Owned by survey respondents	34,100 acres
Acres Responsible for Managing by survey respondents	65,860 acres
# Landowners implementing habitat management in the last 12 months	109 (65% of respondents)
All Coverts – Land Owned (see map, p. 5)	50,621 acres
All Coverts – Land Managed (see map, p. 5)	65, 239 acres

The chart below shows the habitat management activities and acres of land managed by Coverts Cooperators who responded to the 2010 survey. Numbers are in acres.



## Community Conservation

Many Coverts Cooperators serve as local decision-makers and help initiate or implement conservation or stewardship actions in their communities. One Coverts Cooperators reported this year:

*“This year, I was proud to volunteer to help write a grant so that Dover could...do an inventory of all our conservation lands including listing out the various levels of protection, ownership...I helped review the final product to make sure the inventory, which will eventually go on line, is accurate and available to the public on the city website. It has long been a goal of the city to get a handle on all the easements, city owned lands, deed restricted properties that exist.”*

[Note: As a result of this inventory, the City of Dover discovered an additional 700+ acres of conservation lands that were unknown. See news article here:

[http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110208/GJNEWS\\_01/702089917](http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110208/GJNEWS_01/702089917)

<b># of acres of land in New Hampshire that Coverts volunteers helped conserve in 2010</b>	<b>32,734 acres</b>
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## Raising Public Awareness

Coverts Cooperators engage in many activities that promote forest stewardship and wildlife conservation to their families, friends, peers, and community members. One Coverts Cooperator reported this year:

*“We have completed two conservation plans. Have connected with landowners to offer county forester services, explain importance of maintaining habitat, etc. We have done a lot of education work on invasive plants, the importance of native species, etc. Much of this work is with folks who have not had experience with these issues in the past and once they see and understand the problem, it is fascinating to see the change in their attitude.”*

<b>Estimate of # of people reached by Coverts volunteers with stewardship message through outreach efforts, including through direct contact, media, etc.</b>	<b>36,294</b>
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## Coverts Project Initiatives for 2011

**Communication** – With more and more of today’s communication happening on the internet, the Coverts Project is focusing more on our email updates, blog, and postings to the Coverts webpage. We look forward to expanding the presence of training and demonstration videos posted on our website.

Despite an emphasis on improving computer communication, we still mail copies of emailed updates to those volunteers (only about 20 individuals) who do not have access to email. Part of this evolution has meant eliminating the publication of the “Making Tracks” newsletter.

**Improving Volunteer Opportunities** – Having received over \$35,000 in new grant funding to expand the “Speaking for Wildlife” outreach program, will expand it statewide in 2011, training new volunteers and expanding presentations from three to six in 2011.

**Continuing Education** - In 2011, we will offer continue our workshop series focused on stewardship of critical habitats, as outlined in the NH Wildlife Action Plan. Associated with our new series of brochures, these workshops include stewardship guidance for wildlife habitats such as shorelines, headwater streams, northern hardwood forests, and hemlock-hardwood-pine forests.

**Annual Training Workshop** – We will return to the Barbara C. Harris Center for the Coverts training in 2011.

**Advisory Committee** – The Coverts Advisory Committee meets once a year to discuss emerging issues and new ideas for the continued success of the program. Committee meeting notes are available to all Coverts Cooperators (and the public) on the Coverts webpage.

**Updates** – The Project Coordinator will continue yearly updates to all project partners, according to. The report is promoted and made available to Coverts Cooperators on the Coverts webpage, [www.NHCoverts.org](http://www.NHCoverts.org). Also available on the website is a **Highlights Report**, summarizing the 2010 annual report. This shortened version will increasingly be used to concisely describe the impact of the Coverts Project on New Hampshire’s wildlife, forests, and communities.



## **Appendix**

### **NH Coverts Project Annual Report 2010**

Includes:

- [Program Brochure](#)
- [2010 Program Highlights](#) (Summary Report)
- [2010 Coverts Application Form](#)
- [2010 Annual Workshop Agenda](#)
- 2010 Coverts Workshop Evaluation Form
- List of Active Coverts Cooperators by County
- Annual Coverts Activities Survey form – 2010
- [Speaking for Wildlife Program Brochure](#)
- Speaking for Wildlife – Wellborn Ecology Fund grant report