

MAKING TRACKS

Editor's Note: These articles are from a new column, NH Outside, published by UNHCE. Coverts Cooperators and other UNHCE natural resource volunteers work with writer and editor Peg Boyles to collaborate on a weekly column of nature-themed stories. For those who haven't caught them in the press, I offer several samples in this issue. As space allows, look for other examples written by Coverts volunteers in upcoming issues. They are all wonderful! If you are interested in writing for the collaborative, contact Peg at peg.boyles@unh.edu or call 225-5505.

Wonders of Winter

by Carolyn Baldwin (CC99)
NH Outside Writer

For Christmas my grandsons (with some help from their Dad) made me a bird feeder. The design is simple: an open frame about a foot square with a screen on the bottom, suspended from the four corners by cords that attach to a loop about two feet above the frame.

We hung the feeder on a small branch of a young beech tree, high enough so we could just reach to fill it, high enough (we hoped) to be out of reach of the deer, and far enough from the trunk to discourage the cat from exploiting the situation. The south-facing windows both upstairs and down provide a front row seat for observers. We poured a couple of quarts of sunflower seeds onto the screen and awaited the verdict of the intended beneficiaries.

In no time a flock of finches arrived. They mobbed the feeder, and those who couldn't get the first bite waited impatiently, an unruly crowd pushing and shoving, a flying dance among the branches. The tree, in midwinter, sprouted feathered leaves, flying off all at once for no apparent reason, only as far as the adjacent maple. Soon they were back, twittering and competing for a place at the banquet.

Chickadees and tufted titmice hang around, taking a turn when the finches depart for a spell. Occasionally a nuthatch visits, although he seems to prefer the fancier and less crowded feeder outside the kitchen window.

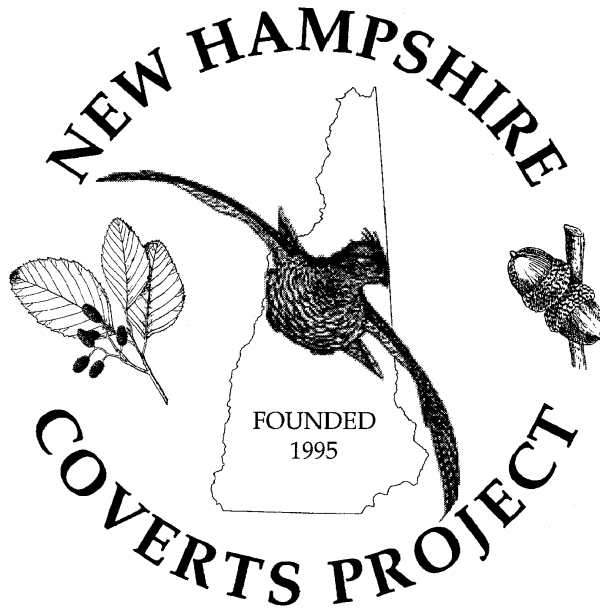
Watching the finches is endlessly fascinating. On my window is a small feeder, only large enough for two or at most three birds at a time. Sometimes one will decide he is king of the castle and aggressively defend his throne, even sacrificing opportunities to feed as he fends off interlopers. But eventually he also flies off, and another, and yet another take his place. The little feeder requires frequent replenishment.



Cottontail Rabbit
Linda Isaacson

Winter is a special time on our hill. When the leaves drop in October, the view changes markedly. Sunrise, masked in summer by the foliage, can be dramatic, and it comes late enough that 7:00 a.m. risers like me can enjoy it. The distant hills and small lakes become visible. The lakes, blue before they freeze over, later appear as white, open spaces.

We who love winter are thought a bit odd by those who complain endlessly of the cold, snow and ice.



NH COVERTS IS LOOKING FOR NEW COVERTS VOLUNTEERS



Coverts trainees during a field session, Hancock, 2005

We are currently recruiting new Cooperators for the 2006 Coverts Project Workshop, scheduled for September 13 – 16, 2006 at Sargent Center in Hancock. If you know of a good candidate, please get them in touch with the Coverts Project office (or send them to our new web address: nhcoverts.org).

But the changing seasons are a source of constant wonder. No other season offers anything that compares with the brightness of a moonlit night on fresh snow. Shadows of the bare trees create a chiaroscuro on the open field. The structure of the landscape is visible from the road—stone walls, icy streams, boulders. The fields of 19th century farmers reveal themselves, although most are overgrown now, often with mature trees.

A true sign of spring, in mid-February, is activity in the sugar bush. A warm sunny day brings the sap up in the maple trees, and sugar makers get ready for the year's first harvest. Deer trails course through the forest, reminding us of the constant life that inhabits what may seem a dead landscape.

The goldfinches, mobbing my feeders, begin to discard their drab winter plumage for their yellow garments, in preparation for spring rituals. The chickadee whistles his spring song, sometimes even on a warm day in January. The piliated woodpecker loudly declares his territory with a persistent drumbeat and occasional screech. Neighbors report flocks of robins, and even a bluebird is heard by the beginning of March.

Last year's cold, snowy March brought January (and the mobs of finches) back in earnest. But it brought the sun, brighter and warmer, shining through the south facing windows, giving the furnace and wood stove a rest four several hours during the day.

Flying squirrels

by J. Ann Eldridge (CC03)
NH Outside Writer

The cat, Miss Jane, knows about flying squirrels. She eats some of those that winter in the wall of the house. My closest encounter occurred when I was proposing to clean out what I had thought of as a bird house. Nose-to-nose with an equally startled squirrel, I changed my assumption of occupancy and my plan. Miss Jane knows intimately certain aspects of squirrel behavior and physiology, but I've begun reading.

I've learned that flying squirrels are extremely common, though we seldom see them due to their position on the night shift of squirreldom. There may be two species of flying squirrels here in Bradford. Northern flying squirrels prefer the conifers and southern flying squirrels take the mixed deciduous. Although similar in appearance, their habits vary somewhat.

A brief column doesn't provide nearly enough space to describe the flying squirrels' large, night-vision eyes which, like the eyes of all rodents, are set far apart for a broad field of vision. This gives the squirrels a better chance of evading the owls and Miss Jane, but poor depth perception. Appearing wracked by indecision, they bob and weave nervously before leaping. In fact, they are triangulating, trying to get multiple visual angles on the proposed landing site. I regret not having enough space to describe why their eyes shine orange at night.

A single column offers barely enough space to include these facts about flying squirrels: They have very long whiskers, charmingly called "vibrissae." They carefully notch an acorn to fit their small mouths before carrying it aloft to a cache hole in a tree, there to pound it in place with their incisors, producing a sound that might carry fifty feet. They roll their babies into balls to transport them from nest to nest, which they do frequently. They have a large vocal repertoire. Our northern flying squirrels grow fur on the soles of their feet in winter. Less territorial than other rodents, they aggregate in numbers in house rafters and hollow trees in winter for communal warmth and Olympic games.



Piliated Woodpecker
David Langley

All squirrels are fairly adept at falling out of trees unharmed. The principle is simple—stick your arms, legs and tail out to provide as much surface area and control as possible then hope for the best. Flying squirrels have taken this elementary parachuting a good bit further and possess a singularly wonderful body part known as a *pataguim*. This is the furry vestment that drapes from wrist to ankle on each side of the flying squirrel's body.

No mere flap of extra skin, the pataguim contains a complex arrangement of muscles. Thin, flat muscles lie within the gliding skin and serve to control the direction of flight. Ropelike muscles along the outer edge hold the air foil taut. Additional muscles help stabilize the outstretched legs. They don't "flap their wings." Yet another set of muscles holds the pataguim close to the squirrel's side so as not to impede them when they scamper afoot.

An added feature is a cartilaginous rod that extends from the wrist in flight to further open the leading edge of the gliding surface. At rest, the rod lies flat along the forearm. Imagine a stiletto knife that appears at the touch of a cufflink in some dreadful movie.

With all this specialized equipment in place, a flying squirrel glides silently through the night woods, spiraling down or making right angle turns as necessary. The initial powerful leap is usually followed by a short, step dive to gain velocity for

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Congratulations to **Will Abbott** (CC98), who started his new position as Vice President for Policy and Land Management at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

Celeste Philbrick Barr (CC04) writes, "I recently volunteered to teach 'Where are you in your Watershed' to five 7th-grade science classes at Milford Middle School. They are partners in the Adopt-a-Salmon Program, and this was an introduction to the watershed concept. The students were all able to use the visiting watershed model to simulate the effect of human influences on fish habitat and water quality. This will hopefully form a link for them between their on-land activities and the aquatic habitat their fish will be introduced to in the Souhegan River."

Following up on a submission from our last newsletter, **Anna Boudreau** (CC95) sent in the good news that the Stafford Rivers Conservancy (of which she is the director) and local partners in the Dover region have successfully protected a 26-acre portion of the historic Tuttle Farm. The Tuttle farm is the oldest family-owned farm in New Hampshire, and this new conservation easement represents the first step in conserving the entire farm.

Colin Cabot (CC2000) has taken up an exciting conservation project in Franklin. He writes, "As President of the Webster Farm Preservation Association, I am heavily involved in the Campaign to Protect Daniel Webster's Farm. Last fall, The Trust for Public Land bought 142 acres of prime farmland from a developer who had hoped to build 132 housing units along the Merrimack River in Franklin. We received an LCHIP grant to support the protection of the land, and the Federal Farm & Ranchlands Protection Program provided another grant to protect of the farmland portion (also serving to match the LCHIP funds). The final conservation piece is the generous contribution by a local farmer of the development rights on his 68-acre neighboring parcel. NH Fish & Game has also gotten involved with an interest in enhancing the waterfowl habitat and public boat access to the river, and it gets even more complicated than that! Part of the farmland, which will be subdivided off, contains 11 buildings, the earliest of which are the ones that constituted Daniel Webster's historic farm, known as The Elms. We are in the throes of trying to raise an additional \$1 million to preserve all of the extraordinary buildings in their context on the land. This property is unique in its history, going well back into our Native American history and playing an important role at the outbreak of the French and Indian war. Webster's house is designated a National Historic Landmark, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated the site on its 11 most endangered list for 2005. The most exciting thing for me is that this project has it all—the highest possible agricultural and conservation priorities, riparian habitat improvements and passive recreation, one of the richest archeological potentials in the state, great historical importance, and the buildings represent an opportunity to create an economic engine for the City of Franklin. We are collectively trying to come up with compatible uses for the buildings that allow for connection between the people using them and the land. You have to visit the site to feel the relationship that exists between man and nature there. Anyone interested in getting involved or finding out more should call me at 435-7314 or e-mail me at Colin@Sanbornmills.org. Thanks!"



The historic Daniel Webster farmland is part of an exciting conservation initiative in Franklin. Photo credit: Gail Rousseau

It was fun to notice that Coverts Cooperator **Nancy Comeau** (CC99) has passed on her love of forests and wildlife to her son, Bryan. As a student at the UNH Thompson School forestry program, Bryan Comeau was awarded the Forestry Student of the Year award for a 2-year program at the annual meeting of the New England Society of American Foresters – Granite State Chapter, held in Waterville Valley in February.

Tim Davis (CC99) writes from Sutton: "As a member of the Sutton Conservation Committee, I was involved with several projects on our town-owned properties. We planted crabapple trees that we received from NH Fish & Game at the King Hill Reservation. We also secured WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program) funding that was used to hire John Brown & Sons and their bron-tosaurus to clear 6 acres at the King Hill Reservation for wildlife habitat. Finally, we had the Town Forest recerti-

fied as a Tree Farm. On my own Tree Farm I also planted crabapple trees received from Fish & Game."

Diane Fitzpatrick (CC99) sent in this notice of an event she organized in Milford in February. [ed. note – Our publication date was too late for this to serve as a notice, but I thought it worth reprinting, since other towns might adapt the concept – I often hear Coverts volunteers discuss trails as an important issue in their towns]:

"A Trail Expo: Where the Trails Are (and what to do when you get there)." There are many hidden treasures close to home. Come to Milford Town Hall, February 26th anytime between 1 and 5 in the afternoon to find out where they are. Every town has public trails, and many local and state organizations will be here to help you find them with trail maps and books (some free, some for sale). Learn about: local trail maps for hikers, mountain bikers, snowmobiles, ATV's, how to survive in the woods, search dog demonstrations, activities for kids, refreshments, exhibitors, historical artifacts and talks, mountain biking in New England, a slide show of recent and historic photos of the Souhegan River. Bring your kids to make animal tracks and learn how to know what animals are roaming in the woods around us. See what it takes to build a trail. To round out the excitement the Souhegan Valley Land Trust will be holding a silent auction, from birdhouses and bat houses, to antique recorders, from spring bike tune-ups to theater tickets and more.

Betsy Hardwick (CC02) sent in the following good news from Frankestown, "On behalf of the Frankestown Conservation Commission, I recently helped negotiate the acquisition of a 90-acre parcel of land that is part of a much larger land protection project in a very important conservation area. This particular property has 1,700 feet of frontage on an undeveloped 25 acre pond, and contains a mix of wetland types from pond-border bogs and streamside fens, to seeps and pools. The upland area is filled with oaks, hickories, beeches, and a variety of shrubs that provide important food for wildlife. This property was purchased with a combination of grant money and conservation bond funds approved at our town meeting this last year. On our own land, my husband (**Jeff Tarr**, CC02) and I have also been improving habitat, clearing wildlife openings and planting fruit-producing native shrubs."

We said a sad "adios" to longtime Coverts volunteer **Dennis Huber** (CC97), who moved to West Paris, Maine in January. Dennis apparently figured he had better leave at the top of his game – his 20+ years of work as Supervisor of Grounds at Phillips Exeter Academy resulted in the school winning the 2005 Outstanding Tree Farm award last year. Dennis will still maintain his membership in the NH Coverts Project, and has plans to attend workshops here (we'll do our best to lure him over state lines!). Over the years, Dennis collaborated with many groups, including UNH Cooperative Extension, to host programs and workshops on the fields and forests at the Academy on such topics as grassland management, invasive species, wildlife openings, and more. He was also a faithful sharer of stewardship and wildlife habitat news for the *Making Tracks* newsletter, and a steadfast supporter of land conservation in the Exeter area. UNH Cooperative Extension, NH Fish & Game, and the Division of Forests and Lands jointly presented Dennis with a certificate of appreciation, which read as follows:

Certificate of Appreciation Presented

To

Dennis Huber

For his dedication on behalf of New Hampshire's

wildlife & forest resources,

His enthusiasm as a volunteer for the NH Coverts Project,

His passion for conservation of New Hampshire's

critical habitats and forest lands,

His innovation in bringing people together

on behalf of wildlife and forests, and

His commitment to long-term, creative stewardship

of the lands under his care.

Cheryl Kimball (CC98) answered the Coverts Project office's call for a volunteer willing to give a talk about feeding birds to a Seacoast-area women's group who meet at a retirement home. She pulled together a fun program: "The talk was only supposed to be 20 minutes or so and, being a writer, I can talk about just about anything for twenty minutes! I used my laptop to show some pictures, but this didn't work very well because there were a lot more people than I thought there would be (25-30)! I did an introduction to the Coverts program and myself, showed some field guides, related some bird statistics and interesting facts, gave some bird feeding tips, some identifying tips, and showed some feeders and different types of feed I borrowed from Horse Hill, a local agriculture supplier. Then I wrapped it up. Everyone was chuckling here and there, and we had some nice discussion with some of the retirement home folks adding their stories. They even gave me a little gift (it is either a pincushion or a lightly scented sachet...), and invited me to join them for a root beer float, which I must say I enjoyed immensely."



Pictured left to right: Consulting forester Charlie Moreno, State Forester Phil Bryce, Pat Langdon, Bill Langdon, consulting forester Brian Johnson (chair of the NH Tree Farm Committee), Jerry Langdon (CC99), and NH Governor John Lynch.

Congratulations to **Jerry Langdon** (CC99) and his family, who received the award for 2006 NH Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year at the Farm & Forest Expo in February (see photo). Jerry was lauded for his commitment to good stewardship and conservation, and for maintaining a working forest surrounded by the rapidly-developing town of Epping. After accepting his award from Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Taylor and Governor John Lynch, Jerry spoke about his land, and the honor he felt having received this award: "I have attended many Tree Farm Field Days in recent years, and I'm very honored to join such excellent company in receiving this award." He also expressed his continued dedication to children and youth getting outside and exploring the out-of-doors: "What I really enjoy is having kids visit our tree farm – that's the best part, for me." We are all looking forward to helping Jerry and his family put on another fun and educational Tree Farm Field Day this fall. For anyone keeping track of such things, this makes the 3rd year in a row that a Coverts Cooperator has won the Outstanding Tree Farm award – wow!

Arlene Laurenitis (CC05) writes from Wilton, "Last fall I completed the Fish and Game Department's Wonders of Wildlife (WOW) Aquatics program, which trained docents to teach programs on Pond Ecology and Wetlands to children. **Bob Jones** (CC05) also completed this program. Through the same WOW docent program, I taught several classes on animal Habits and Habitats and Endangered Species of NH to fourth and fifth graders. I've checked in with my local Conservation Commission and found out that they're an active group with many projects going, including a Wildlife Inventory of Wilton. My husband and I are beginning to inventory our property, too. In January I attended a hearing in Concord to support supplemental funding for LCHIP, and I saw two other CC'05 graduates there! I've signed up for the NH Outside writers workshop in March. And I will volunteer as a WOW docent for the Discover WILD NH Day in Concord April 22. It really is a fun event with workshops, demonstrations, information booths representing all types of organizations, many kids' activities, and this year the "Battling Bull Moose of Fowlerton" exhibit will be on display, and that alone is worth the trip to this event! The exhibit features two full-sized, taxidermied moose who are antler-locked in a battle that brings them both to death. Don't miss seeing it!"

Covert Cooperator **Greg Lowell** (CC02) of Chester was successful in writing and winning a DES Watershed Restoration grant for restoration of shoreline habitat and wetlands in the 105-acre, town-owned Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation area in Chester. Wason Pond was the site of a former commercial campground and much of the shoreline of its 15-acre pond was overused and stripped of vegetation. The grant will pay for removal of shoreline structures and unused septic drains at campsites, placement of waterbars on steep slopes, and revegetation with wildlife-friendly plants and trees. Additionally, the grant will assist in letting a wet meadow on another part of the property revert to its natural state from its former use as campsites. Work is expected to begin this summer.

Bill McDevitt (CC98) sends news from Canterbury: "I am now the Interim Director at Canterbury Shaker Village, a national historic site just outside Concord. We have 690 acres of fields, woods, and ponds (in addition to our 22 historic buildings). The acreage is protected by conservation easements and has a forest management plan in place (and an active cut going on)." Bill has offered to host a Coverts-related workshop at the site, so we'll be thinking of programming ideas, and hopefully take him up on his offer!

Kathryn Nelson (CC2000) writes, "I finished my stint with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission writing a Management Plan for the Souhegan River Watershed. I am now working at the Nashua River Watershed Association in Groton, MA as their Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator. I'm spreading the word of Coverts as I go from watershed to watershed!"

Valerie Piedmont (CC04), Director of the Sustainability Project in Gilsum, sends the following news about a workshop they are sponsoring in June: "Healthy forest ecosystems are self-maintaining, self fertilizing and self renewing. Wouldn't you like to grow food in a backyard ecosystem like that? Well, you can! On Saturday and Sunday June 10th & 11th, The Sustainability Project

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is hosting a weekend workshop "Gardening Like the Forest: Fundamentals of Ecological Garden Design" with Dave Jacke, longtime permaculture designer and author of the new book "Edible Forest Gardens." Preregistration is required. Cost is \$150. Early-bird discount is \$130 if paid by May 15th. Limited to 18 participants. Send registration to The Sustainability Project, PO Box 311, Gilsum, NH, 03448 For information: Valerie Piedmont 352-1887, email: pabval@gilsum.mv.com. You can see more at our website: www.emersonbrookforest.org."

Meri Ratzel (CC03) is temporarily living outside NH, caring for an ailing family member, but sends the following update: "I am still working (along with **Diane Fitzpatrick** CC99) on re-establishing the Souhegan Valley Land Trust. Just to let others know, I miss New Hampshire and am hoping to come back. However, the transition involved a completely different perspective from my previous 'inland' studies. I'm finding that the word 'coastal' extends beyond the beach and involves complex interactions between land and sea. I continue with conservation work in Provincetown as the Intern with Right Whale Habitat program at the Center for Coastal Studies. As an intern, it's my job to assist with plankton sampling in Cape Cod Bay. CCB is the only area known to exist where Right Whales can be seen skim feeding at the surface. I consider myself to be very fortunate for the opportunity. The North Atlantic right whale is the rarest whale on earth. There are anywhere from 300 to 350 North Atlantic right whales known to be in existence."

Gus Ruth (CC02) sends news of a recent petition in his town of Winchester: "There was a petition Warrant article submitted (by supporters of the Free State Project, a group of Libertarians) to Winchester voters. The petition sought to reduce the amount of Change of Use tax given to the Winchester Conservation Commission from 75% to 10%, with a cap of \$10,000. The voters at the deliberative session expressed their support of the conservation efforts by changing the warrant article to suggest a 76% portion of the tax to be granted to the Commission with no cap."

Congratulations to **Tom Thomson** (CC95), of Orford, who received the "2006 Good Steward Award" from the National Arbor Day Foundation. This national award is given to those whose leadership, outlook, and accomplishments in tree planting, conservation, and sustainable stewardship enhance private lands for future generations. Tom and his wife Sheila have been invited to celebrate National Arbor Day on April 29th at the Nebraska farm of Arbor Day Foundation founder J. Sterling Morton.

New Coverts volunteer **David Treat** (CC05) writes: "Hampstead was selected as a sponsor/customer for four UNH students in the Environmental Conservation Seniors Project course at UNH. This group of students will work with our Conservation Commission (of which I am chair) to produce a Natural Resources Inventory for the town. They use the NRI Guide produced by UNHCE as a reference! We are just getting started, but the project must be completed by early May...Our Con Comm has also put together a program of nine outings on town conservation properties for the year. The first two, in January and February, were planned to be snowshoe outings, with me as the leader. The January outing turned out to be a hike (no snow), but was a great success. We had 20 participants aged 5 to 65, and three dogs. I was able to bring some of my Coverts training to bear in describing aspects of the woods during the hike. The February snowshoe was planned to be an evening outing under the full moon, but alas, still no snow, so we postponed until March."

Michelle Veasey (CC03) writes: "One of the most important aspects of the Coverts training for me has been the connections I made with other people sharing similar environmental goals. **Paula Gilman-Hatem** (CC03) shared her expertise in landscaping with native plants and organic lawn care with a group of over 30 people attending one of the NH Sustainable Lodging seminars I was organizing last November in Crawford Notch. She had everyone, including one of the owners from the

Balsams, asking for her advice! She claimed she wasn't a public speaker, but everyone was so fascinated – they didn't believe her. I have her speaking again at a NHSLP meeting in Portsmouth in March! If you know any of innkeepers or lodging general/maintenance managers – encourage them to attend. (They can call me at home for info 362-4679)."

Carl Wallman (CC05) of Northwood writes: "I've been working on an invasives project, collaborating with **Karin Rubin** (CC05). Karin had expressed an interest in controlling invasives in her neighborhood in Portsmouth, so I got her to help me with an invasive project on my farm in Northwood. We contacted Wini Young, the science teacher at Coe Brown Academy in Northwood, who had mentioned that she was interested in teaching her environmental science students about invasive plants. Wini worked up a curriculum using the 'NH Guide to Invasive plants', published by the NH Dept of Agriculture. On October 25, Karin and I met with Wini and her class of about 20 students at Harmony Hill Farm (my farmland). The students had spent some time in class learning the different plants that we would encounter: multiflora rose, oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, autumn olive and European honeysuckle. We worked in groups for over three hours, and in the end had a large pile of stems to be burned. Wini reported that the students really enjoyed the workshop and we are planning to continue this project every year. This project is helping me with a goal of controlling the invasives on my farm. In other news, I am planning a controlled burn of 30 acres on my farm in the next few weeks. I've also started a new venture at an old summer camp in Pittsfield, NH. I have fixed up some of the old cabins for vacation rentals and am conserving the site in an environmentally friendly way (see www.graylagcabins.com). The recreational and educational opportunities we are offering to guests are consistent with the Coverts' goal of 'connecting people with NH's natural environment in meaningful ways.'"

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Training the Next Generation to Care About New Hampshire's Wildlife

by Tanya and Dave Tellman (CC95, 96)



Training the next generation to care about New Hampshire's Wildlife! Dave Tellman (CC96) giving the wrap-up for Pond Ecology at the Landaff Blue School in 2004.

Fifteen years ago while we were completing the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest's Docent Training at the Rocks Estate in Bethlehem, Dr. Judy Silverberg, Director of Education for NH Fish and Game, offered to train our class to present the Wonders of Wildlife Programs for elementary schools. Ever since then, the two of us, along with a group of six other north country volunteers, have been presenting Habits and Habitats, Pond Ecology, Wetlands and Endangered Species, as requested, in north country schools. The programs are free to the schools. NH Fish and Game provides a packet for each teacher, posters, and wonderful handouts for the students. When weather permits, activities can be presented out-of-doors. Our longest association is with 3rd graders at the Brown School in Berlin. Members of our first class will be graduating from college this spring! These classes are great fun

to present and it is a very rewarding experience. The most unruly little boys love to learn about animals! If you are interested in being a part of this program, contact Mary Goodyear at NH Fish & Game, 846-5108 or 271-3211, email: mgoody@ncia.net.

Audubon Society Land Stewards Program

Do you live near a NH Audubon sanctuary? Have you visited one of these special places and wondered who takes care of these lands? NH Audubon is currently looking for volunteers interested in helping steward Audubon sanctuary properties around the state. In order to develop a team approach to land stewardship, Phil Brown, sanctuaries manager for NH Audubon, will be hosting a special program called "How to Start a Friends Group," on Thursday, April 6, from 7-9 p.m., and another on Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m.-noon, both at the Silk Farm Audubon Center in Concord (Exit 2 off Rt. 89). The instructor is Dave Govatski, President of the Friends of Pondicherry Refuge. The sessions will focus on what steps to take in order to organize a group of sanctuary volunteers for a particular property. Dave has years of experience and is very involved with NH Audubon as one of the Pondicherry Sanctuary's stalwart stewards. He also brings experience from federal agencies such as the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the US Forest Service. For information about the program, contact Dave Govatski's email at FriendsofPondicherry@refuge.net. For more information about NH Audubon sanctuaries, or about the upcoming program, call Phil Brown at NH Audubon: 224-9909 x 334.

Forest Society Seeks Land Stewards

The Forest Society is seeking committed volunteers willing to complete a comprehensive training program and "adopt" a Forest Society property that they visit regularly. Land stewards monitor their property, serve as local ambassadors for the Forest Society, and enhance the recreational potential and ecological health of their reservation. Land stewards complete a training program composed of 10 one-day workshops that cover forestry, wildlife, land-use, and general stewardship topics. This year, five workshops will take place in the spring (May-June) and five in the fall (October-November). The registration fee for the 10 workshops is \$300, which can be earned back by volunteering time as a Land Steward. Program benefits include a complementary Forest Society membership, optional mileage reimbursement, a discount at the Forest Society gift shop, and the many intangible rewards that come from supporting conservation efforts and enhancing community resources. For more information contact: Andy Fast, Reservation Stewardship Specialist, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Tel: 603.224.9945 ext. 318, Email: afast@forestsociety.org, www.forestsociety.org

New Ideas from the Coverts Advisory Committee

At the annual meeting of the NH Coverts Project Advisory Committee in February, 2006, eleven committee members discussed new ideas for the Coverts Project, including:

- The issue of active management of town lands, such as town forests, as a topic of interest to many cooperators. Recent discussion on the NH Coverts listserv reinforces that Cooperators are involved in managing town forests in many parts of the state. Look for programs and literature on this topic in the future.
- Members pointed out the need for an easier-to-find web address for the Coverts Project webpage (especially to help recruit new Cooperators, i.e. "to learn more, just go to www.nhcoverts.org") Well, guess what? It's a done deal! Our new web address is: **NHCoverts.org**
- Emphasizing new training collaborations with other UNHCE volunteer programs such as the Community Tree Stewards, Master Gardeners, and NH Outside programs (and other natural resource volunteer programs around the state), which will offer a broader range of continuing education options for Coverts volunteers (and will bring new people to our workshops too).
- Providing programming on farmlands as habitat – one of the focus areas of the new NH Wildlife Action Plan (WAP). We discussed other outcomes of the plan, including a new grants program, administered by NH Fish and Game, that will be focused on protecting critical habitats around the state (called the Landowner Incentives Program, or L.I.P.).

Wonders of Winter

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I know the snow will melt, the skis will return to the basement, and the streams will awaken, roaring through the sugar bush. Making an expedition to check the sap lines becomes an adventure with a sometimes soggy interlude.

Spring birds will return in earnest, and the finches will find food in the forest, while newcomers, the red-breasted grosbeak and the oriole, will honor my offerings, joining the ever-present chickadees and nuthatches and the charming tufted-titmouse.

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UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
 COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

"Making Tracks" is the newsletter of the Cooperators of the New Hampshire Coverts Project. The Coverts Project is a special volunteer education and outreach program that promotes wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship. Its goal is to increase the amount of New Hampshire's private and public lands that are managed with good stewardship practices. The efforts of these volunteers are shared through this publication. For more information, please contact Malin Ely Clyde, Coordinator, NH Coverts Project, UNH Cooperative Extension, 131 Main Street, 214 Nesmith Hall, Durham, NH 03824 (603-862-2166).

Editor: Malin Ely Clyde
 Coverts Project Coordinator: Malin Ely Clyde

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Saving Special Places Conference • Saturday, April 1, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Kingswood Regional High School, Wolfeboro

Sponsored by the Forest Society's Center for Land Conservation Assistance and UNH Cooperative Extension, this conference annually draws hundreds of land protection advocates (and a great number of Coverts Cooperators), from novices to seasoned professionals, for workshops and networking. Put it on your calendar now – all Coverts Cooperators should have received information about this conference in the mail. If you missed it, please visit their website at: www.clca.forestssociety.org or for registration questions, contact Trish Churchill at the Society for the Protection of NH Forests: signup@forestssociety.org, or 603-224-9945 x 311

Discover Wild New Hampshire Day • Saturday, April 22. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Concord, N.H.

Celebrate Earth Day by bringing the family to the N.H. Fish and Game Department's fun-filled community event, Discover WILD New Hampshire Day, set for Saturday, April 22, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the grounds of Fish and Game headquarters on Hazen Drive in Concord. Admission is free. There will be hands-on fun for all ages, including archery, casting, nature walks and arts and crafts. You'll also find over 35 exhibits by conservation organizations – including the UNHCE forestry & wildlife program – from throughout the state. See the new full-size mount called "The Battling Bull Moose of Fowlertown." Presentations on wildlife topics will take place throughout the day, plus live animals and big fish. Call (603) 271-3211, or visit www.wildlife.state.nh.us.

RESOURCES

The following publications are available from the Forestry Information Center. Unless noted, all publications are free. For charge publications, make check payable to UNH Cooperative Extension and remit to Forestry Information Center, Room 211 Nesmith Hall, 131 Main St, Durham, NH 03825. To request copies, call 1-800-444-8978 or email forest.info@unh.edu

Best Management Practices for Forestry: Protecting New Hampshire's Water Quality edited by Sarah Smith and published by UNH Cooperative Extension is "hot of the press". It is a full-color illustrated handbook describing a wide range of recommended techniques to use before, during, and after logging. These techniques were developed over many years by loggers, foresters and scientists based on practical experience and research. It costs \$6.00 and an order form can be downloaded at: <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/Forestry/Docs/FormBMP.pdf>. You can also view the publication on our website at: <http://www.ceinfo.unh.edu/Forestry/Pubs/BMPBook.pdf>

The Place You Call Home: a Guide to Caring for Your Land in the Upper Valley is an "owner's manual" for people who live in the upper valley, but has plenty of good information if you live outside the region. In magazine format, it was produced by "Northern Woodlands" magazine with support from the NH Charitable Foundation's Wellborn Ecology fund and others. It gathers wide-ranging topics on wildlife, land protection, woods roads, forestry professionals, stone walls, tree value and much more.

THE LAST WORD

We had a great afternoon at Huntington Hill Wildlife Management Area, otherwise known as Dr. Sam Doyle's (CC95) property, on Friday, March 10th. Thirteen volunteers, including folks from Coverts, Community Tree Stewards, and NH Master Gardeners joined with several neighboring landowners to explore the fields, forests, and other habitats at this Hanover hillside farm. We were supposed to be on snow shoes, but warm weather prevailed, so we just "shoed." Thanks goes to **John Doyle** (CC96), Sam's youngest son, who gave us a wonderful tour, filled with amiable stories of growing up on the land. Providing excellent commentary on trees, forestry practices, and wildlife were UNHCE Wildlife Extension Specialist Darrel Covell, Grafton County Forest Resources Educator Northam Parr, and Urban Forestry Specialist Mary Tebo.



It was great to catch up with Coverts Cooperator Fred Ernst (CC2000) of Walpole at the March 10th "Nature in Winter Program." Also present but not pictured was new Coverts Cooperator Linda Brownson (CC05) of Wentworth.



Discussing forestry and wildlife habitat projects on the Doyle's land. Pictured L-R: John Doyle (CC96), Grafton County Forester Northam Parr, and nearby woodlot owner Pete Shumway.

Flying squirrels

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glides of 20-60 feet on average. Glides of 150 feet are not unheard of, and down-slope distances of 300 feet have been recorded. A flying squirrel may pancake to the ground to forage on nuts, seeds, and insects, or abruptly swoop upwards at the end of a glide to land on another tree. Its patagium billows to reduce speed, its tail wings upwards, its landing gear thrusts forward. After scaling this tree, it may leap again, speeding through the night forest.

One final note: a mother flying squirrel lies balanced on forehead and feet over her blind, naked offspring and spreads her furry patagium like a blanket to keep them warm. Sounds delightful on a 10-below night.