Roger Brown: Passion and Persistence
by Malley Clyde

It seems to me that there is something special about Roger Brown, Coverts Class of 1995, is about as loyal as they come.

Roger is a familiar face at Coverts events and workshops, always wearing a hat, with a sandy moustache and a southern drawl. He’s quick with a joke, and even quicker with an invitation to come visit his land in Brentwood. His infectious enthusiasm for wildlife, for learning, and for his land comes across the minute you meet him.

“When he gets excited about an idea, he just goes nuts!” laughs Roger’s good friend Phil Auger. “When I first got to know him, I helped him with the stewardship of his 14-acre Brentwood woodlot - a small timber sale, encouraging the fruit trees, things like that. And then I mentioned the idea of conserving his land – something I try and bring up with all landowners.” The next thing Phil knew, Roger had donated an easement on his land to the Rockingham Land Trust, paving the way for him to later do the same with the 79-acre parcel.

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Harmony Anderson (CC02) of Center Strafford shares an exciting sighting: “Last month I was very happy to be observing a king mackerel while on a fishing trip across highway 202A near the Strafford/Roches- ter line. It was my first Blanding’s sighting ever but it was unmistakable with that bright yellow throat and high speckled carapace. It was a big one with about a nine-inch long carapace, so I guess it has survived other road crossings without me in many years past. I reported the sighting to Fish and Game Commissioners in Concord and signed up to be an official reptile and amphibian reporter.”

Roscoe Blaisdell (CC07) of Raymond shares some interesting sights from his Deerfield property: “I had another great season last year photographing critters with my new high-powered macro camera. I got pho- tos of most of the 4 legged animals in my area including another close up one of a bobcat. I had one of these kittens hissing at me in my cave in Raymond last summer. Recently a logger using a forwarder and Timco unit selectively harvested part of my Deerfield woodlot and created two one-acre clearcuts for the wildlife. I am spending most of my free time creating foodplots on my Rockingham County woodlots and Vermont woodlot. The results have been outstanding.”

Bobcat and buck caught by Roscoe Blaisdell’s wildlife-activated cameras.

Paul Dionne (CC01), who incidentally will be presenting a talk on Stewardship of Public Lands at the fall session of Coverts training, sends the follow- ing update on pace with a local update on our Forestry Management Plan for all town conservation areas with forester, Charlie Moreau. I expect that to be completed carapace, it was to be implemented in the next few weeks and fall 2016. I have also worked on another conservation area, working on farm field restoration and habitat improvement. It is the Shepard Family Area; 35 acres of agricultural soils donated by the Alan Shepard family about 5 years ago. The main hay field hadn’t been worked for close to 20 years. I brush-hogged this weekend. So far this summer, John Brown & Sons worked their magic here also, with fantas- tic results. I haven’t been there to check for wood- cocks, but I expect the same result as Broadview. It should also be large enough to support at least a pair of two of Bobolinks. There were migrating bluebirds and an Ipswich Sparrow spotted later last fall, in the newly cleared hay field.

The town, in a non-binding referendum in March 2005, spent a 6 million dollar bond for open space protection. The town council formed a Land Advisory Committee to formulate a process and make recommendations for protection. I was appointed as the Conservation representative. Over the past 10 months, this group of 7 has met 25 times with more than 100 hours in those meetings. We also had several subcommittees. We have a task that met several times independent of the Committee. The report was finalized Friday and it is being printed this week. The LAC has a public hearing with the council next week. From there, I look forward to the council support of our recommendations.” In a recent update, Paul shared that the committee is currently in negotiations for 300 acres of land to put under a conservation easement.

Paul’s work on the Conservation Development Zone Committee is also close to bearing fruit. After several meetings with engineering and legal profes- sionals and the Planning Board, the committee will present a preliminary report at the Council next week. From there, I look forward to the council support of our recommendations.”

Joyce El Kourati (CC03) in her role with the Moose Mountain Regional Greenways shared that nearly 100 paddlers made their way down four scenic miles of the Branch River in June to explore the relationship between land and water in the area. The Representatives from Branch Hill Farm, the Cocheo River Watershed Coalition, Moose Mountains Regional Greenways, the NH Department of Environmental Services, and NNC Cooperative Extension shared their knowledge with the group.

Bill and Marge Jahoda (CC06) share, “The ospreys that have a nest on a dead tree in the Water Resources beaver pond bordering our Johnson Memorial Forest in Pittsburg have fledged this year. We have temporarily closed off to public use the trail on our land bordering the pond to avoid possible nest failure due to too close human activity. We’ll let you know later if we observe any problems in getting the young through the very critical early nesting period.”

Alan Johnson (CC04) of Walpole writes, “Saturday, July 2, 2005 – Black Bear sign in thick raspberry cover throughout a three acre clearcut created six or seven years ago. I recently drove along this area, and I was surprised to see it is in a newly created food plot. I have seen a yearling in velvet and another two year old, but doe sightings have been rare. I am pleased to have two coveys of grouse fledg- ing this different opening for them. They seem to have an affinity for small young clover at this age. I have a male grouse that is quite attractive to running machinery. A week ago I was watching the puffed up one afternoon and followed beside me on a dozer for fifty yards. This weekend he appeared again; this time at- tracted to my tractor while I harrowed a new food plot. This spring I’ve seen more yearling bobcat and low-bellied sapsuckers than ever before. A pair just fledged their young, hatching them in a cavity in the dead top of a hemlock on the edge of a field. A pair of downy woodpeckers used a bluebird house in the same field, on the edge of a small Christmas tree plot, for the second year in a row.”

Cheryl Kimball (CC08) of Strafford writes of her observations of her barn bats this year: “...Our bat family has expanded this year. I was selling someone I hadn’t seen any yet, but just last night I found two, one alive and (probably, sadly, from the cats), one dead. We have done the front of our barn completely redone last fall and I am wondering if the colony has been reduced because they’re not happy with the new tighter arrangement (the back is still wide open)! Or are they just coming in at the same time? For a similar small bat year? When we first moved here twelve years ago we tried to drive them out of the barn (they make quite a commotion, trip and make Noise!) but the bats have been none too successful. I have since become quite enamored of them. I suspect we would be dragged away by mosquitoes by now if it weren’t for the bats and dragonflies!”

Betsy Kruse (CC01) shares updates in Candia and their need for advice on ATV issues. “I will be working on a zoning revision committee for Candia. My hope is to incorporate more conservation language into our ordinances, in keeping with our new master plan. I have been asked to represent Candia on the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. I am waiting to hear whether the selectmen approve my appointment, which shouldn’t be a problem. The Candia Conservation Commission is in session. We are discussing management in Candia (we hope) negotiations to make our first conserva- tion purchase – a key property in one of the Bear-Paw greenways. As a way of warning to others, and a plea for input, we are running into resistance from some residents who feel we shouldn’t spend town money on property we intend to post against motor- ized wheeled vehicles. The bear-watcher didn’t see any ATV’s, EVER! Of course, if we don’t buy it, ATV’s wouldn’t use it for things like hiking, biking, snowmobiling or horseback riding, either. We are trying to work with after-market manufacturers to allow motorized wheeled vehicles, IF an ATV trail maintenance/ rider supervision plan can be approved. We have big problems with ATV’s already, which will need serious consideration before we can expect to ask the town for more conservation money at Town Meeting in March ’06.” Betsy found everyone’s feedback from the email version of this update very useful and is saving the responses to share with her CC. You can reach Betsy at poold@comcast.net, or if you have more information to share.

Jerry Langdon (CC09) writes, “The Epping conser- vation commission has been busy building an interpretive trail along the Lamprey River. Led by Kevin Martin our forestry Committee has built a kiosk (map of trail), signs, wet area bridge crossings, and pamphlets for trail. These are almost complete at this writing.” The Epping CC welcomes visitors – if you’re interested in seeing their work, the trailhead is located at the Route 87 Bridge (Tilton Bridge). There is parking at the bridge and the kiosk is visible from the trailhead.

“We have had many sightings on my own property this summer. We did a biomass harvest in 1998 and built a 4 acre gold driving range. This has improved the biodiversity and habitat greatly. We have seen a cow and her heifer in the 150 yard flag, por- cupines, turkeys, red-tailed hawks, hamsters, many butterflies, woodcocks, coyotes, fishers, great blue herons, many deer have also been spotted, and it seems like there are more robins this year than ever before.”

Dick Mallion (CC09) shares several updates: “The Whitfield Conservation Commission has completed the Natural Resource Inventory for the Town. With assistance from Watershed to Wildlife Inc. partners John Severance of Strafford and Michelle Veasey of Walpole, Whitefield now has a state-of-the-art NRI added to the town’s GIS in addition to hard copy booklets with the information and maps. Conservation Commission member Rita Chadwick (CC08) of Strafford did a great job with the work and mapping as part of a project towards her degree. An NRI briefing was presented to the town officials and citizens at the end of June. Four large laminated maps produced for the NRI are now hung in the Town Office for general use, and they also serve as attractive decorations.

“Mark Sullivan (CC88) recently moved from Whitefield to California. He had been a member of the Whitfield Conservation Commission since joining the Coverts program.

“The Whitfield Conservation Commission chaired by Dick Mallion (CC09) has helped to expedite the town’s approval and subdivision for adding 489 acres to Pondicherry Wildlife Preserve in June. The Nature Conservancy purchased the land for immediate trans- fer to US Fish and Wildlife Service. Since 1990, the pondicherry preserve has grown from 300 acres to over 5,300 acres in the towns of Whitefield and Jefferson.”

Nanci Mitchell (CC02) of Gilmanton writes of an interesting discovery, “My husband and I received a FLEP grant to develop a forest management plan for our property in Gilmanon. We were walking through a stand of mixed hardwood and pine in late June when our forester, Brenda Brown, noted a hawk nest 40-50 ft up on a sugar maple. We left it. Two weeks later a bobcat appearance in the nest and we were excited to think that we might see an adult or juvenile hawk. But then we noticed ears and then a nose. Suddenly we realized that a bear cub was peering out from the nest to see who had intruded upon his woods. We took a couple of pictures and then the bear turned and was gone so quickly left the area. But what a memorable sight!”

Quite a surprise for Nancy Mitchell on recent walk with Forest Branch.

Michelle Veasey (CC03) shares news from the Atkin- son Conservation Commission: “With funding from the Fish Plate Grant, we have been organizing volunteers and gathering GPS, his- torical and natural data to create a guide to Atkinson Trails. I was inspired by the work of the Peterbor- ough Conservation Commission, which Franice Von Mertens (CC99) shared with the ‘03 class of Coverts. Our conservation commission hopes that more people will enjoy the natural landscape of our community and thus, feel more connected with it when it comes to protecting it.” You can view the trail map on their website, www.atkinsonconservation.org.
Exceptional Educational Opportunity
Opens in Temple

The New Hampshire School of Falconry, the creation of Nancy Cowan (CC98), has been permitted by the USFWS as one of only two operating schools in falconry in the New England region. Nancy says “The school will be located and hold classes, demonstrations and hunt days based on falconry education at The Timberdoodle Club of Temple, NH. … [It] is a beautiful facility owned by people who are known for their land use and wildlife protection work in the Town of Temple.”

The school will offer classes in Raptor 101 for children from 11 – 17, falconry workshops, Raptor Handling for Professionals, (and others handling raptors in a non-falconry situation), group demonstrations, and hunts. Curriculum topics will focus on conservation, protection, hunting laws and wildlife education. Nancy’s youth education is unique in that none of the other schools in the country offer classes focused on children’s education.

The school’s latest acquisition is Banshee, a captivating bred peregrine falcon. Right now, she is living in Nancy’s half-bay becoming accustomed to human movement, voices, visitors and dogs.

If you have questions or are interested in learning more about educational opportunities, contact Nancy at falconers@comcast.net.

Walk or Wheel on into the Emerson Brook Forest

Sunday, August 21, 10 am - 2 pm
Parking at Gilsum Elementary School

The Sustainability Project invites one and all to join in on a day of Merriment in the forest. Bring your friends and family, pack a lunch, take a hike and experience playful forest entertainment and education. Northeast Passage and White Mountain Adaptive Ski and Sports will provide non motorized adaptive equipment for those who are unable to access wilderness areas on foot. Take advantage of this opportunity to explore all your options at the wheelchair accessible Emerson Brook Forest Outdoor Education Center.

General Parking for the event is at the Gilsum Elementary School with shuttles to the forest site. In case of rain, activities will take place at the Gilsum Elementary School Community Center.

The Sustainability Project Inc. a non-profit conservation organization promotes educational, social, and recreational activities that encouraged the individual and collective well being of all community members. For additional information on August 21st event visit www.emersonbrookforest.org or contact The Sustainability Project at 352-1887 or e-mail info@emersonbrookforest.org.

Granite State Woodlot and Wildlife Management Course

Monday, September 19 thru Friday, September 23
Brown Lane Barn, Hollis

This 5 day course covers land stewardship, tree identification, boundary location, trail design, tree measurement, forest ecology, woodlot harvesting, wildlife management, timber inventory skills and wetland identification. Brown Lane Farm covers 2,000 acres of wetlands, forests and fields, abundant in wildlife. The cost of the course is $250 and includes meals, overnight accommodations and education materials. Access registration materials on the web at http://www.centro.unh.edu/Forestry/Docs/woodlot.pdf.

Wood Lot Day

Saturday, October 1
Phillips Exeter Academy

Offered through UNH Cooperative Extension, the Wood Lot Day will feature a series of interesting workshops and information from supporting organizations from across the state. Coverts will be there and could use YOUR help in manning our table! Registration is not required for this event. Check the UNH Cooperative Education site as directed above for more information.

Peterborough Open Space Committee Takes Unique Approach to Conservation Issues

by Francie Von Mertens

Peterborough’s somewhat new Open Space Committee has two projects of interest.

Following next-door neighbor Hancock’s lead, we modified their parcel ranking system and applied it to all parcels in Peterborough larger than 25 acres. Asst. by aerial photos, Fish & Game’s new co-occurrence mapping program is a great tool used to create a ranking of parcels. The committee’s goal is to give the committee a priority order for landowner outreach.

One parcel is at the Miller State Park entrance and may be a landowner enthusiasm that will be matched with assistance. Of course the not-too-hidden agenda is to get people aware that they, too, can initiate land conservation. We are getting lots printed up with the idea of passing them around to other Conservation Commissions and Open Space Committees, with budget information and lessons learned. As for the marketing angle, how to get them into as many hands as possible, we keep on learning to get everyone on board.

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Roger Brown, continued from page 1

As a reward for all of his work, Roger and Bonnie enjoy a great variety of wildlife on their land. They counted nineteen turkeys from their front porch one day, and they've spotted, gray fox, fisher, deer, pileated woodpecker, coyotes, raccoons, and otter. (Roscoe Blaisdell (CC97) spotted the otter tracks before Roger had seen the critter). Beaver have flooded a large area of red maple where they watch painted turtles and a green heron and hope to have great blue heron someday. Large outcrops are full of garter snakes, and they've had a porcupine on the porch. “There used to be more ruffed grouse – and I’ve been working on improving habitat for them,” frowns Roger. “But maybe we’re in a down part of their cycle.”

Neighboring properties have seen a lot of management lately – some heavy cutting – which has altered Roger’s management plan. He wants to complement the early successional habitat created by these cuts, so now his management is focused on maintaining forest cover. He has no more patch cuts planned in the near future: “I don’t want to lose our scarlet tanagers,” says Roger.

In 2003, Roger helped launch a “biothon” fundraiser to raise money for Rockingham Land Trust’s protection of Lamprey River turtle habitat. He and his team raised over a thousand dollars by identifying 285 species of plants and animals on his land (and another parcel). This event has become a local tradition: “For me personally there [was] the added bonus of knowing a lot more about my land,” reported Roger about the event.

But I know what you are thinking. Where the heck is “Keeneborough?” Well it’s an alternative name for the town of Brentwood, originally a part of Exeter named after Sir Benjamin Keene. Go see it for yourself – Roger has an open door policy to all Coverts Cooperators – he would love to show you around!

RESOURCES

The following new publication is available from the University Press of New England, 1-800-421-1561 or visit http://www.upne.com/1-58465-467-8.html.


THE LAST WORD

Cooperator Tracks Nesting Green Sea Turtles in Costa Rica

Judi Lindsey (CC01) an enrichment teacher at the Henry Moore School in Canada spent part of her summer in Costa Rica thanks to a grant she was awarded by the NEA Foundation. The Learning and Leadership Grant allowed Judi, after training in San Jose, Costa Rica to travel to the country’s eastern coastal area of Tortuguero to search for nesting sea turtles in the dead of the night, along with a group of scientists from the Caribbean Conservation Corporation.

As a reward for all of his work, Roger and Bonnie enjoy a great variety of wildlife on their land. They counted nineteen turkeys from their front porch one day, and they’ve spotted, gray fox, fisher, deer, pileated woodpecker, coyotes, raccoons, and otter. (Roscoe Blaisdell (CC97) spotted the otter tracks before Roger had seen the critter). Beaver have flooded a large area of red maple where they watch painted turtles and a green heron and hope to have great blue heron someday. Large outcrops are full of garter snakes, and they’ve had a porcupine on the porch. “There used to be more ruffed grouse – and I’ve been working on improving habitat for them,” frowns Roger. “But maybe we’re in a down part of their cycle.”

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Judi Lindsey among “half-moons” – tracks left when turtles come ashore, but decide to return to the water.

Judi’s work involved collecting biometric data and tagging forty green sea turtles. Judi says, “One night over 500 came ashore to nest. It was awesome to patrol the moonlight beaches on either the 8-12 or 12-4 shifts. Our presence warned off poachers. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with a different culture which has the goal of protecting their environment just as we do.” Her students will certainly have exciting material to cover this fall!