

# Engaging People & Volunteering



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# Land Stewardship: being a role model



## Community Conservation: your role as leader



## Raising Public Awareness: your role as educator

### IN OUR Backyard: OTTERS

*In Our Backyard, a parade led by the wildlife and habitats that make our outdoor spaces so special and so much a part of our lives.*

I often like to go out into the woods early in the morning after it rains. There is something special about being the first person to walk through freshly fallen snow. It is also a great time to see the tracks of fish-eating otters that swim and bark.

After a recent storm, I made an interesting discovery while walking with the rescue dog against tracks, the dog rubs and barks tracks, and a solitary one made a small trail through the snow. I saw some tracks I didn't recognize. I followed them back to their origin: a den beside the river. Otters.

Otters also called river otters are active year-round in the marshes and streams of Epping Falls. They are an intensely playful creature, and I see them swimming the pole of river through the woods. If you have a chance to track them

through the snow, every the tracks you will see that the first prints are replaced by a dozen more in the snow, as they slide along on their bellies like sleds. In winter months, they are a joy to watch as they take fish, sometimes going downstream for seemingly seemingly long stretches.

I got to know a family of otters this spring (although I'm pretty sure they wouldn't recognize me). A mother and two young ones frequent visitors to the stream of the York River near my house. Watching the young ones explore their world - growling if I'm close but not so growling on their own - was amazing.

The easiest way to find to identify an otter is by watching it swim. Otters are really distinguished from beavers and muskrats by their much more athletic style of swimming. Out of the water, they are recognizable by their relatively large size (adults are roughly 2' to 3' in length and weigh about 20 lbs). Their ears are round in the water, but flat when they are on land - not swimming.

According to UNH Cooperative Extension Wildlife Outreach Coordinator Mike Anderson, otters need suitable wetland habitat - streams, rivers, ponds or lakes - with adjacent bank

located), to be stored and used in case of a fire. The people along the route were to be allowed to tap into the water line if they chose. The State of NH got into the act and insisted the town find a new water supply. A circle of wells was drilled in a pasture on the north bank of the river and a water tank was built on the other side of the river next to Prospect cemetery. The line to the wells was located off Prescott Road, opposite the John Hear house. A rough road was made from the end of the lane to the riverbank. In order to haul in the pipe, lumber, bricks, pump and other supplies. When the new wells became operational, Mr. Archibald, who lived in the house at the end of the lane, was hired to check the pump and wells every day. The town plowed the lane as far as the house, but you had to walk down to the river. When Mr. Archibald died, Mel Becker, a one-legged man took over the job. He decided it was too far to walk through the snow with his crutches, so he went in by the water tank on the other side of the river. Now he had the problem of crossing the river to access the pump house. He was a welder and mechanic, so he constructed a cable car to get him across the river. My father, Jack Thurston, maintained the pump house in 1945 and 1946. As a child I would go with him, and spent my time crossing the river, back and forth in the cable car. Kind of brave for a seven year old girl! As time went on, the wells started giving out and a new source of water was needed. Water was found near the junction of Martin Road and Fremont Road early in 1947. A well and pump house were installed on the south side of the road. A pipeline was installed down Railroad Avenue to Main Street. Twenty-five years later, new wells were drilled on the opposite side of the road and piped to the pump house. Epping has quite a history of obtaining water for the residents of our town.

This research material came from the Dixie Sandborn collection at the Epping Historical Society. We are forever grateful to Dixie and Buster Sandborn for all of their many years of collecting Epping history.

We are open Monday mornings from 8:00 to 12:00, or when the flag is flying! Call for an appointment if this is not convenient for you. Call: 679-2944 or e-mail: [joyngarden@hotmail.com](mailto:joyngarden@hotmail.com).

Submitted by Joy Troy, curator

**Nature Talks**

Your Conservation Commission is actively committed to Epping trails. That includes managing those we have, as well as building new ones. Sarah Brennan has taken the lead for posting existing trails on [www.TrailFinder.info](http://www.TrailFinder.info). Trail Finder is administered by the Upper Valley Trail Alliance with support from the Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation Agency, UNH Cooperative Extension and the National Park Service. The ConComm is grateful for their support - they have been very helpful in helping get our trails into the system.

We hope you will take a moment to check out the website, right now the Fox Run trail is loaded and the Southeast Land Trust has loaded some trails as well. In addition to trails in Epping, you can see trails in the rest of NH and VT. Not only are all the trail maps located in one place, but you can view trail lengths, uses (snowmobiling, hiking, walking, etc.), viewpoints, photos, geocaches and more. New trails throughout NH are being added to the website regularly. We hope this trail project encourages people to get outdoors and enjoy the fruits of conservation.

Along with getting trail information out to the people, the ConComm is also interested in organizing a program to help maintain the trails. Pat VanWagoner did a lot of research into trail adoption programs. We consider a program like this to be a great way to maintain our trails, as well as getting more people involved in conservation.

Please let us know of any trails you'd like to see on Trail Finder. This is surely a team effort and all feedback is welcomed. If you know of any trails that should be seen in Trail Finder or you would like to help with this effort, please put a note in the ConComm mailbox at Town Hall.

Lastly, as we go to print there is an opening on the Commission. If you are interested in helping us get people outdoors, reviewing wetlands permits and connecting with the community, check us out at [epppingconcomm.org](http://epppingconcomm.org) and leave us a note at Town Hall.

Submitted by Sandy Goodspeed, guest contributor

**The Civil War Roundtable of NH**

NH grows a (P)

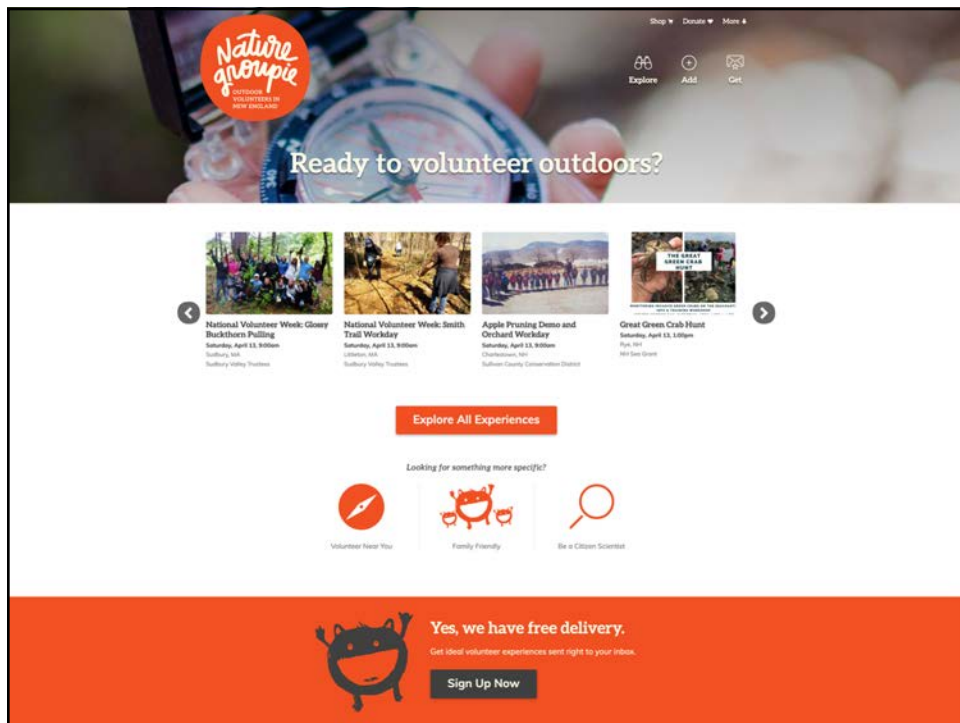


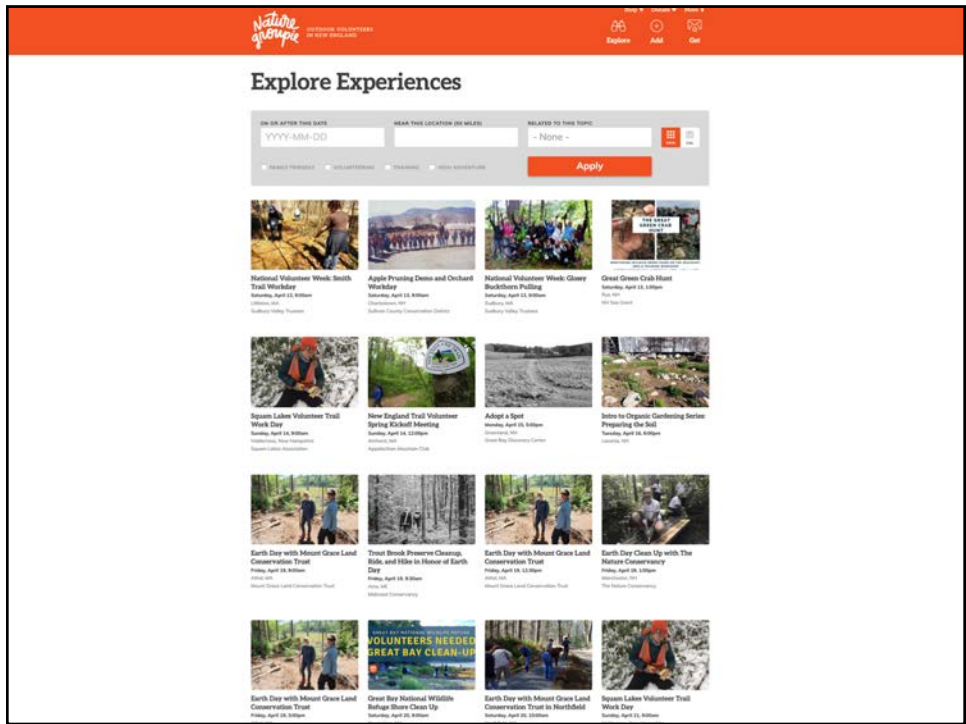
## Small Group Brainstorming



## Speaking for Wildlife Program







**Shared Resources through**

*Nature groupie*

**Communications**

**Weekly Bulletin**

**Tools**

**Stewardship Tool Library**

**Volunteer Training**

**Stewardship Training Guides**

**Data**

**The Compass (quarterly news for partners)**





Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. - Margaret Mead