



NFWF

EVERSOURCE

# Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife

## NFWF CONTACTS

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## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016

### PARTNERSHIP SUMMARY

In 2016, Eversource and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) completed the second year of grantmaking through Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife, which is a partnership dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests and rivers in New Hampshire. Eversource, through its subsidiary Northern Pass Transmission LLC, has committed a total of \$3 million to the partnership. Through Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife, NFWF works with a variety of stakeholders — private landowners, government agencies, academic institutions and conservation groups — to cultivate science-based conservation strategies, and cost-effective on-the-ground projects. Eight new projects were funded in 2016, again through a competitive review process, for a total of 17 projects funded in New Hampshire over the two year period (see map). To date, the program has leveraged \$1,200,000 from Eversource, \$1,418,000 from federal partners, and \$2,062,000 in grantee match for a total conservation impact of nearly \$4.7 million.



Poorfarm Brook | Credit: Belknap County



Buckthorn Blitz at College Woods | Credit: Stewardship Network-New England

## ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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## PARTNERS FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FISH AND WILDLIFE SUMMARY

CONSERVATION IMPACT	2015	2016	TOTAL
Number of Projects	9	8	17
Miles of Stream Opened	92	148	240
Acres of Forest Assessed	3,500	10,945	14,445
Fish Passage Barriers Rectified	10	8	18
Acres of Forest Restored	170	1,431	1,601
Volunteers	431	230	661
People Reached	540	70	610

## FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

	2015	2016	TOTAL
Eversource - Projects	\$400,000	\$800,000	\$1,200,000
Eversource - Program Management	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
NFWF Match	\$363,000	\$1,055,000	\$1,418,000
Grantee Match	\$995,000	\$1,067,000	\$2,062,000

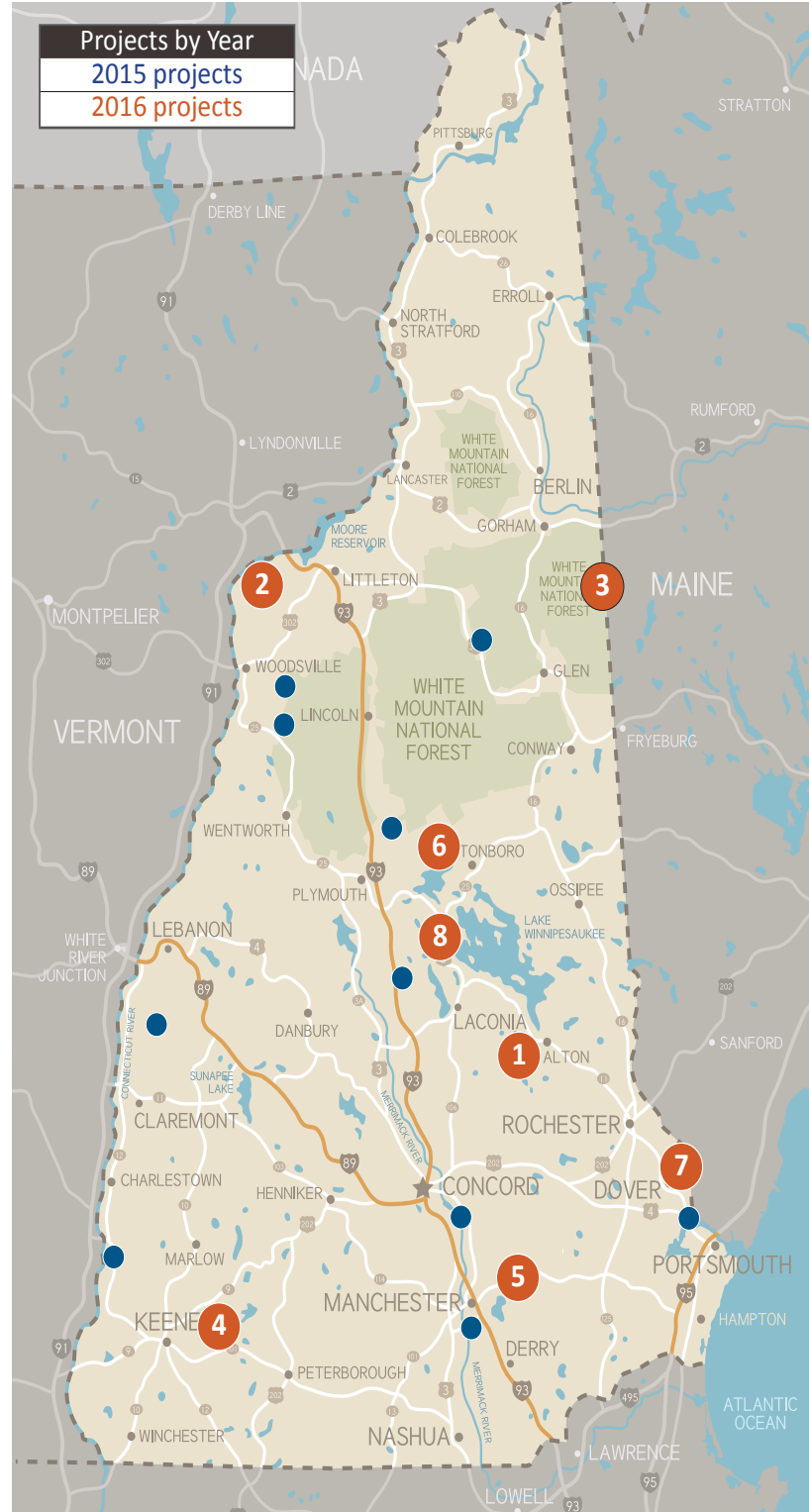
## 2016 Project Summaries and Locations

### 1) RESTORING STREAM BANKS AND IMPROVING FOREST MANAGEMENT TO BENEFIT EASTERN BROOK TROUT (NH)

Award ..... \$70,033

Grantee Match ..... \$74,562

The **Belknap County Conservation District** will revise the Gunstock Forest Management Plan to incorporate more wildlife habitat, restore and stabilize a stream bank on Gunstock Brook to reduce sediment and nutrient releases and improve water quality and fish habitat for Eastern brook trout. Project will address forest sustainability and improving native wildlife and fish habitat for targeted species, repair of a popular and accessible ¼ mile Wetland Walk trail and expanded interpretation services in a demonstration area. Work includes planning bird and fish habitat improvements for woodcock and trout, pollinator plantings, developing information materials, interpretive signing and leadership to coordinate the project and line up future Gunstock forest management, habitat improvements and educational outreach. Gunstock includes a large section of the Poorfarm Brook watershed and diverse habitat conditions including Hemlock-hardwood-pine, Northern Hardwood, Cliff-Talus, forested wetlands and open ponds. The project will prevent 47 tons of sediment and 41 tons of phosphorous at a priority restoration site from entering Gunstock Brook and the Poorfarm Brook watersheds, which flow into Lake Winnepesaukee.



## 2) REMOVING FISH BARRIERS TO RESTORE ACCESS TO 140 MILES OF EASTERN BROOK TROUT HABITAT (NH, VT)

Award .....\$199,165  
Grantee Match .....\$229,075

The **Connecticut River Watershed Council** will increase aquatic connectivity on the Upper Connecticut River in the Town of North Haverhill by removing seven barriers, identified using ecological rankings from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and regional connectivity reports, that are blocking fish migration for spawning, sediment transport and natural flow regimes in these cold water streams. Project will open access to 140 miles of historic cold water spawning habitat and thermal refugia for Eastern brook trout while also improving sediment transport, restoring natural flow regimes and reducing flood elevations and the potential for infrastructure failures during storm events in six New Hampshire and Vermont communities.

## 3) REPLACING A CULVERT ON THE SHEPARDS RIVER TO RESTORE HABITAT FOR EASTERN BROOK TROUT (ME, NH)

Award .....\$100,000  
Eversource Funds.....\$75,000  
Grantee Match .....\$169,750

The **Town of Brownfield, Maine** will replace an older and undersized culvert on the Shepards River in Brownfield, Maine with a fish-friendly, open bottom structure that will restore fish passage for Eastern brook trout and provide access to historic spawning habitat. Project will restore eight miles of known Eastern brook trout habitat upstream in New Hampshire that will be reconnected to 27.6 miles of habitat downstream and will ensure that the road is no longer at risk of closure during flooding events. The Shepards River is home to a native brook trout fishery and also had an historic Atlantic salmon run that may be restored when the downstream barriers are removed.

### 2015 Success: Connecticut River Watershed Council



Oliverian Brook Fish Passage: **Before** | Credit: CRWC

## 4) IMPROVING POLLINATOR HABITAT IN RIGHTS-OF-WAY (NH, MA)

Award .....\$111,077  
Grantee Match .....\$111,077

The **University of Connecticut** will assess the best opportunities to create and manage habitat for declining pollinator populations, including the Monarch butterfly and bee species, on transmission line rights-of-way in New Hampshire and south into Massachusetts and northern Connecticut. Project will determine best management practices to achieve an optimal diversity of pollinator species by comparing pollinator utilization of young forest habitats and adjacent mature forest habitats along these corridors.

## 5) ACHIEVING MULTI-SPECIES BENEFITS FROM YOUNG FOREST RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT (NH, ME)

Award .....\$197,982  
Grantee Match .....\$198,100

The **University of New Hampshire** will compare the effects of mechanical mowing, selective herbicide treatment and new forest openings on habitat utilization by Golden-winged warblers along transmission line rights-of-way. The purpose of the grant is to address a decline in young forest habitat in New England by observing usage by young forest dependent birds in newly created habitat for New England cottontail. Field sampling will be conducted in southern Maine and southeastern New Hampshire and will focus on conservation priority bird species including Golden-winged warbler, Prairie warbler, Blue-winged warbler, Eastern towhee and Brown thrasher. Project partners include NRCS, New Hampshire Fish and Game, the New England cottontail habitat state management teams, and UNH Cooperative Extension. Project will inform decisions about where new clearcuts in rights-of-way should be positioned to maintain a mosaic of functioning habitat types. The project will assess and compare 445 acres of young forest habitat.



Oliverian Brook Fish Passage: **After** | Credit: CRWC



#### 6) RECRUITING PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO RESTORE YOUNG FOREST HABITAT FOR GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS (VT, NH)

Award ..... \$70,000  
Grantee Match ..... \$70,000

**Audubon Vermont** will recruit landowners in the Champlain Valley of Vermont and in New Hampshire, around Lake Winnepesaukee, to assess and implement forest management techniques that enhance the complexity of forest habitat across the landscape to benefit Golden-winged warblers and other priority bird species. The project will emphasize signage, demonstration areas and public workshops to showcase best management practices by improving at least 400 acres of young forest habitat and initiating easements on a minimum of 100 acres in the target area.

#### 7) CREATING NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL HABITAT ON UNDER-UTILIZED LANDS (ME, NH)

Award ..... \$60,000  
Eversource Funds ..... \$5,000  
Grantee Match ..... \$166,870

The **Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve** will accelerate the restoration of young forests by creating a best practices guide for restoration on under-utilized lands, including transmission line rights-of-way in southern Maine and eastern New Hampshire. Project will support an expert on-the-ground coordinator to ensure that the landowner or manager is matched to the appropriate restoration approach from the guide and will implement a suite of practices that will result in 300 combined acres of demonstration habitat supporting New England cottontail.

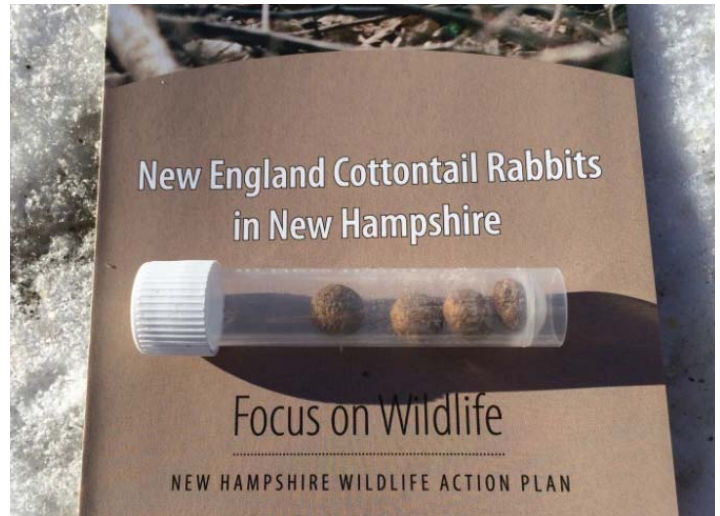
#### 8) RESTORING YOUNG AND MATURE FOREST HABITAT FOR NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL AND PRIORITY BIRD SPECIES (NH)

Award ..... \$65,000  
Grantee Match ..... \$65,000

The **Wildlife Management Institute** will increase the acreage of young forest habitats utilized by New England cottontail, American woodcock, Golden-winged warbler and other young forest dependent bird species in New Hampshire. Project will improve a total of 152 acres of habitat by recruiting landowners through a suite of species-specific websites that highlight the importance of maintaining young forest habitat and providing technical assistance for implementation of best management practices.

#### VOLUNTEERS SEARCH FOR RABBIT CLUES: VOLUNTEERS ROAM NEW HAMPSHIRE SEARCHING FOR RABBIT PELLETS

On a cold, steely February morning in Hudson, New Hampshire, a troop of 23 intrepid volunteers line up for a morning of outdoor recreation and data collection. There is a cheery, excited atmosphere. Given the task at-hand, it seems surprising to see so many smiles. This particular group of volunteers chose to dedicate their Saturday morning to collecting rabbit feces — as much as possible. In this case, 28 samples were taken. These stalwart people were taking part in the Stewardship Network: New England's annual Bunny Blitz. "New Hampshireans seem to be cut from a different cloth. They will take any excuse to get outside — especially after a long winter," said Malin Clyde, program manager at the Stewardship Network.



Rabbit Pellet Sample | Credit: Malin Clyde



New England Cottontail | Credit: FWS