



NFWF

EVERSOURCE 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

2017 Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife

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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

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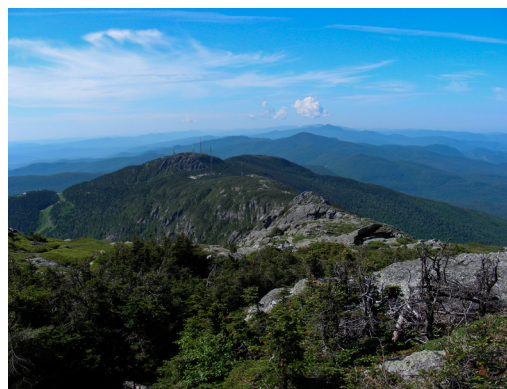
PARTNERSHIP SUMMARY

In 2017, Eversource and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) completed the third year of grantmaking through Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife, a partnership dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests and rivers in New Hampshire. Eversource, through its subsidiary Northern Pass Transmission, 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. Four new projects were funded in 2017, for a total of 21 projects funded in New Hampshire over the three year period (see map on next page). To date, the program has leveraged \$1.4 million from Eversource, \$1.62 million from federal partners and \$2.45 million in grantee match for a total conservation impact of nearly \$5.5 million.



Bicknell's Thrush | Credit: Kent McFarland



Mountain birdwatch survey location
Credit: Vermont Center for Ecostudies

PARTNERS FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FISH AND WILDLIFE SUMMARY

CONSERVATION IMPACT	2015-2016	2017	TOTAL
Number of Projects	17	4	21
Miles of Stream Opened	240	2	242
Acres of Forest Assessed	14,445	30,282	44,727
Fish Passage Barriers Rectified	18	0	18
Acres of Forest Restored	1,601	3	1,604
Volunteers	661	30	691
People Reached	610	252	862
FUNDING DISTRIBUTION	2015-2016	2017	TOTAL
Eversource - Projects	\$1,200,000	\$200,000	\$1,400,000
Eversource - Program Management	\$300,000	\$50,000	\$350,000
NFWF Match	\$1,418,000	\$203,000	\$1,621,000
Grantee Match	\$2,062,000	\$386,000	\$2,448,000
Total	\$4,980,000	\$839,000	\$5,819,000

(continued)

2017 PROJECT SUMMARIES AND LOCATIONS

Projects highlighted on map with corresponding project number

1. Restoring Two Miles of Instream Woody Habitat Structure to Benefit Eastern Brook Trout (NH)

Award	\$55,730
Eversource Funds	\$25,730
Grantee Match	\$56,400

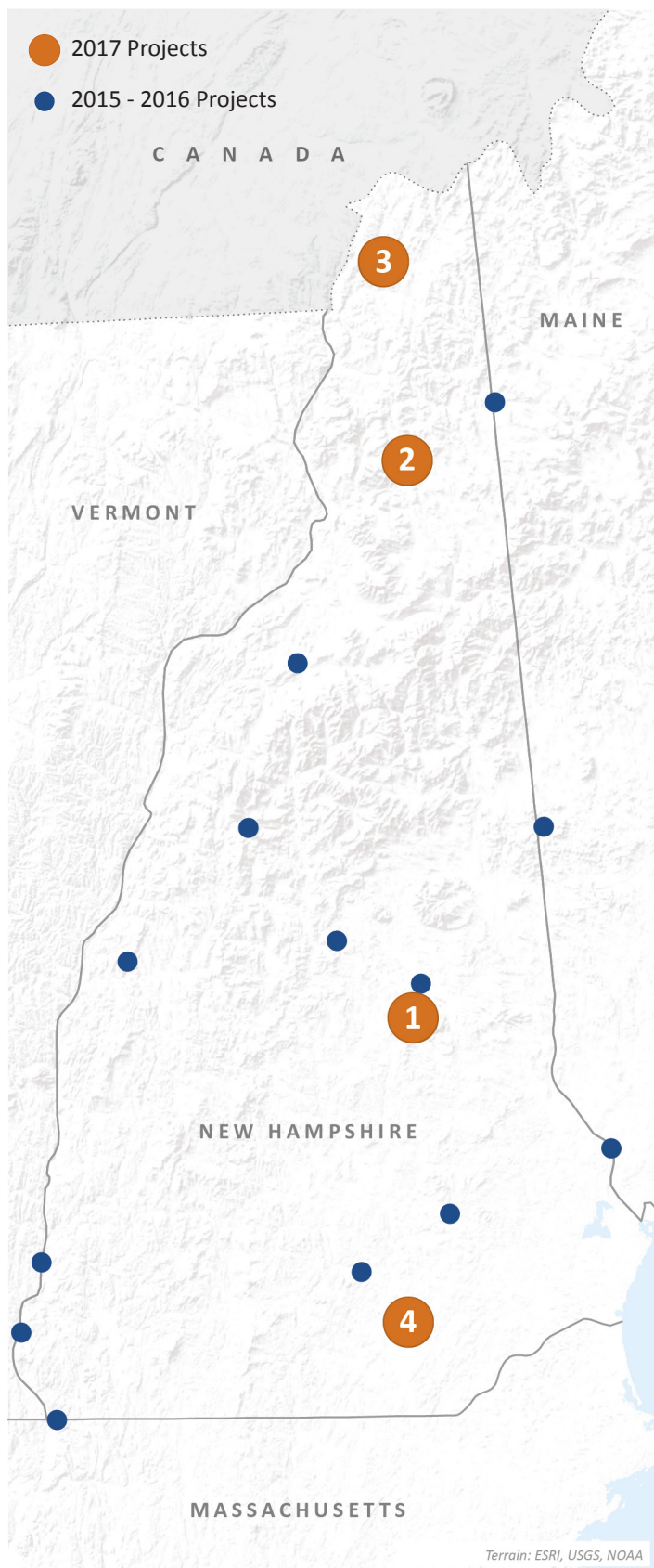
The *Belknap County Conservation District* will restore instream habitat structure, based on a previously funded revision of the management plan, to re-establish natural stream conditions and create pools and spawning habitat for Eastern brook trout on Poorfarm Brook in the Gunstock Recreation Area near Gilford, New Hampshire. The Gunstock Recreation Area was constructed by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. An adjacent parcel of land was added in the 1990s that expanded the area to 2200 acres.

The project will install large woody material in 28 locations to restore 2 miles of historic habitat as a public demonstration of the effectiveness of the technique in sustaining populations of wild trout. Reducing the velocity of the stream during storm events will provide flood resilience and an opportunity for technology transfer during and following implementation. Additionally, interpretative signage and information materials will be installed at the Wetlands Walk.

2. Documenting Bicknell's Thrush Use of Commercial Young Forest for Lower Elevation Breeding (NH, ME)

Award	\$50,609
Eversource Funds	\$25,609
Grantee Match	\$51,905

The *Vermont Center for Ecostudies* will document how Bicknell's thrush, a songbird of high conservation concern, uses young forest habitat in managed commercial forest stands in New Hampshire and Maine, and identify the specific stand characteristics associated with occupancy during the breeding season. The primary threats to the species are habitat loss on the wintering and breeding ranges. The data collected for the project will determine the extent to which Bicknell's thrush uses unthinned stands of balsam fir regenerated after clearcutting on commercially managed forests at relatively low elevations. Current best management practices will be updated as appropriate to reflect the new information.





Post project celebration - Shepards River | Credit: Alex Abbott, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

3. Using Science-Based Forestry Practices to Target and Recruit Landowners in Key Watersheds (NH)

Award	\$102,942
Eversource Funds	\$14,842
Grantee Match	\$102,942

The *University of New Hampshire* will develop multiple forest management regimes to benefit priority forest birds, including wood thrush and the black-throated blue warbler, based on existing forest inventory data from the United State Forest Service and landowner-specific data from The Forestland Group, a large landowner with holdings of 150,000 acres in northern New Hampshire. The project will reach out to 252 landowners and will enable 82 landowners to implement the appropriate management practices to improve management on 1,000 acres of early successional forest habitat and 500 acres of late successional forest habitat.

4. Demonstrating the Efficacy of Young Forest Restoration for New England Cottontail and Important Bird Species (NH, CT, ME)

Award	\$174,838
Eversource Funds	\$114,838
Grantee Match	\$174,874

The *University of New Hampshire* will document for the first time population level response of New England cottontails and other young-forest-dependent species to previous and planned early successional forest habitat management activities in Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maine. This project provides the quantitative approach needed to assess New England cottontail population response to early successional forest management. It fills critical conservation gaps since there is no mechanism for demonstrating outcomes of ongoing restoration. The project will utilize a capture-recapture population estimate combined with a pellet survey on thirty sites totaling 482 acres that have undergone recent restoration of early successional habitat and will develop a landscape scale model to predict future abundance on 28,800 acres of restored habitat.



Eastern brook trout



North Branch Oliverian Brook Fish Passage: Before
Credit: Connecticut River Conservancy



North Branch Oliverian Brook Fish Passage: After
Credit: Connecticut River Watershed Council

**FEATURE STORY: OLIVERIAN BROOK,
CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL (CRWC)
Local Brook Trout Population Sees Huge
Results Less Than a Year After Restoration Project**

Reported by Kate Jamison for North Country News

"As a river steward with the Connecticut River Conservancy, Ron Rhodes led the way to replace two aging culverts on a tributary to the Connecticut River in Haverhill, New Hampshire with alternatives friendlier to fish passage. Without the ability to pass along these waterways, fish species like brook trout have seen declining populations over the years.

In 2016, Rhodes was the project manager for two different restoration projects on the North Branch of Oliverian Brook; one at Page Road and one at Stonecrest Drive. He worked with the town government to secure removal and replacement of the aging culverts, which were limiting water and sediment

flow. These restoration projects, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's New England Forests and Rivers Fund, opened a full 22 miles of stream for fish passage.

Jo Lacaillade, the town manager for Haverhill, said the restoration project helped to prevent flooding during a severe storm earlier this summer. "It's an improvement in many ways," Lacaillade said. "During a heavy storm we experienced in July, the new bridge that they put in helped beautifully. Ron Rhodes was great to work with and kept us informed." Haverhill, New Hampshire and other parts of the Upper Valley experienced flash flooding that did over \$1 million in damage to the town. The water levels on Oliverian Brook rose to reach and slightly overtop the new bridge at Page Road, but the new bridge held strong against the current. The Connecticut River separates 53 communities in New Hampshire and Vermont for 271 miles before crossing the border into Massachusetts. It is an essential fresh water resource for all of New England."