



NFWF

EVERSOURCE

Enhancing Habitat for Early Successional Species

NFWF CONTACT

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ABOUT EVERSOURCE

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**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,
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BACKGROUND

Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife is a new partnership between Eversource and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests and rivers in New Hampshire. In February 2015, the partnership announced the award of grants supporting new conservation projects, including one to enhance habitat for early successional species.



New England cottontail | Credit: USFWS

PROJECT FACTS: ENHANCING HABITAT FOR EARLY SUCCESSIONAL SPECIES

Grantee: Wildlife Management Institute (WMI)
Grant Amount: \$50,000
Matching Contributions: \$150,000
Total Conservation Investment: \$200,000
Project Period: Spring 2015

Key Partners: New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the Town of Londonderry, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Establish at least 30 acres of early successional habitat through two pilot projects on sites in the Town of Londonderry and on the Bellamy River Wildlife Management Area that are part of a larger effort to restore populations of American woodcock, golden-winged warbler, and other species dependent on early successional habitat. Project will engage local volunteers to provide additional habitat for New England cottontail and avian species with similar habitat needs, including brown thrasher, common yellowthroat, willow flycatcher, and white-throated sparrow.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Restore additional acres of early successional habitat at Bellamy River WMA through selective herbicide application and planting of shrub seedlings.
- Select potential sites in the Town of Londonderry to improve early successional habitat. Methods include selective timber harvest for regeneration and brontosaurus mowing for maintenance and enhancement of existing habitat.
- Provide educational materials at the site next to Londonderry High School and Middle School through leverage from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Schoolyard Habitat program.

INTENDED PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Restore an additional 10 acres of early successional habitat at Bellamy River WMA with pre-treatment through selective herbicide application and planting of 20,000 shrub seedlings.
- Select two of four potential sites in the Town of Londonderry to improve at least 20 acres of early successional habitat. Methods include selective timber harvest for regeneration and brontosaurus mowing for maintenance and enhancement of existing habitat.
- Provide educational materials, including kiosks and recreational trails, at the site adjacent to Londonderry High School and Middle School through leverage from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Schoolyard Habitat program.



Eastern Brook Trout Aquatic Organism Passage

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Eastern brook trout | Credit: USFWS

PROJECT FACTS: EASTERN BROOK TROUT AQUATIC ORGANISM PASSAGE

Grantee . . . Connecticut River Watershed Council, Inc.
Grant Amount \$50,050
Matching Contributions \$130,000
Total Conservation Investment \$180,050
Project Period Jan. 1, 2015 through Dec. 31, 2016

Key Partners: Trout Unlimited, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and the Town of Haverhill

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will use natural stream simulation design techniques to replace barriers to fish passage in an eastern brook trout watershed whose tributaries flow off of the White Mountain National Forest and into the Connecticut River watershed. Project will identify and prioritize priority projects within the Oliverian Brook watershed, including the North Branch and Titus Brook tributaries in the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Use natural stream simulation design techniques to replace barriers to fish passage in the Oliverian Brook watershed, a priority restoration site of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture.
- Identify and prioritize priority projects within the watershed that will improve the overall health of eastern brook trout populations.
- CRWC will further identify and prioritize projects within the Oliverian Brook watershed based on its initial findings and assessments. CRWC will solicit towns and individual landowners for project participation and ultimately implementation.
- Remove, replace or retrofit undersized, perched or impassable culverts, restoring channel geomorphology as needed, and planting stream banks to restore riparian habitat and reduce erosion.

INTENDED PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Increase the quality and quantity of aquatic habitats by replacing stream crossings in select tributaries of Oliverian Brook.
- The Page Road/North Branch culvert replacement project will result in the removal of two fish barriers (e.g. perched culverts), and reopen to fish passage 10 miles of stream, as well as 20 miles of interconnected tributaries.
- CRWC’s survey and outreach work on the other 17 culverts identified will cover about 25 acres of this watershed and reach an estimated 50 people.



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Grant Highlight: New England Cottontail

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INITIATIVE DETAILS

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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: RESTORING YOUNG FORESTS TO BENEFIT NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL AND AMERICAN WOODCOCK (NH)

Grantee:	Wildlife Management Institute
Key Partners:	Wagner Forest Management and Plum Creek Timber Company
Project Location:	Throughout the State of New Hampshire
Project Period:	September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2017
Eversource Funds:	\$100,000
NFWF Federal Funds:	\$100,000
Grantee Matching Funds:	\$200,000
Total Project:	\$400,000

Promote and implement young forest management activities on private land in northern and southern New Hampshire, to benefit a suite of species, including New England cottontail and American woodcock. Provide technical assistance on private lands owned by Wagner Woodlands and Plum Creek Timberlands to create new management plans and implement improved management practices.



Credit: USFWS

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Utilize habitat best management practices (BMPs) that have been previously developed for American woodcock and New England cottontail to increase the amount of suitable habitat. Feature BMPs on habitat demonstration areas.
- Provide technical assistance to public and private landowners to identify and implement habitat management projects.
- Implement three projects on Wagner Woodlands lands to benefit American woodcock and identify five additional projects with private, municipal, state and federal lands partners.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Increase early successional forest habitat by 140 acres.
- Conduct forest management on 21.8 acres to add to existing field shrub edges and riparian vegetation at the Bartlett Brook Wildlife Management Area.
- Create three roosting fields totaling about 15 acres for American woodcock.



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Grant Highlight: Bicknell's Thrush

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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: MAPPING ABUNDANCE AND ESTIMATING POPULATION SIZE OF BICKNELL'S THRUSH (ME, NH, VT)

Grantee:	Vermont Center for Ecostudies
Key Partners:	University of Massachusetts Landscape Ecology Lab
Project Location:	High-Elevation Forests in New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont
Project Period:	June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2017
Eversource Funds:	\$35,000
NFWF Federal Funds:	\$43,588
Grantee Matching Funds:	\$128,255
Total Project:	\$206,843

Produce two spatially explicit estimates of abundance and population size of Bicknell's



Credit: Kent McFarland

thrush to predict how abundance, population size, and distribution may change in response to forest succession and disturbance events. Fill critical information gaps identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the International Bicknell's Thrush Conservation Group. Results will help identify priority habitat areas for future conservation.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Generate spatially explicit estimates of abundance of Bicknell's thrush.
- Estimate population size of Bicknell's thrush in the United States in each year from 2011-2016.
- Predict future distribution and population size of Bicknell's thrush and other montane-forest birds under different scenarios of climate and landscape change using the UMass Landscape Ecology Lab's Designing Sustainable Landscapes modeling framework.
- Evaluate progress on goals established in the Bicknell's Thrush Conservation Action Plan.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Improved ability for the Fish and Wildlife Service to make informed decisions about the status of Bicknell's thrush.
- Recruitment of 100 volunteers and monitoring of 650 stream and forest sites.
- Identify priority areas most able to provide sustainable high-elevation habitat.



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Grant Highlight: Outreach and Assistance

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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR LIMITED RESOURCE LANDOWNERS IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED (MA, NH, VT)

Grantee:	Connecticut River Watershed Council
Key Partners:	New Hampshire Fish and Game, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Project Location:.....	Connecticut River Watersheds of MA, NH and VT
Project Period:.....	August 1, 2015 to August 1, 2017
Eversource Funds:.....	\$25,000
NFWF Federal Funds:.....	\$39,540
Grantee Matching Funds:.....	\$70,000
Total Project:	\$134,540



Credit: Connecticut River Watershed Council

Provide technical and financial assistance to at least six private landowners unable to meet cost-share requirements for improving riparian and instream habitats on their land. Target priority watersheds with high potential for sediment and nutrient loading reductions and implement habitat best management practices to restore riparian and instream habitat and meet the goals of Long Island Sound Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Increase on-the-ground priority conservation projects by eliminating financial roadblocks on private working lands and leveraging public resources and private philanthropy.
- Establish effective working relationships with owners of working lands that will produce designed and implemented projects.
- Employ practices that include riparian buffer plantings with native trees and shrubs, root wad and bioengineering bank stabilization, and instream habitat creation and enhancement.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Design, permit and implement two projects in each state to restore riparian and instream habitat.
- Restore 6 miles of stream by creating instream habitat for eastern brook trout.
- Enhance water quality in 12 miles of stream through implementation of erosion control best practices.



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Grant Highlight: Stewardship And Restoration

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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: THE STEWARDSHIP NETWORK: NEW ENGLAND - MOBILIZING VOLUNTEERS FOR FOREST AND RIPARIAN HABITAT RESTORATION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Grantee:	University of New Hampshire
Key Partners:	University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
Project Location:	State of New Hampshire
Project Period:	December 1, 2015 to November 30, 2017
Eversource Funds:	\$50,000
NFWF Federal Funds:	\$50,000
Grantee Matching Funds:	\$100,000
Total Project:	\$200,000



Credit: Malin Clyde

Increase the capacity of local conservation organizations, public agencies and local communities to work with volunteers on conservation of New Hampshire’s lands and waters. Provide technical assistance and training in volunteer management on at least 15 habitat restoration projects and three citizen science projects in three

focus areas, including habitat restoration for forest and riparian species in greatest need of conservation, innovative approaches for invasive plant removal, and citizen science programs.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Provide technical assistance and training about working with volunteers to implement habitat restoration projects that benefit species in greatest need of conservation.
- Provide technical assistance to citizen science projects on wildlife and/or water quality.
- Deploy new marketing strategies to increase participation in the Stewardship Network.
- Implement technology upgrades to a web-based portal to enhance volunteer recruitment.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Engage 300 volunteers in habitat restoration projects in three different counties.
- Conduct volunteer citizen science surveys on at least 250 acres of private land.
- Increase volunteer subscriptions to the Stewardship Network by 20 percent.
- Improve search functioning for events (by geography and topic), and better facilitate social media sharing of events.



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Grant Highlight: Riparian Forest Buffers

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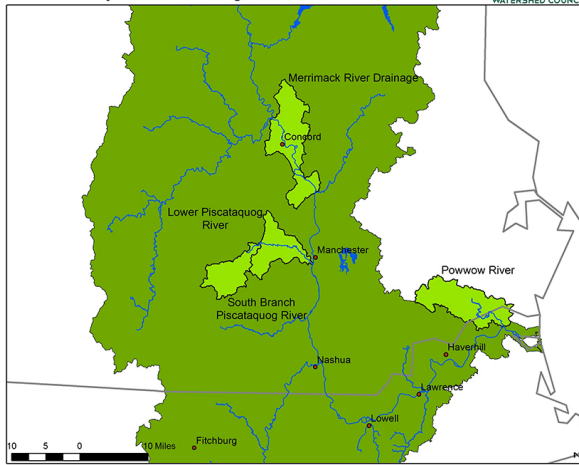
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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: EXPANDING RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFERS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY USING A PRECISION STORMWATER APPROACH (MA, NH)

Grantee:Merrimack River Watershed Council
Key Partners: University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
Project Location:..... Hillsborough, Merrimack and Rockingham counties
in New Hampshire and Essex County in Massachusetts
Project Period:.....August 1, 2015 to July 31, 2017
Eversource Funds:.....\$37,576
NFWF Federal Funds:.....\$66,395
Grantee Matching Funds:..... \$124,446

Total Project:.....\$228,417

MRWC Project Area - 4 Targeted HUC12s



Credit: Merrimack River Watershed Council

Restore streamside forest buffers in four targeted New Hampshire and Massachusetts sub-watersheds of the Merrimack River to improve water quality and habitat for eastern brook trout and other aquatic species. Provide training and technical assistance to landowners and municipalities, resulting in the planting of mixed native seedlings on demonstration sites.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Reach out to interested towns and private landowners about restoring or protecting streamside buffers that are most likely to improve water

quality and benefit wildlife.

- Implement forest stewardship plans that improve streamside forest buffers through outreach to stakeholders.
- Train private foresters and municipal officials in forested buffer restoration best practices.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Better manage 1,000 acres of private and municipal forest added to the state Forest Stewardship Program within the riparian buffers of four targeted sub-watersheds.
- Create 20 forest stewardship plans and demonstrate best management practices to 27 towns and 60 landowners.
- Restore one-half mile of riparian buffer, spread over nine demonstration sites, using 10 volunteers to plant 1,500 saplings.



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Grant Highlight: Stream Barrier Assessment

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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: ASSESSING FISH BARRIER PRIORITY MODIFICATIONS IN SELECTED CONNECTICUT RIVER TRIBUTARIES (MA, NH, VT)

Grantee:	American Rivers
Key Partners: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game	
Project Location:	Tributaries of the Connecticut River in MA, NH and VT
Project Period:	September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2017
Eversource Funds:	\$21,000
NFWF Federal Funds:	\$29,324
Grantee Matching Funds:	\$53,000
Total Project:	\$103,324



Credit: Amy Singler, American Rivers

Identify priorities to remove barriers to fish passage and provide engineering designs for selected projects in Connecticut River tributaries. Conduct landowner outreach and complete preliminary engineering studies to advance up to six barrier removals that will, when implemented, restore access to critical upstream habitat for native eastern brook trout, river herring and Atlantic salmon.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Identify priority fish barrier removal opportunities using the Northeast Connectivity Assessment Tool (NCAT), which provides regional information to allow strategic selection of projects most likely to produce ecological benefits.
- Complete preliminary designs for priority barrier removal projects within the Connecticut River watershed tributaries with a focus in New Hampshire.
- Offer the preliminary designs to owners of fish barriers as an incentive to complete the removal or replacement of the barrier.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Complete preliminary designs for six barrier removal projects that include potential sediment issues, infrastructure risks, species impacts, and a construction cost estimate.
- Reach out to at least 12 landowners to gauge willingness to remove a barrier.
- Facilitate barrier removals that ultimately will restore access to more than 60 miles of upstream habitat for eastern brook trout, river herring, Atlantic salmon and other fish.



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Grant Highlight: Culvert Replacement

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GRANT HIGHLIGHT: RESTORING CONNECTIVITY THROUGH FISH BARRIER MODIFICATIONS ON OLIVERIAN BROOK (NH)

Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council
Key Partners: Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire Fish and Game
Project Location: Stonecrest Drive, Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire
Project Period: August 1, 2015 to August 1, 2017
Eversource Funds: \$65,000
Grantee Matching Funds: \$65,000
Total Project: \$130,000



Credit: Connecticut River Watershed Council

The Connecticut River Watershed Council will replace an undersized, perched culvert on Oliverian Brook in Haverhill, New Hampshire by providing design, engineering and permitting assistance. Project will open and connect stream and riparian buffer habitat to benefit eastern brook trout and other aquatic species in a sub-watershed identified as high priority by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Provide design, engineering and permitting assistance to replace an undersized and perched culvert that restricts access to upstream habitat for eastern brook trout.
- Recruit three volunteers to assist in implementation.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Increase habitat connectivity for eastern brook trout in a high priority Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture watershed.
- Reconnect and improve .25 miles of habitat for eastern brook trout, as well as increase flood resiliency.