



NFWF

EVERSOURCE

## Partners for NH Fish and Wildlife 2017 Grant Slate

### NFWF CONTACTS

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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](http://www.nfwf.org)

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire

### OVERVIEW

Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife is a partnership between Eversource and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests and rivers in New Hampshire.

The partnership invests in on-the-ground restoration projects and applied science in order to:

- Strengthen the health of forest systems by improving the management of public and private forestlands and by creating a mosaic of mixed age forests
- Promote working forests that are integral to local economies and ecosystems
- Improve the quality of cold-water river and stream systems through targeted riparian and stream restoration
- Reduce barriers to fish passage and increase access of fish to high-quality, cold-water habitat
- Enhance biodiversity of forest and river systems and increase populations of species such as New England cottontail, American woodcock, Bicknell's thrush and eastern brook trout
- Create and sustain vital habitat for diverse native freshwater fish and bird populations in New Hampshire

Through Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife, NFWF and Eversource work 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.

*(continued)*

### Demonstrating Efficacy of Young Forest Restoration for New England Cottontail and Birds (CT, ME, NH)

Grantee: University of New Hampshire

NFWF Award Amount: ..... \$174,838

Matching Funds: ..... \$174,874

**Total Project: ..... \$349,712**

For the first time, the University of New Hampshire will document the population level response of New England cottontails and other young forest-dependent species for 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. Since 2008, this project has aimed to create, restore and protect early successional forest for New England cottontail and other shrubland-dependent species, in order to reduce key threats to these species, and increase populations of keystone species; including golden-winged warbler, American woodcock and New England cottontail.

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 28,800 acres of restored habitat.

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

Grantee: University of New Hampshire

NFWF Award Amount: ..... \$102,942

Matching Funds: ..... \$102,942

**Total Project: ..... \$205,884**

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 U.S. Forest Service and landowner-specific data from The Forestland Group, a large landowner in northern New Hampshire.

More than one third of New Hampshire's forests are understocked and in a potentially degraded condition. An understocked condition means that the forests do not contain sufficient stocking of current or potential future sawlog trees, of preferred or secondary commercial species, to be able to fully utilize the growing space of the site even following 10 years' growth.



New England Cottontail

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.

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

Grantee: Belknap County Conservation District

NFWF Award Amount: ..... \$55,730

Matching Funds: ..... \$56,400

**Total Project: ..... \$112,130**

The Belknap County Conservation District will restore instream habitat structure that will reestablish 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 2,200 acres. Stream channels that were previously straightened for fast water removal — which resulted in stripped and transported sediment to the pond — were returned to more natural channels, and wetlands were restored. Two new sediment trapping areas were established, and pond edge buffer areas were improved through planting blooming native plants to also encourage pollinators.

The project will install large woody material in 28 locations to restore two miles of historic habitat to be





Eastern brook trout

used 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 provide an opportunity for technology transfer during and following implementation. Interpretative signage and information materials will be installed at the Wetlands Walk.

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

Grantee: Vermont Center for Ecostudies

NFWF Award Amount: .....\$50,609

Matching Funds: .....\$51,905

**Total Project: .....\$102,514**

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies will document how Bicknell's thrush 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.

Bicknell's thrush is a songbird of high conservation concern. The primary threat to the species is habitat loss on the wintering and breeding ranges. Core breeding habitat for the species consists of naturally disturbed stands of balsam fir on mountain tops of the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada. Research in Canada, however, has revealed that breeding populations also occur at relatively low elevations in dense, unthinned stands of balsam fir that regenerate after clearcutting. No comprehensive, extensive surveys have been conducted for this species outside of its traditional high-elevation habitat.

The project will use the data to revise and update the existing best management practices in forests managed for production of timber and pulpwood. 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 to appropriately reflect the new information.