

INTO THE WOODS

NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION | SPRING 2020

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Dear Members and Friends,

Climate change is in the news every day and it makes me channel Winston Churchill and adapt his famous quote on Russia at the beginning of World War II:

"I cannot forecast to you what climate change will eventually mean to us. It is an emergency wrapped in a crisis inside an existential threat: but perhaps there is a key. That key is our forests."

The emergency is that we have no more than 10–12 years left to act decisively in order to keep the average global temperature increase below 1.5 degrees Celsius; after that, things can get really bad. **The crisis** will manifest as rising seas, increasingly damaging weather and fire, and perhaps the final spark for the next great planetary extinction of biodiversity. **The existential threat** is... well, maybe Larry Kramer, President of Hewlett Foundation, put it best in the latest issue of *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* magazine. He asserts that all grant makers should dedicate some significant portion of their funding to mitigating climate change because, "Simply put, if we fail on climate, we fail on everything." And finally, **the key** is for New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) to stay focused on our core historic mission of excellence in forestry and ask what can we do to play a role in mitigating climate change. As I look through the items in this issue of *Into the Woods*, I can see the answers bubbling up through our dedicated staff and Board members' hard work.

We are keeping track of wild animals on our properties and anticipating their needs in a warming climate. Recently, Alec Giffen, Carla Fenner, and Jennifer Shakun convened a first meeting at Prouty Woods of 20 distinguished forestry professionals. Our goal is to tap their vast experience to craft a set of Exemplary Forestry™ standards that can protect wildlife and sequester carbon in southern New England forest types. These standards will complete a matched regional set when they join the Acadian Forest standards we produced several years ago for northern New England.

Frank Lowenstein and Jen Shakun continue to drive forward our efforts in our Build It With Wood initiative. In this issue, we report that the news about mass timber is exploding. The experts are saying the wood revolution is upon us as building codes change to accept this groundbreaking approach to tall building construction. Carla Fenner and Alec Giffen are leading our scientific investigation and we will soon have a first-of-its-kind full life cycle analysis to show how forests can simultaneously sequester carbon and provide wood for new buildings.

NEFF Community Forests like Deland Memorial Forest continue to provide us with the information and experience to give us the confidence we can bring climate solutions to market. Chris Pryor has been guiding our forest management and collecting data, and can now show historical proof we can grow and harvest a great deal of wood products and wind up decades later with more trees, more volume and more sequestered carbon than when we began.

Finally, several years of research and outreach has paid off for Lisa Hayden and her MassConn landowner outreach pilot. Her challenge was to improve the way we communicate to landowners and then export her ideas to other practitioners. Her final report is a detailed review of how we improved landowner response by a factor of four. Before we can describe better forestry and implement it on private lands to achieve climate benefits, we first have to communicate with the people who own the land. Now, thanks to Lisa and her partners in MassConn, we know we can. Lisa is working with Sophie Traficonte and Christine Parrish to apply the lessons we've learned to advancing our Pooled Timber Income Fund and our Western Maine Bid Process, both of which aim to accelerate the pace of land conservation.

NEFF is rising to meet the climate challenge. This is just a snapshot of the different projects ongoing at NEFF, and a sample of the work of our dedicated staff. Thank you so much for your support that allows us to play these important roles.

Robert Perschel, Executive Director

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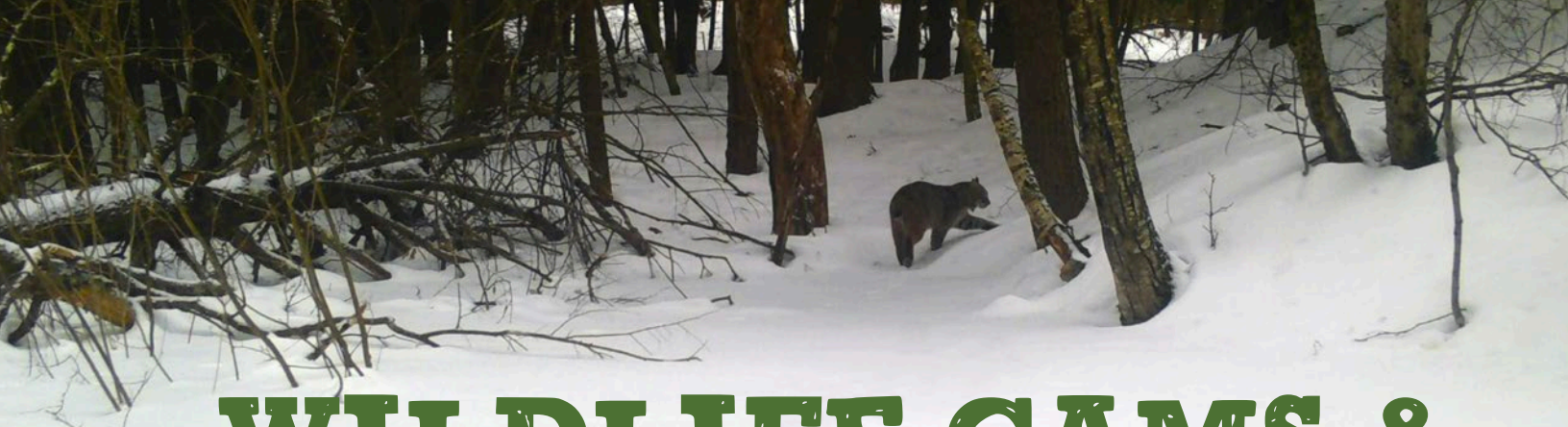


Save the Date!

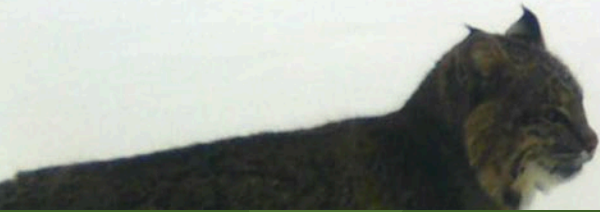
NEFF's Annual Meeting, a celebration and luncheon at Prouty Woods, is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 13. Enjoy good food and company, listen to an engaging presentation, and go for a walk in the woods. Visit newenglandforestry.org/connect/events for more information and to register.

Front Cover: Bobcat sitting by birches. Photograph by Roger Irwin.
Right: Deland Memorial Forest.
Back Cover: Deland Memorial Forest.





WILDLIFE CAMS & CORRIDORS



WRITING BY Tinsley Hunsdorfer

In late January 2019, a pair of sleek Bobcats quietly made their way over snow-covered hills to a frozen pond in far northwestern Massachusetts. One cat paused on the ice, swiveling its head—tufted ears, ruffs and all—as it scanned its surroundings, while the other padded over the ice on sure feet and then wound its way back into the woods, occasionally turning to look back at its companion. After scoping out the area for a few more seconds, the Bobcat on the pond followed the other’s path into the woods as a few snowflakes fell from a gray sky.

Given how notoriously shy Bobcats are around humans, how do we know about this moment? NEFF holds a conservation restriction on Kevin and Nicole Knobloch’s forestland in Charlemont and Rowe, MA, and they and NEFF staff have been working together to place remote motion-activated wildlife cameras at key locations.

In just 45 seconds, this remote footage not only captured a wildlife interaction humans rarely witness in person, but also revealed interesting behavioral information. Bobcats are territorial and largely solitary—except during mating season, when male-female pairs travel together. Most mating takes place in February and March, meaning these particular cats were likely a newly formed breeding pair.

Kevin Knobloch grew up in a rural town that provided him with plenty of opportunities to run around in local woodlands as a child and then later hike in the mountains—which he calls his “natural habitat”—and he arrived at adulthood knowing he wanted to own forestland.

“When I was finally in a position to buy land, back in 2000, I rang up the inimitable Keith Ross at NEFF, who at the time served as Director of Land Protection,” Kevin said.

Keith, whose role is now filled by Will Brune, told Kevin he had seen just the thing: a strikingly beautiful 656-acre parcel in northwestern Massachusetts. Kevin purchased the forest that year, and then immediately took steps to protect it. He placed 608 acres under a NEFF conservation restriction in 2001, and an amendment is underway to fold another 41 acres into the restriction, leaving a few acres available for an eventual home along the road should his daughters choose to build one.

“I was very interested in the idea of permanently protecting this beautiful forest from the outset because that fits with my values of protecting wildlife habitat, water resources, and open

space, as well as spending time in the wild,” Kevin said. “I was impressed by how sensitive NEFF was to the concerns of landowners and how they were open to fashioning a conservation restriction that aligned with my goals.”

As they were growing up, Kevin’s daughters Tor and Molly loved camping and hiking—and often bushwhacking—on the land. When Kevin and Nicole started dating, one of the first things they did together was go camping at the property, complete with a bushwhacking-to-the-campsite experience.

“On one of our first trips out, we sat down for lunch and a black bear strolled by, entirely unaware of our presence,” said Nicole. “It was clear to us back then that this was a special place where wildlife could still live relatively unimpeded by humans.”

In March 2017, Nicole started working at NEFF as project leader for the Build It With Wood initiative, and concurrently began a Bullard Fellowship at Harvard Forest, where her research focused on large landscape conservation in heavily urbanized Massachusetts. She began thinking about how to

assemble a wildlife corridor that would include the Knobloch land, and started to research its habitat status.

NEFF Director of Forest Stewardship Chris Pryor introduced her to OLIVER, a Commonwealth of Massachusetts online mapping service and database that pulls from a variety of geographic information system (GIS) sources, including the state’s *BioMap2* report on biodiversity. Under the report, the Knoblochs’ property has been designated as Core Habitat, and plenty of nearby land received the same designation; unlike some nearby land, their property was further classified as part of a 2,900-acre Forest Core, a subset of Core Habitat that covers the 10 percent of Massachusetts’ forests that are most intact and least impacted by roads and development. According

It was clear to us that this was a special place where wildlife could still live relatively unimpeded by humans.

to the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, “Core Habitat identifies key areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of rare species and other Species of Conservation Concern, as well as a wide diversity of natural communities and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth.”*

Nicole and Kevin felt that between the state’s habitat designation, their property’s sizeable contiguous forestland, and their proximity to additional conserved land—including about 1,400 nearby acres in Rowe’s Pelham Lake Park, private land protected by Franklin Land Trust, and NEFF’s Carpenter Read Memorial Forest—the Knobloch parcel was well suited to being part of a wildlife corridor. They also concluded that helping expand the protected corridor around it was how they could best benefit local wildlife.

They both initially thought they would have to conduct direct outreach with nearby landowners to make progress on the corridor, but it turns out the local Franklin Land Trust is just as motivated to see a corridor come together, and is now coordinating with landowners like Kevin and Nicole while leading efforts in the area.

At about the same time Nicole and Kevin stepped up their plans for a wildlife corridor, they also picked up a fun and relevant new hobby: tracking wildlife on their land using remote video cameras.

NEFF Conservation Easement Manager Andrew Bentley came out to see the land that fall and noticed habitat features—including a type of high ridge animals use like a highway—that indicated the property likely saw frequent wildlife activity. He proposed installing remotely triggered cameras to discover which species were using the land and what behaviors they were engaging in.



* Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Department of Fish and Game, *BioMap2: Rowe maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town_core/Rowe.pdf*



CAM HIGHLIGHTS

Visit vimeo.com/newenglandforestry to view full video footage.



12:57 PM 01/29/19 16F

BOBCATS

Bobcats become more diurnal—active during daylight—in the fall and winter in response to changes in prey activity



02:32 PM 04/22/19 60F

BARRED OWL

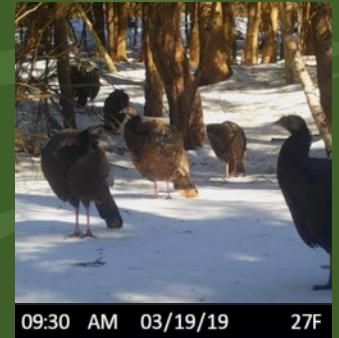
A series of videos shows a Barred Owl catching and eating prey over a four-day period



06:58 AM 09/22/19 59F

AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

A young bear investigates grasses and leaf litter



09:30 AM 03/19/19 27F

FLOCK OF WILD TURKEYS

Kevin and Nicole decided to purchase two Stealth Cam DS4K cameras for use on their property, and donated the equipment to NEFF.

During NEFF's annual visit to the Knobloch property in November 2018, Andrew and Kevin placed the cameras at a ridgetop pool and at a stream junction. Andrew first came back to check the cameras and download their footage in January 2019, and repeated the process in summer 2019 while also relocating one camera to a different stream. He then came back to remove them in October ahead of the hunting season.

These three batches of footage have included some real gems, and in total, have documented nine species: Eastern Moose, American Black Bear, Bobcat, Wild Turkey, Coyote, White-tailed Deer, North American Raccoon, North American Porcupine, and Barred Owl.

"Our favorites have included hilarious footage of a juvenile bear who seemed

All of this wildlife activity speaks to the quality and diversity of habitat types on the land, including sustainably managed forest, ridge lines, vernal pools, streams, and basins.

overjoyed to be rooting around in leaf litter, a column of three coyotes passing through, and a moose so big that its body didn't fully fit in the frame," said Kevin. "While we've had the privilege of crossing paths with a moose, black bear and turkey on our property over the years, this footage shows these amazing animals at their most relaxed in their habitat, and watching them is an immense joy."

The Knoblochs' land isn't just providing habitat to the larger animals that activate the remote cameras. Andrew Bentley is a knowledgeable birder, and he heard or saw the following birds on the Knobloch land during just one day

while visiting in June 2019: Blackburnian Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Wood Thrush, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Red-eyed Vireo and Scarlet Tanager. Some of these species depend on unfragmented forests and are at risk due to habitat loss and climate change.

All of this wildlife activity speaks to the quality and diversity of habitat types on the land, including sustainably managed forest, ridge lines, vernal pools, streams, and basins. During a NEFF visit, Andrew, Kevin, Nicole, and

ETHICS OF WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY



WHITE-TAILED DEER

A deer drinks from and eats near a ridgetop pool

NEFF Stewardship Associate Beth Gula even found a small evergreen swamp near the headwaters of a little stream on the property with a mix of hemlock and red spruce; these swamps are typically found only in the highest elevations in Massachusetts, and can serve as vernal pools and are often used by large mammals like moose.

"In southern New England, it's rare to have such a large, contiguous forestland with unusual features conducive to biodiversity and wildlife," Nicole said. "We feel a special responsibility to the land to keep it that way."

By preserving such high-value habitat, the Knoblochs have provided the refuge and resources wildlife populations need to thrive throughout their lifecycle—breeding Bobcats have different needs than individual adults, for example—and their property's impact will only grow as the corridor around it expands. 🌿

Photographing and filming wildlife is a popular and engaging hobby, but the welfare of animals and their habitat is more important than getting the perfect shot.

Selections from "Audubon's Guide to Ethical Bird Photography"

The National Audubon Society has compiled a guide to ethical bird photography, and while it's tailored to one subset of the animal kingdom, the guide's key concepts provide a good starting point for many wild animal species. You can read the full guide at audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography

REMOTE TECHNOLOGY

- Be cautious with remotely triggered cameras. Setting a trap around a fresh kill or cache is generally acceptable, but supplying bait or other lure in order to attract an animal is not acceptable. Never use direct flash, which may temporarily blind owls; a flash with a filter that lets only infrared light through is acceptable.
- Do not use drones to photograph birds, especially at their nests. Although drones can be useful when working with researchers and biologists to document bird populations for science (such as island nesting colonies), drones in general can be very disruptive to birds. They are also illegal in national parks and some state parks.

IN-PERSON PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

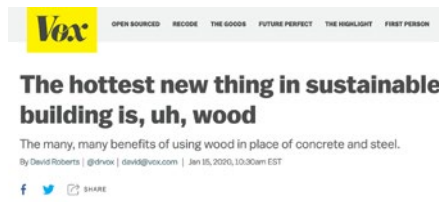
- Use a telephoto lens and maintain enough distance to allow your subject to behave naturally. Blinds offer a great way to watch and photograph birds without disturbance.
- Never advance on birds with the intention of making them fly, whether they are lone birds or flocks of birds. This disrupts natural processes such as resting, foraging, or hunting, and causes them to expend energy unnecessarily.
- Concern for birds' habitat is also essential. Be aware and respectful of your surroundings. Avoid trampling sensitive vegetation or disturbing other wildlife.
- If your approach causes a bird to flush (fly or run away) or change its behavior, you're too close. Some birds may "freeze" in place rather than flying away, or may hunch into a protective, aggressive, or pre-flight stance. Watch for changes in posture indicating that the birds are stressed, and if you see these, back away.
- Never lure birds (including but not limited to hawks, owls, eagles, ospreys, roadrunners) with bait. "Bait" includes live animals (such as snakes, fish, mice, crickets, worms); dead animals or parts of animals; processed meat; and decoys such as fake mice. Baiting can change the behavior of these predatory birds in ways that are harmful for them.

Our thanks to Audubon for making this resource available to the public, and to Sally Naser of The Trustees of Reservations and NEFF's own Andrew Bentley for providing advice and resources about trail cams.

MASS TIMBER'S BREAKTHROUGH

WRITING BY Frank Lowenstein

It's looking like 2020 is going to be the year mass timber breaks into the mainstream. Here are five articles out since the new year that look at different aspects of the mass timber construction movement, as well as two articles from last year where NEFF had a major imprimatur.



HIP!

What happens when one of the world's most famous climate writers turns his eye to wood buildings? This spectacularly detailed look into the climate potential of plyscrapers and other forms of mass timber construction. Dave Roberts, now also known as Dr. Vox, takes a hip look at the field, and explains how mass timber helps hold back climate change.

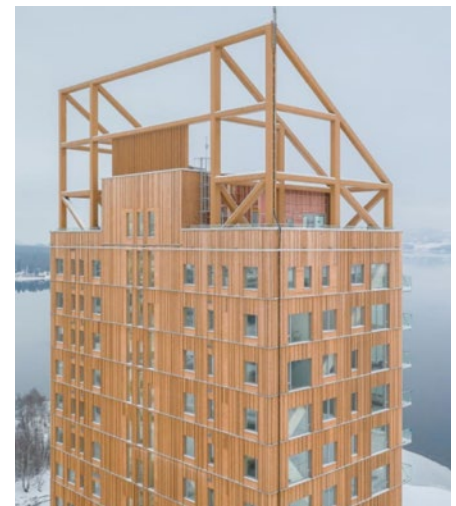
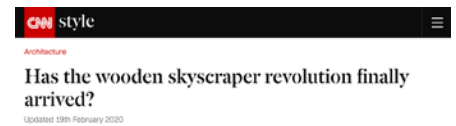
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BIG!

North America is giving Scandinavia a run for its money in the tallest wood building race. First the Treet apartment building in Bergen, Norway, seized the world record at 14 stories. Then the Brock Commons dormitory at the University of British Columbia in Canada jumped ahead at 18. Norway rushed back with the 18 story, but taller, Mjostarnet. Now the United States enters the competition with a 25-story whopper, the Ascent building in Milwaukee, WI, with plans to break ground this spring.

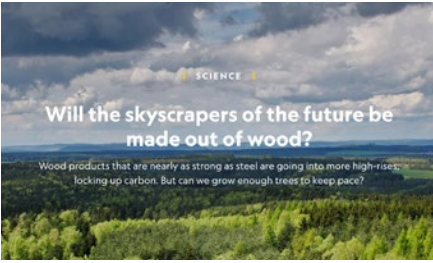
[cbs58.com/news/tallest-timber-tower-in-the-world-to-break-ground-in-milwaukee-this-spring](https://www.cbs58.com/news/tallest-timber-tower-in-the-world-to-break-ground-in-milwaukee-this-spring)



REVOLUTIONARY!

CNN's recent coverage of wood buildings focuses on how their construction cost keeps coming down, putting them on the verge of being cheaper than steel and concrete—a tipping point that looks likely to send towers soaring to over 900 feet above London and more than 1,000 above Tokyo.

[cnn.com/style/article/wooden-skyscraper-revolution-timber/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/style/article/wooden-skyscraper-revolution-timber/index.html)



FROM THE FOREST!

Compared to articles with similar topics, recent coverage from *National Geographic* of mass timber includes more discussion of where the wood will come from, and focuses particularly on rising climate-driven mortality in forests that affects how forests must be managed to produce wood sustainably. The main point of the article: diverse forests are more resilient. New England's forests are remarkably diverse and much less fragile than some more diverse forests like tropical rain forests. When managed according to NEFF's Exemplary Forestry™ standards, they can produce high-quality wood, great wildlife habitat, and still store more carbon on the land.

nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/01/skyscrapers-of-the-future-will-be-made-out-of-wood

Design / Green Architecture

It's wood. It's Passive House. It's the "Goldilocks density."

Lloyd Alter [@lloydalter](#)
February 18, 2020

[f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [m](#)



BOSTON!

Boston features prominently in the mass timber news of the day, with the announcement of the first major cross-laminated timber building in Boston—a five-story apartment house in Roxbury. The building will be net zero energy and net zero carbon, demonstrating how wood can play a key role in fighting climate change.

treehugger.com/green-architecture/its-wood-its-passive-house-its-goldilocks-density.html

Climate Solutions

Forget the log cabin. Wood buildings are climbing skyward — with pluses for the planet.

"Mass timber" construction is gaining ground, although not all environmentalists agree on its potential for slowing climate change.



TO THE COMPUTER!

Computers play a vital role in the wood building revolution, with computer-controlled cutting creating precision openings for windows, doors, pipes, and wires. So, it's especially appropriate that Microsoft is building a huge new campus out of cross-laminated timber. This December 2019 article from *The Washington Post* touches on the Microsoft campus, and also quotes NEFF Executive Director Bob Perschel.

washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2019/12/12/forget-log-cabin-wood-buildings-are-climbing-skyward-with-pluses-planet

The New York Times

Opinion

Let's Fill Our Cities With Taller, Wooden Buildings

Trees are some of our best allies in solving the climate crisis.

By Frank Lowenstein, Brian Donahue and David Foster

Mr. Lowenstein is the chief conservation officer of the New England Forestry Foundation. Mr. Donahue is an associate professor at Brandeis University. Mr. Foster is the director of the Harvard Forest and the president of the Highstead Foundation.

Oct. 3, 2019



SOLVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS!

Mass timber can't do it alone, but it can be part of a coordinated strategy to use our world's forests to best advantage. NEFF's Chief Conservation Officer led the charge to publish this op-ed in *The New York Times* in fall 2019, advocating for a comprehensive approach: save forests, manage them better, and use the wood for long-lived products. Like buildings!

nytimes.com/2019/10/03/opinion/wood-buildings-architecture-cities.html

FEATURED COMMUNITY FOREST

DELAND MEMORIAL FOREST

WRITING BY Tinsley Hunsdorfer

Get to know a NEFF forest that specializes in a very large tree species—the Eastern White Pine, which can reach 150 feet in height—and habitat for a very small animal species, the imperiled and 15-inch long New England Cottontail.

Photo by Kari Post

LOCATION



Francestown /
Lyndeborough /
New Boston, NH

SIZE



882 acres

AMENITIES



Trails



Parking



Rivers & Streams

Stretched along the winding South Branch of the Piscataquog River, NEFF's Deland Memorial Forest has a lot to recommend it, from a wooded loop trail that provides hikers with beautiful water views and birdwatching opportunities, to a diverse combination of habitat types and a network of streams, rivers and wetlands.

What really makes Deland stand out, however, is how well white pine grows there, and that rare bunnies were once spotted—and may someday make a comeback—in the forest.

According to Deland's management plan, "The property is an excellent example of a well-managed, natural white pine stand on glacial sands, gravels and till."

Sandy, glacial outwash soils are a poor fit for agriculture, but are exactly what

white pine trees need. Pair these soils with Exemplary Forest™ management, and you've got a productive, healthy forestland that naturally favors white pine. In Deland, more than 2.7 million board feet of timber have been harvested since 2000, and about 85 percent of it was white pine.

These harvests conducted to Exemplary Forestry™ standards are part of what makes Deland Memorial Forest a good fit for New England Cottontails, as the rabbits are well-adapted to the habitat that forms after harvests.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "The New England cottontail prefers early successional forests, often called thickets, with thick and tangled vegetation. These young forests are generally less than 25 years old."* New England Cottontails are

CREATING DELAND MEMORIAL FOREST

In 1990, Susan Deland donated the Deland Memorial Forest to NEFF in memory of her husband, F. Stanton Deland. Mrs. Deland gave a conservation easement on the land to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF).

In 1994, Elizabeth Whitman generously donated 37 acres of abutting land in New Boston to the Deland Memorial Forest. In 1995, two abutting parcels were then purchased with major fundraising assistance from Mrs. Deland, SPNHF, New Hampshire Audubon, and the Piscataquog River Watershed Association. In 1997, Mrs. Deland protected an additional 256 acres with conservation easements. New Hampshire Audubon has also built a nature trail through part of Deland well-suited to viewing wildlife.

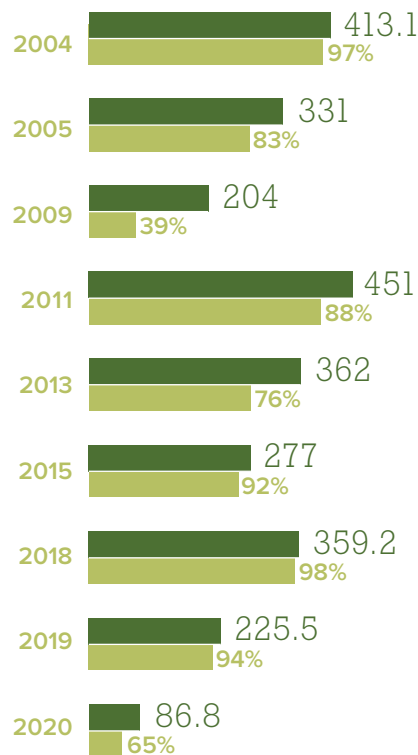
The remarkable cooperative effort that brought today's Deland Memorial Forest together is just part of NEFF's conservation impact in this area of south-central New Hampshire. NEFF's 551-acre Townes Memorial Forest is just a couple of miles down the road, an additional six small NEFF forests are within a 10-mile radius of Deland, and the nearby Town of Milford permanently protected two of its existing town forests by donating a 646-acre conservation easement to NEFF in 2019.



2,709
MBF
harvested since 2000

85%
White Pine

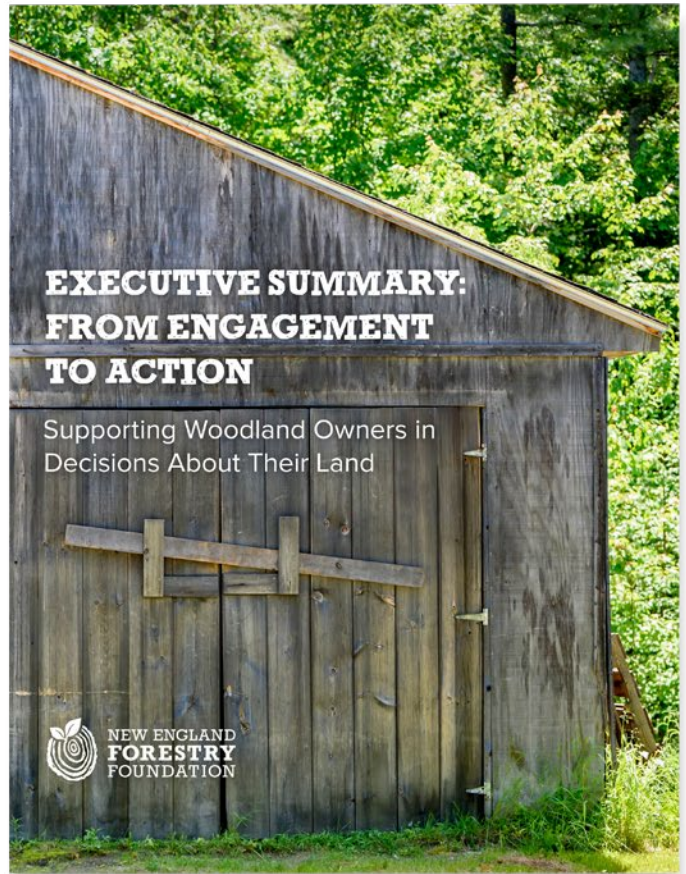
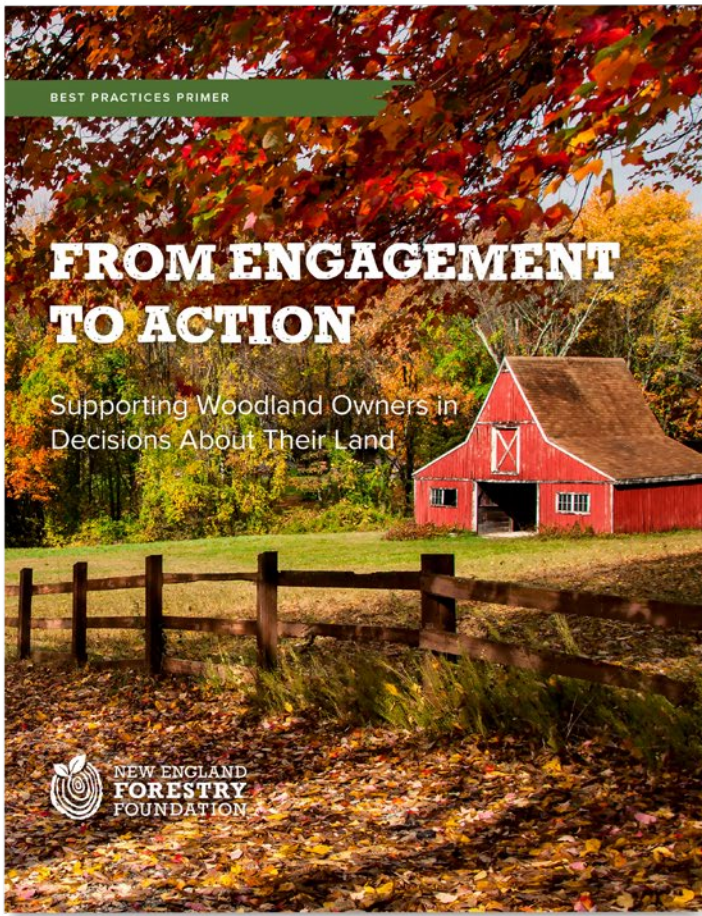
■ Total MBF (thousand board feet)
■ Percentage that is White Pine



in decline, and loss of this particular habitat type is the primary cause. Since 1960, the species' range has shrunk by 75 percent, and they are now listed as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

NEFF's current management plan for Deland, compiled by forester Dennis McKenney, makes the rabbits' habitat a top-level objective and records Dennis' last sighting of a New England Cottontail at the property:

"Management Objective 2: Protect, and if possible, enhance the habitat for rare or endangered species. This specifically includes the New England Cottontail. (My last sighting of a NEC was in compartment F in the brush along the river in 1983 +/-, Dennis D. McKenney, 11/19/2015)." 🌿



Best Practices Primer and Executive Summary

NEFF PUBLISHES TRA OUTREACH REPORT

Over the last five years, New England Forestry Foundation has learned a lot about how to reach private landowners. Collectively, 215,000 families with 10 or more acres of forest land own 11.7 million acres of New England. Their decisions will shape the future of New England’s forests, and they face myriad decisions of consequence:

Whether to manage their trees for wildlife habitat or for carbon storage;

Whether to hire a forester to guide timber harvests;

Whether to sub-divide their land;

Ultimately whether to work with NEFF, a local land trust, or a public agency to conserve their forest lands.

Since 2015, NEFF has been working to do something rare; we've tried a series of concerted, carefully planned and targeted social marketing campaigns to improve outreach to landowners, focusing on how the conservation community can best provide information to this critical audience. In late 2019, NEFF published a 60-page report detailing the lessons and best practices we've learned.

"From Engagement to Action: Supporting Woodland Owners in Decisions About Their Land," is available for download at [newenglandforestry.org/connect/publications](https://www.newenglandforestry.org/connect/publications). It provides recommendations to conservation and forestry practitioners, land trusts, and municipal agencies for scaling up landowner outreach. The recommendations should be particularly useful to the network of 44 Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCPs) that span New England. The report traces the on-the-ground

experience of a focused, long-term, multi-partner effort to track and test landowner outreach tactics in a high-priority landscape over time, including tools for messaging about forestry and climate change adaptation.

Most woodland owners love their land, and many worry about what will happen to their land in the future. Land trusts can help through proactive and strategic landowner outreach, focused particularly on places critical to maintaining the ecological function of our forests. Through successful outreach, the conservation community can engage with and support landowners so they are aware of their options for conservation and Exemplary Forestry whenever they are ready to make decisions.

To pilot strategies for these kinds of outreach, NEFF worked with American Forest Foundation (AFF)

and the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership (MassConn), a coalition of land trusts serving 38 towns on the Massachusetts-Connecticut border. Forest corridors still remain in the MassConn region, but development is encroaching on all sides from Worcester, Springfield, Providence and Hartford. The partners worked together to win grants, plan, implement and road test outreach and social marketing strategies to large-acreage landowners over a five-year period.

The MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative included a series of direct mail campaigns offering landowners information and free visits

Through successful outreach, the conservation community can engage with and support landowners so they are aware of their options for conservation and Exemplary Forestry whenever they are ready to make decisions.

July 2017 harvest hike at Opacum Land Trust's Morneau Farm, Dudley, MA. Photo by Lisa Hayden.



with land protection specialists and foresters with coordinated follow-up to responders. These periodic campaigns were paired with seasonal peer learning opportunities, such as woods walks hosted by landowners, estate planning forums, and workshops about funding programs.

Since 2016, NEFF and MassConn partners have won grants to incorporate climate change themes into outreach efforts by training foresters to provide tailored advice to woodland owners about how their parcel of land might be particularly affected. To date, the partners have completed 102 visits by trained foresters to the owners of

LANDOWNERS SHARE BARRIERS TO CONSERVATION

As part of the MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative, AFF and NEFF invited a small group of landowners to participate in a focus group—following a Stafford, CT estate planning forum—about how they viewed the process of planning for the future of their woodlands. The following comments were among those made by owners, who shared some of the barriers and challenges they faced in moving ahead with these decisions.

This feedback informed outreach to inspire owners to take steps to initiate their planning process, and to learn more through online resources such as AFF's MyLandPlan.org. NEFF's outreach report also identifies the need for streamlined access to estate planning professionals familiar with land conservation, training for practitioners to implement effective “peer-to-peer” landowner programs and funding sources to sustain these programs over the time-scale of landowner decisions.

DESIRE TO PROTECT LAND FROM DEVELOPMENT

“My goal is to keep the property open land, or at least get an easement ... so that it won't be developed. And I haven't done very much except worry about that.”

BALANCE PROVIDING FOR FAMILY WITH PROTECTING LAND

Many participants spoke of struggles in how to use their land to provide for their family while still protecting their special, unique land.

“Although I've thought about it, I haven't done anything about it... will I [be able to] satisfy the things that I want to support and still be able to be fair to the kids?”



MISALIGNMENT OF KIDS' AND PARENTS' VALUES

Parents tended to see their land as special, unique and an asset, but kids tended to see more the burden of land ownership (extra work, taxes, time, etc.).

“I think a lot of those intrinsic values... [my kids] somewhat internalize, so they see the farm as being something special. Yet they don't necessarily want to grab a shovel and a hoe and spend the rest of their life growing potatoes.”

FEAR OF MAKING A MISTAKE

Participants spoke frequently about the amount of information they need to make legacy planning decisions and while many felt motivated to make these decisions, they were afraid of doing something wrong.

“I've had a lot of conversations with each of my boys [about the land], but haven't done anything concrete to date, for fear of making a mistake.”

more than 7,700 combined acres in the MassConn Woods and are following up to support owners in applying for funding to adopt forest management plans and implement recommendations.

As demonstrated by the graphic on page 14, the MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative found patterns of repeated participation by individual landowners as they gradually learned more about the resources and funding programs available to them over the course of the project. Partners found that offering free information can be a useful gateway or stepping stone into the program, before offering a free visit with a forester or land trust representative. Meeting with an expert can be an intimidating step for owners who are less confident in their own knowledge or goals, so “information priming” is an approach to pave the way toward a visit.

A key theme of the report is the value of—and need for investment in—repeated opportunities for landowners to develop their own goals and interests for their land and to engage with other landowners

and professionals as they learn about their options for conservation or more active forest management.

The project also improved conservation planning and knowledge. During the project, MassConn received a grant to create a shared computerized map database that updated protected open space maps for the two-state region, adding some conservation easements that had never been tracked in past data layers. There were approximately 174,000 acres of protected open space in the MassConn region when that data was created in early 2016, and across the 38 towns, and more than 5,000 additional acres have been protected since then.

NEFF is using lessons from the MassConn Woods as we work with partners to apply similar tools across New England. We're also working with foundations and other conservation funders to encourage them to provide resources to land trusts for improved training for outreach practitioners, messaging and evaluation tools for conservation collaboratives, and long-term funding for the outreach staff needed to sustain outreach in high-priority landscapes. Sustained outreach is key to tripling the current pace of protection to achieve Harvard Forest's Wildlands and Woodlands Vision of conserving 30 million acres of forest by 2060.

WE VALUE YOUR SUPPORT

Last spring, New England Forestry Foundation kicked off its 75th year with a special celebration at our Annual Meeting. Throughout the year, our *Into The Woods* publications have reminisced about the people and places that frame NEFF's successful history. This success was only possible with generous support from you and others like you—NEFF's dedicated donors. We hope it was gratifying for you to see what has been accomplished with your help. It hasn't all been easy, but together, we're unstoppable!

As we embark on the next 75 years, your continued support is crucial as we work together to tackle the complex challenges of climate change as it impacts New England. This is a critical time for the conservation and forestry leadership that NEFF represents. Your donation will help build a case in support of the critical role working forests play in the mitigation of climate change. Together we will ensure that New England forests make their greatest possible contribution to abating damaging climate change. Thank you for all you do for New England's forests!

Please also consider including New England's forests and NEFF in your estate planning. There are many ways that you can help protect forests and advance NEFF's conservation mission while meeting your own financial and family succession goals. **Contact Penny Flynn for more information: pflynn@newenglandforestry.org**

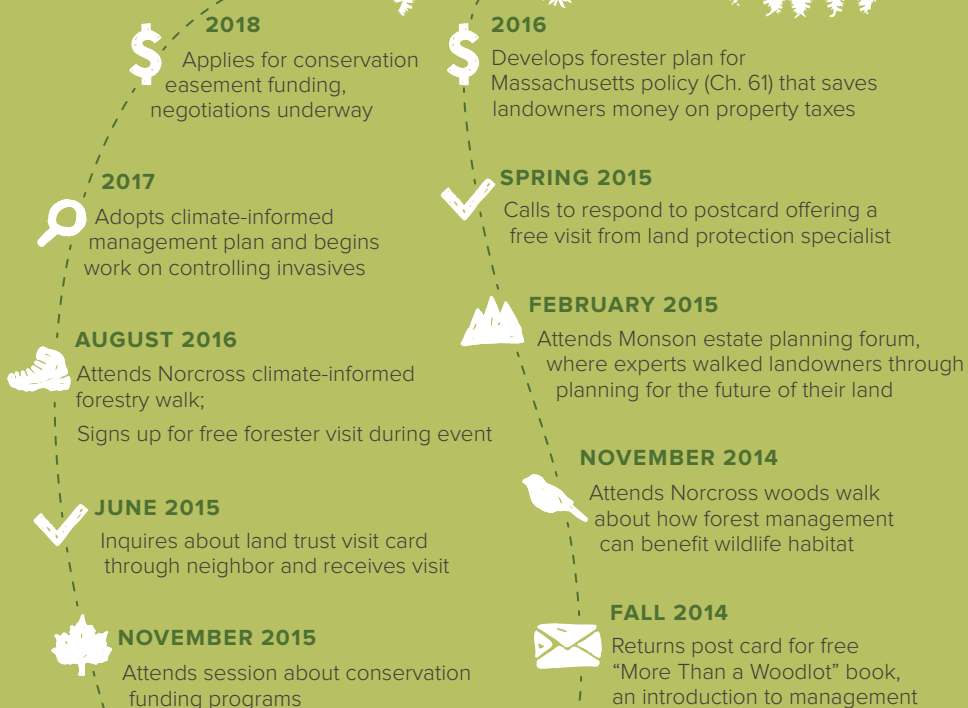
Patterns of Landowner Engagement Over Time

Connecticut Landowner
200 ACRES

A

B

Massachusetts Landowner
11 ACRES





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