

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FROM ENGAGEMENT TO ACTION

Supporting Woodland Owners in
Decisions About Their Land



NEW ENGLAND
FORESTRY
FOUNDATION



From Engagement to Action:
Supporting Woodland Owners
in Decisions About Their Land

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Elizabeth G. Hayden, Frank Lowenstein
and Robert T. Perschel

Forests blanket 80 percent of New England. They provide key services to society, such as maintaining drinking water quality and quantity, cleaning the air, and reducing the extent of damaging climate change (Perschel, Giffen & Lowenstein, 2014). And they are under threat. New residential and commercial development has eaten away about a million acres of forest since the 1980s—an area larger than the entire state of Rhode Island (Foster et al., 2017, p. 11). Development continues to spread from cities, suburbia and even along rural roads in certain areas near the Maine coast and in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. When forest is converted to homes, lawns and shopping malls, this loss permanently reduces forests' abilities to store carbon while creating traffic congestion and associated increased emissions, reducing the viability of rural farm and forest enterprises, and damaging wildlife habitat.

How can we halt this forest loss? The path to success must involve the owners of these New England forests—the 215,000 owners of 10 or more acres. The decisions these owners make in the coming two or three decades will have a profound impact on whether many of our communities retain their rural, wooded or agricultural heritage and whether our forests can play a vital role in mitigating climate change. However, data indicates that the decades-long effort to communicate with landowners using traditional methods has largely failed to spur them to action. In order to meet our goals for New England, we need a better, more efficient and more effective way to communicate with these landowners and align their good intentions toward policy goals. The intensive communication project detailed in this report—the **MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative**—successfully demonstrates that sustained application of innovative approaches will work to get landowners to protect and better manage their land. With

the appropriate funding, these new approaches, in concert with promising peer learning strategies now being piloted, can be scaled up regionally to reach all New England landowners to protect our landscape from development and introduce new forest management techniques to mitigate climate change.

What would success look like? Our forests would be protected from development. Wildlife would be more plentiful and threatened species assured a future. New Englanders would produce more of the wood products they consume from locally well-managed forests rather than from questionable imports. And in addition, applying Exemplary Forestry practices on these private lands—with benefits to wildlife, carbon storage and wood product markets—could offer the mitigation equivalent of taking every car in New England off the road for 20 years, according to estimates by the New England Forestry Foundation. How we communicate with landowners will determine whether we capture these climate mitigation possibilities and whether our region's forest remains healthy and resilient enough to continue providing the tangible benefits of clean water, clean air, soil, wildlife habitat and forest products that our society counts on them for.



NEW ENGLAND
FORESTRY
FOUNDATION

The accompanying report produced by New England Forestry Foundation details a focused effort to apply new approaches to reach out to forest landowners and engage them in improving their forest management and exploring conservation outcomes. The results show a nearly four-fold improvement over the response rate achieved by traditional forestry outreach, and have generated key, replicable findings that could advance efforts to retain forest ecosystem services for the benefit of all New England citizens.

The results suggest recommendations for funders, land trusts, regional partnerships, and federal and state agencies. Adoption of these recommendations would result in sustained engagement with landowners in key conservation geographies, improved efficiency of outreach by local conservation and forestry organizations, faster incorporation of new themes such as climate adaptation strategies into outreach campaigns, and improved networks among outreach practitioners to foster innovation and improved program evaluation. This document identifies the necessary communication tools and approaches.



My MassConn Woods: Outcomes by the Numbers

The MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative included three core partners:

- | New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF)
- | American Forest Foundation (AFF)
- | MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership (MassConn)

Ongoing collaboration among these organizations, with periodic participation from other partners, resulted in the initiative's successful pursuit of grants to keep the work going. Against the backdrop of an active two-state partnership of regional land trusts with deep forestry knowledge, the MassConn landscape of south-central Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut realized investment of about \$3.7 million in private and public grants to various partner collaborations to pursue outreach, conservation and forestry outcomes over the course of the project.*

Among the grants, was an effort to create a shared MassConn Mapper data source, a project that updated GIS maps of protected open space and added 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 in early 2016, and across the two-state, 38-town partnership, more than 5,000 additional acres have been protected since then (B. Hall, personal communication, September 26, 2019).

Below is a chart tracking outreach outcomes by the numbers, but there were numerous other benefits. The MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative:

- Road-tested the implementation of sustained landowner outreach in a high-priority landscape of remnant forest cores experiencing the threat of development from surrounding urban and suburban regions.
- Demonstrated the importance of repeated opportunities offered to high-priority landowners periodically over time as an effective onboarding strategy for fostering their deeper engagement with their land.
- Provided an outreach model for connecting landowners with foresters to assess vulnerability to climate change at the privately owned parcel level and providing climate-informed forestry advice.
- Tested messages for conserving land to benefit wildlife habitat, for leaving a legacy by conserving family lands, and for managing land to promote resilience to climate change.
- Supported national partner efforts to identify best practices for landowner outreach including piloting direct mail tactics and response tracking as well as integrating climate resilience mapping data with outreach strategy.
- Fostered investment in a maturing Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) as a model for scaling up outreach expertise at the land trust and RCP level while strengthening partnerships at local and regional scales.



New Braintree, MA, photo by Lisa Hayden

The MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative succeeded in engaging 533 discrete, individual or family forest landowners owning a total of 31,387 acres, who participated in some form of outreach activity, including 20 percent of whom took the step of meeting with a natural resource professional to discuss their goals for their land encompassing 8,556 acres. Each of these numbers represents a person or a family with their own experience and perspective about their land. Some owners took part in multiple activities, but are only counted once each in the statistics below.*

MARKETING OUTREACH & OUTCOMES	 Total individual landowners**	 Total acres owned
Marketed to through direct mail outreach (some were contacted in more than one campaign)	3,704	289,054
Requested informational materials	228	12,685
Requested a site visit with a professional	150	12,014
Requested American Forest Foundation’s localized “Tips for Landowners” email newsletter	214	10,700
Attended an event or workshop co-hosted by NEFF/AFF/MassConn partnership (not counting owners who attended individual partner events)	186	8,390

*During this time period, the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership was also undertaking several compatible regional efforts to promote landowner engagement and increase the pace of land conservation, independent from but in coordination with the NEFF/AFF project, but for which results are not incorporated in this report.

**Landowners of 10 or more acres in the 38 towns of the MassConn region

PROJECT TIMELINE



2012-2013

Expert panel convened to help develop program concept

2013-2014

Baseline research conducted: Conservation Awareness Index, landowner focus groups, and Barriers and Benefits mailed survey

2014-2015

Initial active direct mail outreach phase in a 10-town, state-border pilot area with messaging about conservation and sustainable forestry



2016-2020

Active outreach incorporating climate change adaptation in concert with conservation and sustainable forestry outreach themes throughout the 38-town landscape

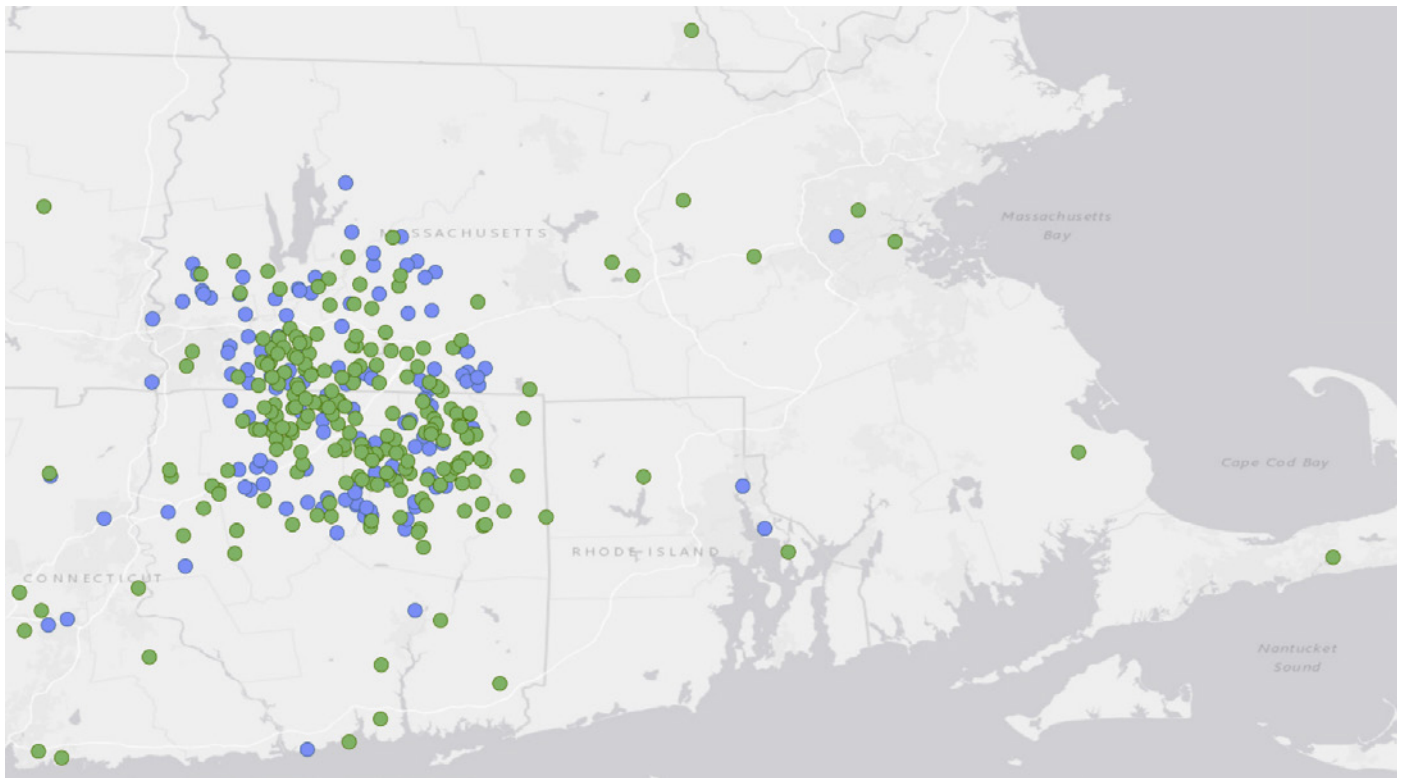
2018-2020

Sharing lessons and insights to advance and scale up landowner outreach in support of New England's vision for forest conservation and implementation of actions to solve the climate crisis



TOTAL LANDOWNER REQUESTS FROM MY MASSCONN WOODS LANDOWNER OUTREACH

By Mailing Address, 2014–2019, Courtesy of American Forest Foundation



Each of these points on the map represents a person or a family with their own experience and perspective about their land.

- Expert Visit Requests
- Information Requests

21st Century Marketing for Land Conservation

The future of New England's forested landscape rests in the hands, hearts and minds of more than half a million individuals and families who own more than 13 million acres of forest (Butler, 2016). In particular, the decisions that the 215,000 owners of 10 or more acres make in the coming two or three decades will have a profound impact on whether many of our communities retain their rural, forested or agricultural heritage. When corporate ownership is included, fully 84 percent of New England's forests are in private ownership; the management of these private lands will determine whether the region's forests remain healthy and resilient enough to continue contributing the

tangible benefits of clean water, clean air, soil, wildlife habitat and forest products that our society counts on them for. Consequently, how we engage and support private forest landowners, provide them with information on available alternatives for their land, and structure public policy incentives to enable them to continue to maintain New England's forests as forests is a key set of questions.

More than five years ago, New England Forestry Foundation and partners embarked on an initiative to test alternative approaches to outreach, marketing and communications to the critical audience of family forest owners, aiming to improve



NEW ENGLAND FAMILY FOREST OWNERS OF 10+ ACRES National Woodland Owner Survey 2011–2013

State	Acres	Ownerships
CT	609,000	18,000*
MA	1,007,000	26,000
ME	5,307,000	86,000
NH	2,164,000	39,000
VT	2,521,000	40,000
RI	100,000	6,000
TOTAL	11,708,000	215,000

Source: Butler, 2016

* 2015 CT re-sampling of 2011 data found 17,000 families and individuals own about 600,000 acres (Tyrrell, 2015)

LEFT: NEFF's Goodell Morse Memorial Forest, Woodstock, CT, photo by Lisa Hayden
RIGHT: Landowner map courtesy of Wildlands and Woodlands

the effectiveness of land trust and conservation organization practice with this segment of the region's forest ownership.

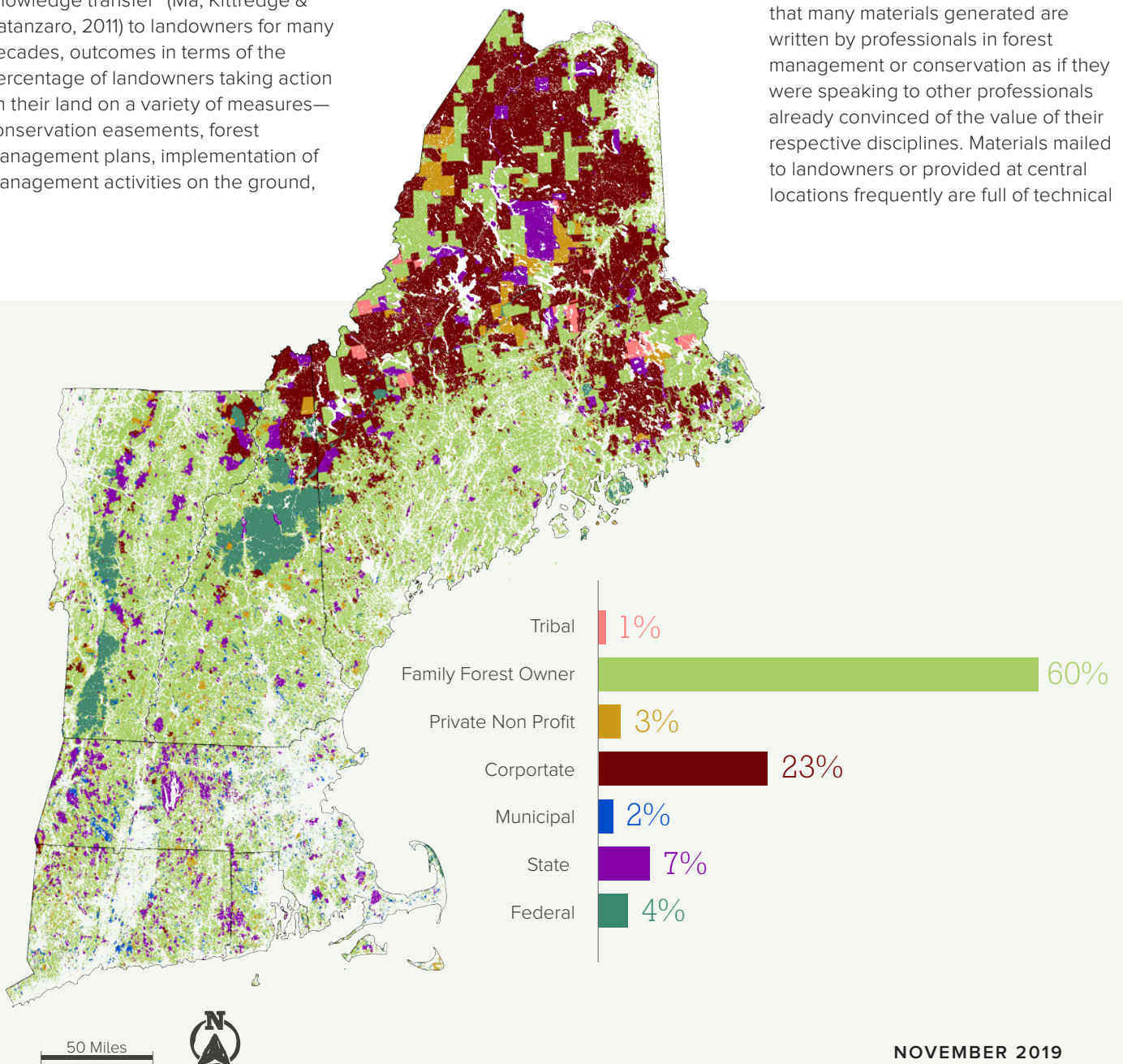
Why Do We Need a New Approach?

The data indicates that traditional methods of communicating with landowners have largely failed. While outreach and extension practitioners have been working on education and "knowledge transfer" (Ma, Kittredge & Catanzaro, 2011) to landowners for many decades, outcomes in terms of the percentage of landowners taking action on their land on a variety of measures—conservation easements, forest management plans, implementation of management activities on the ground,

etc.—hasn't changed much. In our pilot landscape of the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership, baseline research found that while close to half of owners had harvested timber, less than 25 percent worked with a professional forester to manage their land. About 65 percent of landowners surveyed could not identify a local land trust and nearly 80 percent could not identify a local forester. This low level of awareness is typical of national results.

"After decades of effort, the ability to communicate our forest management message in a way that will move nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners to action continues to elude us," wrote Leslie B. Snyder and Steven H. Broderick in a 1992 journal. Twenty years later, much the same situation led to the creation of this outreach project.

One drawback to traditional outreach and non-targeted marketing efforts (often cited as producing response rates in the range of 2-3 percent) is that many materials generated are written by professionals in forest management or conservation as if they were speaking to other professionals already convinced of the value of their respective disciplines. Materials mailed to landowners or provided at central locations frequently are full of technical



terms and jargon, with preachy language about what people *should* do. Either the attitude or the language can cause landowners who do not share the same background or perspective to simply quit paying attention.

Another familiar phenomenon is that outreach events may be “preaching to the choir,” reaching the same active or motivated community members who always show up. We know that these landowners represent only a small fraction of the total landowner audience, and that there are others who could be interested in improved forest management or conservation, but lack the time or connections to engage. In past outreach, the forestry and conservation fields have not sufficiently considered how landowners view their land; what factors affect their decisions, such as life events, need for money,

their world view, and value systems; and who they consult when making those decisions, such as networks of family, friends, neighbors or other landowners they respect and trust.

Enter a New Solution

In late 2012, NEFF consulted with outreach academic experts as it developed the concept for a landowner outreach pilot program to launch the following year. NEFF and national partner American Forest Foundation (AFF) had received funding that year from the U.S. Forest Service to launch the work in a 10-town, pilot landscape within the 38-town region of host partner, the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership (MassConn), an existing collaboration of multi-town land trusts on both sides of the Massachusetts-Connecticut border. This region was chosen both because

of its location in a rapidly suburbanizing north-south corridor with significant still-intact forest cores, and long-standing professional relationships among key partners.

The active outreach phase of the **MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative**, as this project came to be known, coincided with a time when Opacum Land Trust hired an executive director whose role also included one day a week focused on further developing a Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) for the MassConn landscape. Since fall 2014, NEFF has had a consultant or full-time coordinator actively road testing new strategies and tactics by actually “doing” outreach campaigns in partnership with MassConn, AFF, local land trusts and foresters on a pro-active, consistent basis, and to “learn by doing.”



Woodland resilience walk at The Fen, Woodstock, CT, photo by Lisa Hayden



Erythronium americanum, trout lily, photo by Leslie Duthie

The New England Context for Landowner Outreach

With limited public extension budgets for outreach, the process of building the pipeline of engaged owners can be daunting. Part of the challenge is that landowners are by nature a moving target of individuals owning land at any one time, with constant change due to death, inheritance, sale, acquisition and subdivision. And as forest fragmentation increases, their numbers are on the rise. As Kittredge (2004, p. 16) notes, “The audience is a moving target, because new owners enter the population and others leave ... The effort is further impeded by reduced agency budgets and growing demands for a host of services. The result is that effective outreach to family forest owners is becoming more difficult due to more of ‘them’ and fewer of ‘us’ to send the message.”

The clock is also ticking for privately owned large forest blocks as aging Boomer and earlier-generation landowners are reaching critical life decisions about the long-term care and ownership of their land. Some experts have called this demographic wave of anticipated land transfers “the silver tsunami,” a reference to the “graying” of a significant segment of landowners in the New England region.

Why bother reaching out to owners instead of waiting for them to contact us?

With limited time and resources, the conservation and forestry community needs to focus and prioritize our efforts to ensure we are investing wisely to protect the places on the landscape

The outreach initiative’s primary focus was on increasing the ecological social capital in the region—in other words, building shared appreciation for the value of forests among landowners—with ancillary outcomes to support the number of acres conserved and managed in MassConn’s strategic land protection plan. We aimed to interest previously unengaged woodland owners in becoming more actively involved with their land, to consider how segmentation of the owner audience might help accomplish outreach objectives, and to tap into informal social networks among landowners to share knowledge about conservation and forestry and remove barriers to action.

Through the partnership with AFF, a strong element of social marketing—informed by aspects of behavioral economics and social psychology—permeated the project’s outreach strategy, campaign tactics and follow-up evaluation. Social marketing (note, as distinct from social media) seeks to apply marketing concepts to influence behavior for the greater social good—not to get someone to buy something, but to get someone to “do something,” or to engage in behavior with desirable results, such as quitting smoking—or planning ahead to conserve their forest land (Morgan, 2017). In this project, social marketing was used to promote

individual actions to result in the outcome of forest conservation and sustainable forest management.

Ongoing collaboration among three core partners (NEFF, AFF and MassConn), against the backdrop of an actively innovating regional collaborative, contributed to the initiative’s successful pursuit of grants to keep the work going. Public and private funding supported outreach activities, such as woods walks, forums, professional visits, demonstration sites and workshops. By 2016, with a new private grant to incorporate forest climate adaptation, the outreach expanded to the full 38-town region and continued to evolve to meet partner needs and priorities, followed by a Forest Service grant, to conclude in 2020.

The project also benefitted from the synergy of being grounded in a region with a strong tradition of academic expertise in outreach and forest management through University of Massachusetts Extension, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies’ Quiet Corner Initiative and the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative, and the 8,000-acre Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary in the heart of MassConn, as well as MassConn member land trusts, which in some cases were working to build memberships and relationships with local landowner leaders.

that will deliver the biggest ecological benefits to healthy ecosystems and human communities—not only for our current population, but for generations to follow. Typically this means we should be conserving large parcels of land in strategic locations, which can be defined by a range of criteria (i.e., large and connected forests, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, drinking water sources, zones of high terrestrial climate resilience, etc.). We need to strategically reach out to the owners of these important lands to be sure we reach them. If we're too busy reacting, we may never get to protect some high-priority places.

With a warming world and changing climate, the stakes are even higher.

Natural, undeveloped lands provide a crucial part of the equation to solving the climate crisis, both in absorbing

carbon dioxide from human-caused emissions that are causing global warming, and in providing nature the breathing room to bounce back from disturbance and keep ecosystems functioning. Thus, reaching landowners who do not want their land to be subdivided for development about their options for conservation can help fight climate change. Another important dynamic is whether natural lands are left alone as nature or wilderness reserves, or managed with sustainable, Exemplary Forestry—New England needs landowners engaged in both options—while avoiding poor quality forest management, which can reduce carbon storage and forest health and degrade wildlife habitat, making the forest more vulnerable to future mortality from wind, insects, or drought.

Meanwhile, according to Harvard Forest's Wildlands and Woodlands report (W&W), all six New England

states are expected to experience forest loss at rates ranging from 21 percent to 63 percent by 2030. By 2060, 1.2 million acres of forest and farmland will be lost if current rates continue (Foster et al., 2017, p. 10). As larger properties of 100-200 acres become carved up into subdivisions, or 50- to 80-acre parcels, and then 15- to 30-acre, or even smaller house lots, the process of parcelization intensifies—and results in more and more landowners of ever-smaller parcels to reach with information about stewarding their land—and the likelihood of conservation or sustainable forest management on these properties diminishes.

In order to reach the ambitious goals of W&W to keep 70 percent of New England covered by forests by conserving 30 million acres by 2060 (10 percent as wildland reserves and the rest working forests), it will be imperative to utilize all of the skills and

Harvest hike at Morneau Farm, Opacum Land Trust, Dudley, MA, photo by Lisa Hayden



best approaches the conservation community has developed in order to save the largest possible connected forest lands for their multiple values and benefits. The forest conservation movement is now challenged to hone the tools we need to energize proactive outreach to high-priority ownerships while constantly priming the pump to interest new landowners and propel strategic landscape connections on the ground.

NEFF embarked on this outreach work to stock our toolbox, build our expertise in better communicating with this landowner audience, and more efficiently target our resources to conserve the forests of New England. The ability to effectively communicate with and mobilize this audience of private landowners holds the potential to transform the pace of conservation and improve the quality of forest management in our region.



Landowners Are Critical Partners to NEFF

Land trusts do crucial work by identifying lands of ecological and social or recreational value, completing the acquisition of these parcels (through fee purchase, donation or conservation easement) and taking on the daunting responsibility of promising to manage and protect these places forever. But land trusts, such as NEFF and our local and regional partners, can't accomplish their important missions without a key player in this transaction—the property owner—who must for some reason love their land more than the monetary value or potential financial security it can provide if they decide to sell or subdivide it. The option to sell can be accomplished quickly and is easily understood, while the route to conservation is unfamiliar, time intensive,

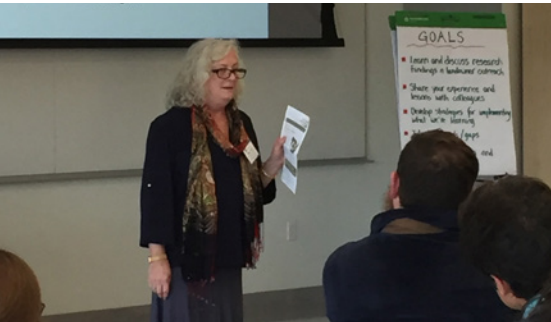
and often complicated, requiring multiple potentially costly steps, as well as negotiation with an entity that must agree to the perpetual terms of the transaction.

Through NEFF's Heart of New England program, we seek to increase synergy among a triad of key audiences: private landowners, as well as foresters and land trusts. **Our core objective has been to help landowners understand their goals, how to meet them and who they need to enlist to make it happen** (assuring that appropriate local or regional land trust partners are consulted in pursuit of conservation, and that a professional forester is known and called upon when the decision is made to perform a timber

harvest or other forest management). NEFF's objective has been to share and disseminate learnings from this initiative through the network of 44 Regional Conservation Partnerships working to advance landscape-scale conservation and forestry across New England.

NEFF has successfully grown its portfolio to more than 29,000 acres of fee-owned lands in more than 145 Community Forests, most donated by families or individuals who wanted their land to stay wooded and be sustainably managed into the future. Another more than 1 million acres of land are still privately owned but protected by permanent conservation easements that NEFF annually monitors.

An Outreach Symposium: Practitioners Brainstorm to Bridge Research and Reality



critical to building strong peer networks and fostering the welcoming, supportive environment and intimate social gatherings where sharing and learning among landowners can best occur.

Turbo presentations were followed by a facilitated discussion intended to help identify important areas of focus for outreach professionals to:

- Distill our combined knowledge and share expertise.
- Discern emerging best practices that should be shared more broadly to scale up conservation results.
- Highlight gaps in knowledge and areas of agreement for future research, testing in the field or funding.

At the Symposium, academic researchers and practitioners immersed in active outreach efforts shared brief talks about their recent work including: Brett Butler, Research Forester from the US Forest Service and the Family Forest Research Center; Paul Catanzaro, Extension Assistant Professor at UMass Amherst; Katherine Hollins of the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative and TELE (Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively) at Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies; Elizabeth Vranas, Northeast Conservation Manager from American Forest Foundation, and Lisa Hayden, Outreach Coordinator of New England Forestry Foundation, both of whom partner with the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership (“MassConn Woods” RCP).

Scaling Up Effective Landowner Engagement Practices

Outreach Professionals Identify Gaps & Emerging Directions for the Field in New England

Aware that our goals for conserving 30 million acres of New England will require effective outreach to the people who own that land, New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) wants to support our partners to adopt the most effective and efficient practices.

With grant support from the Overhills Foundation, NEFF hosted a landowner outreach symposium on Nov. 16, 2018, at the UMass Design Building before the Regional Conservation Partnership Network meetings, titled “From Research to RCP Reality: Scaling Up Effective Landowner Engagement Practices to Propel Our Vision for New England.” This half-day workshop brought together academic experts with outreach practitioners to share current work and discuss scaling up best practices and promising avenues of research.

A headline question participants sought to answer: How can we synthesize research results and promote knowledge transfer about how landowner outreach activity can most effectively and efficiently achieve results for conservation?

Organizers were honored to have many experts in the room who spoke from years of experience working with landowners. Mary Tyrrell, recently retired Director of Sustaining Family Forests Initiative/Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE) at Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, was invited to open the symposium by sharing her perspective on landowner outreach over her past decade of work developing the TELE program. An important observation from Mary is the difficulty of winning funding for the “non-sexy work” of landowner outreach, such as coordinating events, planning communications and tracking responses for follow-up. The routine tasks of ordering food, making and distributing event fliers, and taking the time to individually call or email owners may not be rocket science, but they are

Outreach Symposium Findings

About two dozen participants (who were joined by some RCP leaders for portions of the discussion) broke into four discussion groups, and had a chance to participate in two brainstorming sessions each.

The chart below presents key themes that emerged from facilitated groups of outreach specialists and experts at the November 2018 Landowner Outreach Symposium, “From Research to RCP Reality.”

WHAT LESSONS CAN BE EASILY REPLICATED AS BEST PRACTICES?

- Need for continuity (in outreach to landowners over time)
- Doing “peer-to-peer” right (support provided to peer leaders, as well as to conservation and forestry professionals/practitioners in how to implement these programs)
- Sharing when we know what works (such as AFF’s Community of Practice: practices tested in a variety of landscapes, results shared)
- Landowner cohorts by generation or motivation segment (retreat, working the land, absentee, etc.)

HOW CAN WE EVALUATE OUR OUTREACH WORK?

- Inventory software
- Developing appropriate metrics/tracking on-the-ground results
- Ensuring appropriate data is collected so outreach can be fully assessed
- Pairing research and extension (state/university agricultural programs)
- Encourage an environment of active learning and sharing
- Develop a toolbox for assessing outreach activities

WHAT DON'T WE KNOW?

- Timing for outreach/when to influence (post-purchase of land, or nearing retirement, etc.)
- Family dynamics—legacy planning
- Database(s): What are they? How to use them?
- Social media/conservation and younger audience (who will they be?)
- Broader community engagement vs. landowners
- Response to climate change messaging

GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE TO TEST IN THE FIELD?

- Applying research to best practices: how much is shared/used — Create a Hub?
- Coordinating work/knowledge (keeping up - what is everyone doing?)
- Resources for evaluation, standards
- How can we frame research to produce actionable findings (results that can be implemented in the field to improve outreach)?

ARE THERE THINGS WE SHOULD DO LESS OF?

- Untargeted mailings (someone should be ready to take the next step)
- Too many labels/branding fatigue
- Too much jargon
- Return on Investment (ROI) — gauging efficiency

HOW CAN WE APPLY LEGACY PLANNING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE — AND SCALE UP RESULTS IN ACRES CONSERVED?

- Now that we have learned 50-66 percent of landowners have a Goal to keep their land intact and “in forest”—focusing on tools to meet their goals!

- Peer to Peer landowner engagement—which is capacity intensive, requiring follow-up to engaged owners
- Providing tools and facilitators (such as UMass estate planning forums/publications to assist owners to plan)
- Develop modules/example programs such as the Your Land, Your Legacy materials, for use in RCPs

HOW CAN FUNDERS SUPPORT YOUR RCP TO DO LANDOWNER OUTREACH?

- Building capacity to implement outreach (i.e. paying staff)
- Measuring impact of outreach by implementing tracking, monitoring and evaluation tools
- Improving outreach effectiveness —identifying what to include in a toolbox; build a better hub of resources
- Moving from discrete one-off outreach events to a more strategic campaign that supports landowners through a series of smaller steps over time, building to a larger goal action
- Transaction cost funds (for completing conservation deals with landowners, purchasing development rights, etc.)
- Tapping into under-utilized NRCS funds when available
- Some consistency in outreach funding so RCPs are not competing for the same resources

A COMMON BASIS OF TRAINING ACROSS THE RCP NETWORK, SUCH AS:

- TELE approach
- Training on initiating and fostering Landowner Peer to Peer Networks
- How to conduct surveys like the Conservation Awareness Index/or focus groups

Patterns of Landowner Engagement Over Time

Connecticut
landowner
200 acres

A

Massachusetts
landowner
11 acres

B



2018

Applies for conservation easement funding, negotiations underway



2016

Develops forester plan for Massachusetts policy (Ch. 61) that saves landowners money on property taxes



2017

Adopts climate-informed management plan and begins work on controlling invasives



Spring 2015

Calls to respond to postcard offering a free visit from land protection specialist



August 2016

Attends Norcross climate-informed forestry walk
Signs up for free forester visit during event



February 2015

Attends Monson estate planning forum, where experts walked landowners through planning for the future of their land



November 2015

Attends workshop about conservation funding programs



November 2014

Attends Norcross woods walk about how forest management can benefit wildlife habitat



June 2015

Inquires about land trust visit card through neighbor and receives visit



Fall 2014

Returns postcard for free "More Than a Woodlot" book, an introduction to management

New Tools to Help Landowners Understand Climate Risks to Their Land – and Take Steps to Promote Long-Term Resilience

 To access the MassConn Woods toolkit, visit forestadaptation.org/massconn

Climate Change & Our Forests: Guidance for Foresters and Land Managers

Climate science cheat sheet, including a chart from the Tree Atlas that projects what species will fare better or worse under anticipated climate impacts, for the professional forester to incorporate as adaptation guidance into their forest management planning, and refresh key concepts before landowner visits.

Keeping Your Woods Healthy Through the Years Ahead

Landowner-facing fact sheet explaining local climate change impacts already being observed in Southern New England, and how they can take steps to help their woodlands withstand the anticipated changes and disruptions.

Considerations for Your Woodlot


Checklist of site-appropriate adaptation strategies recommended by the forester, who fills out the sheet and leaves it with the landowner either at time of the visit or in follow-up communication. The list includes simple descriptions of sustainable forestry practices—such as protecting soil and water and promoting a diversity of tree species and ages—that become even more important with a changing climate. There is room below each practice for hand-written details. The information from the checklist vulnerability assessment can then be used to provide a climate-informed section of a forest management plan or as a start toward a more robust exercise for site-level adaptation planning with the NIACS Adaptation Workbook.

Site visit sheet

This grant project tracking form is filled out by the forester after the visit to allow project follow-up with the owner within three to six months to offer support, and potentially to pursue funding opportunities as appropriate, to implement the recommendations, or to help landowners pursue other goals for their land, such as conservation.

Outcomes to Date: Counting all grants, New England Forestry Foundation and MassConn Woods partners have completed a total of 97 climate-informed forestry visits to landowners owning a total of 7,524 acres.

Climate Change & Our Forests

Guidance for Foresters and Land Managers 

Forests are a defining feature of the landscape in “the MassConn Woods” of northeastern Connecticut and south central Massachusetts. These natural systems, so crucial to our history and current quality of life, provide many environmental, economic, and social benefits to the region.

These forests, primarily in private family or individual ownership, will increasingly be affected by a changing climate. Understanding these potential impacts is an important first step to sustaining healthy forests in the face of changing conditions.

THE CLIMATE HAS CHANGED
The Earth’s climate is changing. Many trends have been tracked across the globe, some reaching back hundreds of thousands of years. Although the climate has always changed, the changes that have occurred over the past century are more profound than anything that has happened since the start of human civilization and have important effects on our current environment.


The average annual temperature in the area has risen more than 2°F since the late 1800s.¹ Temperatures warmed in all seasons, with winter warming by more than 3°F. Temperature records show that warming has accelerated in recent decades.

Winter temperatures increased by more than 3°F since the turn of the last century, and heavy rainfall events have become more common.

Precipitation also increased during this period, ranging from increases of approximately 3 inches across most of Connecticut to more than 5.5 inches in central Massachusetts.² The greatest increase in precipitation has been in the fall, with smaller increases during spring and summer. Extreme precipitation events have increased substantially, particularly over the past several decades.³


CHANGES WILL CONTINUE
It’s impossible to predict exactly what will happen in the future, so global climate models can help us understand how the climate may react under various scenarios. There are many different models available and they provide an opportunity to understand the range of potential changes that may occur depending on the carbon-intensity of future energy sources.

Temperatures will increase
Climate models agree that temperatures will increase across all seasons in the region over the next century. The projected increase in annual temperature ranges from 3 to 10°F by the end of the century, depending upon future scenarios.⁴ Growing seasons will continue to get longer as a result of warmer temperatures.



1

Considerations for Your Woodlot



The following are general recommendations to keep your woods healthy and able to adapt to changes into the future. **While all of these actions are important, the checked recommendations are most applicable to your woods and your situation.** To learn more, consult our fact sheet, consider working with a professional to implement these practices on the ground or visit our website at <http://mymassconnwoods.org/>.

Top Forest Stressors to Keep an Eye On	Extreme Weather Vulnerabilities

- Protect water and soils on your land
- Improve ability of your trees to resist bugs and disease
- Prevent and control non-native plants and weeds that threaten native plants and animals
- Manage damage to young trees from excessive deer browsing
- Prepare for big weather events by promoting strong, healthy trees in your woodlot
- Respond quickly after big disturbance events to help your woods bounce back
- Promote a diversity of tree species
- Promote a diversity of tree sizes
- Protect rare or sensitive plant & animal communities
- Consider how your current trees will react to future conditions and which tree species you might want to promote
- Monitor your woods and the effect of different management tactics

Investing in Landowner Outreach

The process of land conservation is a marathon, not a sprint. And yet the New England conservation movement must now set a record pace.

Just as it's crucial to keep reaching out to the same landowners over the years with information, invitations to learning or social events and connection to experts (particularly as their knowledge and engagement grows), there is a corollary: it is vital to sustain funding for strategic landowner outreach programs over time to keep propelling those newly engaged owners to the next step of their decision-making process.

Unlike shopping for a consumer product, decision-making about land is not a one-time purchase, but a multi-year—even life-long—process. It's likely to take a series of interactions with the unengaged landowner before they make the decision to actively pursue conservation or forest management. Even when an owner comes to the point of knowing they want to protect their land from development, that is just a starting point for the actual conservation deal or transaction which frequently takes multiple steps and years to complete.

The desired outcomes of outreach—another protected property, or a woodland on course for ecologically based, exemplary forestry—are not ideally suited for a one-off, single-grant time frame. Yet conservation

organizations are often trapped in the cycle of chasing the next grant. They must build a program, often including outreach components to meet specific objectives over 2 or 3 to 5 years. They make some progress, submit a report on outcomes at the close of the funding period and then start from scratch on a new project. The records of interactions with landowners who participated in the past program might be dispersed, filed away, or in some cases kept by individual organizations for follow-up (though often only within the memory of individual staff who were involved). Efforts to continue engaging those owners can often languish at that point, unless the project developed a record-keeping system or database of outreach and landowner response—and unless there was ownership among designated partners for follow-up and access to the information.

As the New York-New England Family Forest Owner Engagement Initiative concluded in 2014, "It is common knowledge that it usually takes much time, effort, and money for landowners to move from awareness of their options to action. However, most RCP members ... believe all three are in short supply" (Labich, Nov. 2014, p. 10).



KEY TAKEAWAY

Funders tend to want immediate or relatively short-term (1-2 years) results, and seem less interested in supporting the relatively small investment of salaries for the outreach practitioner (in fact, some federal grant programs explicitly avoid funding for outreach and want to pay only for on-the-ground outcomes).

However, modest investments in proactive outreach can produce significant results. When staff are able to build an outreach program over an extended period, they are able to develop expertise, not only in the local landscape and owner concerns, but in partner resources and funding programs. They may become known as a trusted point of contact and receive referrals through word of mouth, while getting to know owners in their region through repeated interactions and offering continuity. Even the salary for an intern (through the TerraCorps/MassLift programs, for example), can jump-start landowner-focused outreach activities, such as hosting walks and educational forums and the time-consuming "PR" steps of developing communication materials to promote and host those events, not to mention the key step of following up with attendees after the event or visit with a professional.

Thus, a key recommendation of this report is a call to action to make landowner engagement a priority: to make an investment to turn “Best Practices” for outreach into “Business as Usual” operations for forestry and conservation partnerships working at the landscape scale.

In a follow-up survey to attendees of the November 2018 Landowner Outreach Symposium (completed by about 30 percent of participants), 100 percent said they would value additional workshops and training on landowner outreach. Asked the most important issues for the New England outreach community to follow up on, respondents ranked highest the need to:

1. “Advocate for routine funding to sustain landowner engagement in priority landscapes.”
2. “Pairing research and Extension/ on-the-ground outreach to hone and test best practices.”
3. “Test audience segments, channels and messages to learn what works.”
4. “Curating of tracking, monitoring & evaluation tools to measure impact.”

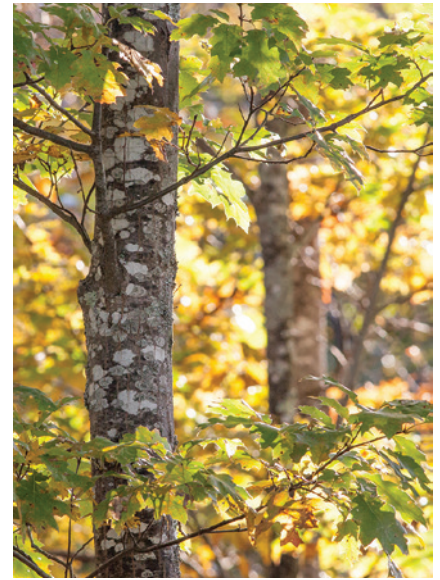
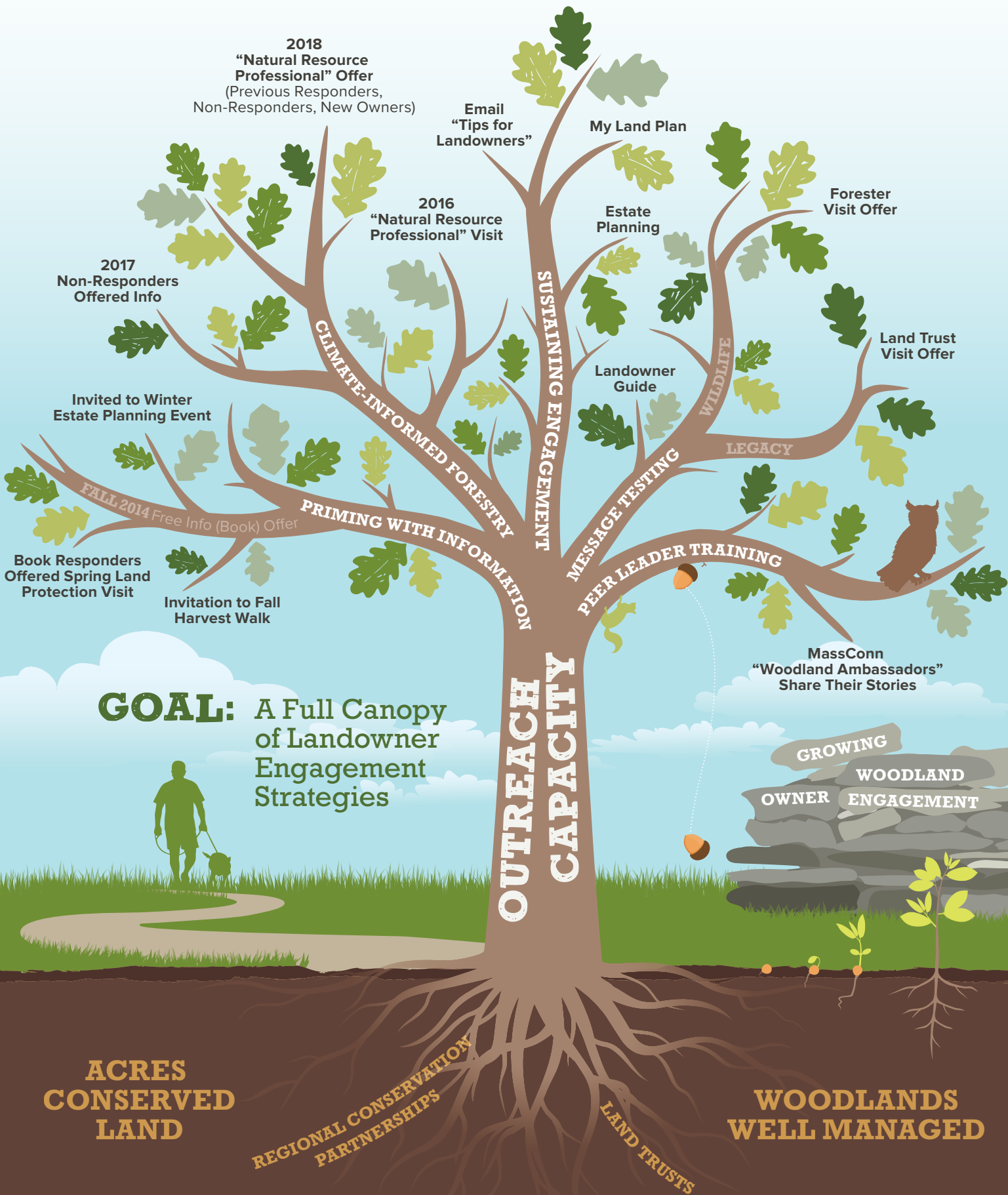


Photo by Charlie Reinertsen



Caltha palustris, marsh marigold or cowslip, photo by Leslie Duthie



Recommendations: A Call for Investment in Strategic Landowner Outreach

NEFF proposes that the conservation and donor communities collaborate to find or generate and apply sustained funding for long-term, protracted outreach activity for each Regional Conservation Partnership to propel efforts toward the Wildlands & Woodlands Vision (W&W). To reach the goal by 2060 (now only 40 years away), will require a tripling of the current pace of protection (Foster et al., 2017).

Our successful pilot work in the MassConn region now allows us to estimate what level of support is required to design comprehensive communication campaigns to deliver tangible conservation benefits. Our recommendation is to fund and implement similar but tailored efforts in each of the 44 RCPs, as appropriate. This is the path forward to achieving the land protection and management goals of Wildlands and Woodlands. **Outreach approaches need ongoing funding to marry a focus at the parcel/ecological attribute level with considerations of social psychology, behavior change, and the human dynamics of landowner peer learning networks. We then need to systematically reach out to and engage the owners of high-priority parcels for conservation to ensure they are aware of their options to conserve and steward land.** A comprehensive, sustained regional communication effort designed to achieve long-term conservation goals will require a significant investment, but it is the only way to reach the owners of these lands and achieve the overall vision.

Applying marketing techniques to landowner outreach is a growing area of professional expertise. Many important tools already exist—and are waiting on the workbench. We now need to load them into our collective tool belt for more frequent and proficient use. Based on the preceding insights about the gaps/ongoing needs for landowner outreach, NEFF is advancing the following recommendations for New England’s Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCPs).

Develop a Tactical Tool Belt for RCP Landowner Outreach

The outreach modules in this tool belt will provide the means to turn “Best Practices” for outreach into “Business as Usual” operations in New England’s RCPs. Based on local needs, the tool belt can be outfitted with the full arsenal of implements—or tailored to fill each RCP’s gaps in outreach capacity. The modules will include customizable templates for segments of the landowner audience, for specific themes and uses (direct mail post cards, invitations, fliers, etc.) and for particular outreach objectives (conservation easements, property tax programs, forester consultations, etc.).

EMBARK ON CLIMATE CHANGE OUTREACH TO LANDOWNERS

RCPs and their funders need to disperse and deploy a suite of recently piloted outreach tools for climate-informed forestry/land management and further integrate climate change solution themes (i.e. mitigation through enhanced carbon storage in forests and wood products) into landowner outreach materials. NEFF, AFF and NIACS demonstrated effective use of climate change outreach tools in the MassConn Woods, including direct mail messaging about forest health and climate resilience and checklists for one-on-one forester visits with owners for parcel-level adaptation advice. In an informal survey of 2019 Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference attendees, tools for communicating with landowners about climate change, adaptation and carbon management were the highest priority interest area for respondents.

FILL GEOGRAPHIC DATA GAPS FOR CHARTING OUTREACH STRATEGY AND DEVELOP A W&W GREENPRINT

Fund and periodically update GIS and parcel-level mapping tools to fill in gaps where data do not already exist to assist RCPs to complete New England-wide targeting of high-priority lands for wildland conservation, exemplary forestry, agriculture, wildlife habitat and other components of W&W outcomes. Training for use of The Nature Conservancy’s Climate Resilience maps would allow prioritization of highly resilient properties in outreach campaigns.

SUPPORT RCPS TO DEVELOP ONE-STOP LANDOWNER RESOURCE CENTERS IN CONSULTATION WITH EACH STATE EXTENSION OFFICE

Owners tend to be confused by the myriad public and private funding avenues they could go down. At these service sites established at a key RCP partner organization, owners can access info at wherever they are on their ownership path. As Tyrrell (2015, p. 7) notes, “Both awareness and use of traditional landowner assistance programs are extremely low,” and in Connecticut, with few public service foresters, a need was identified for more assistance on the ground. These Landowner Resource Centers could be located at a land trust or other non-profit partner site to provide an alternate to government-sponsored resources which can be a barrier for some owners. In addition to brochures and informational materials, a key aspect would be a

knowledgeable contact person to connect owners to the current available funding programs and offer a smooth on-ramp to NRCS cost share rolling deadlines and connection to Technical Service Providers who help owners to navigate the bureaucracy of federal applications. AFF's Woods Camp (forestfoundation.org/aff-acquires-woodscamp), adopted in some states, is one example of a program that helps match and connect landowners to opportunities through online resources and social media.

DEVELOP INITIAL ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

Develop initial engagement resources for previously unengaged, or brand new landowners (those who recently purchased woodlands) and who may be just beginning to think about their land beyond its monetary value, such as:

- A landowners' introductory guide emphasizing the suite of multiple benefits of forests, combined with general interest nature writing and advice about common ownership challenges: similar to *The Place You Call Home* guide. NEFF produced Connecticut and Massachusetts editions of this popular 80-page magazine resource with *Northern Woodlands* magazine, but editions could be created for each New England state—and periodically updated.
- Campaigns and support for getting owners enrolled in state current use programs to save money on their property taxes and reap the benefits that society acknowledges for the ecosystem service values of open space land.
- Inviting new or unengaged owners into the local landowner peer network for learning and connections to meet their goals, such as engaging with neighbors, local land trusts, and referral to foresters or other professionals.

EXPERIMENT WITH APPLICATION OF MARKETING SEGMENTATION DATA

Continue to experiment with application of marketing segmentation data to the landowner audience and test integration of digital outreach tools such as social media platforms and other avenues of online engagement.

Social media may not be the channel to reach some older-generation members of the landowner audience who are not now participating on those platforms, however, outreach practitioners must keep pace with the online habits of younger-generation owners as well. We need to build online tools into our outreach toolkit so we are connecting with and continuing to build relationships with these owners now, in order to support their decision-making in the decades to come.

FUND ROUTINE GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR RCPs

Fund routine grants available for RCPs to apply to bolster their outreach capacity based on locally developed goals (including the “non-sexy” nuts and bolts of marketing, communications and event coordination for the landowner audience), or the integration of any of the Tool Belt outreach modules. These bridge grants would include funds for practitioner training on key outreach concepts (such as TELE, climate outreach, evaluation, or developing peer-to-peer networks, etc.). This additional funding source would keep routine outreach going between geographic or restoration-themed “big-ticket” grant campaigns and allow RCPs to maintain momentum with engaged landowners in multiple strategic locations.

- As focus on climate change intensifies and incentives are developed for environmental commodities such as carbon storage and protection of air and water quality, these routine funding sources could also be an avenue for building the outreach infrastructure to market and support landowner networks for ecosystem services payments, potentially among aggregated parcels of privately owned land.
- These grants could provide support for each RCP to identify the typical series of steps that owners in that area are likely to progress through on their journey toward conservation or more sustainable forest management (there may be interim outcomes and sub-steps, for example, progressing from current use enrollment to pursuing an easement). TELE calls this the “Landowner Ladder of Engagement,” while AFF calls it the “the Landowner Journey.” Identifying these rungs on the ladder, or typical stages of engagement, can help programs plan targeted marketing materials or events to help move owners from one step to the next, ultimately leading to on-the-ground outcomes of more acres conserved and sustainably managed. Because we may not have the resources to reach all high-priority landowners, focusing follow-up on those who are primed for action (based on their history of engagement) is a solid strategy.
 - Along with identifying the ladder of engagement comes sustaining follow-up to owners whose interest/engagement has lapsed. The process of tracking landowner responders from year to year and following up with owners who previously expressed interest, is one of the most important parts of outreach—because repeated engagement will be needed for most owners to adopt the desired actions of conservation or forest management. And yet, this step often falls through the capacity cracks.

- There is great value in having outreach and communications professionals routinely engaged in assessing targeted marketing activities to various groups of landowners in order to develop the most effective follow-up tactics. For example, small-group owner meetings with cost share professionals or free consults with estate planning attorneys or family facilitators, can assist owners to the next stage of their landowner journey—and these efforts can produce on-the-ground results with owners who are prime prospects. Ongoing outreach activity also allows continued expansion of the pipeline of engaged owners beyond those already known to include new prospects.

As a report on Connecticut woodland owners notes (Tyrrell, March 2015, p. 7-8), traditional programs geared toward silviculture are “not necessarily appealing to our ‘woodland retreat’ landowners. In order to get these landowners onto the engagement ladder of more and more active management of their woodlands, perhaps the traditional programs should be supplemented with lighter touch advice and assistance focused on activities the landowners enjoy, and solving the landowners’ problems. Once a landowner is engaged with a professional in small ways, such as getting advice on how to best cut firewood or build a trail, they are more likely to take some of the bigger steps such as silvicultural management for bird habitat or stand regeneration.”

- In concert with a potential Wildlands & Woodlands public education/communications campaign about the value of forests for people and society, outreach modules to landowners of smaller parcels (of less than 10 acres) and even backyard pollinator habitats could also be developed, highlighting climate solutions relevant for all scales along the spectrum from rural to suburban to urban. As Tyrrell (March 2015, p. 8) argues, owners of less than 10 acres should not be neglected, for “they need good advice and support to manage their woodlots and wooded backyards well.” (At the time, there was one Connecticut state urban forester for 122,000 of these small woodlot owners.)

Teaming Up to Propel Our Vision for the Forests of New England

The conservation and forestry fields now need to combine our accumulated knowledge to implement effective and efficient outreach tactics. Listed below are some prominent storehouses of outreach expertise that could combine forces for a Wildlands & Woodlands moon shot. We need all of these silos of outreach expertise working in concert, and available for deployment, in each important forested landscape.

AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION (AFF) BEST PRACTICES AND OUTREACH RESPONSE TRACKING

AFF has developed a Landowner Outreach Community of Practice for sharing best practices as well as a digital Woodland Owner database for tracking outreach marketing, owner response, action on the ground, and parcel ownership over time. They offer online resources such as Woods Camp (a web-based tool to match owners with conservation programs or stewardship opportunities: forestfoundation.org/aff-acquires-woodscamp) and MyLandPlan.org which helps landowners connect with a professional, plan and complete activities on their land. Currently 18,400 woodland owners have created accounts, owning roughly 3.4 million acres, of which they have used the site’s tool to map 1.8 million acres.

TELE (TOOLS FOR ENGAGING LANDOWNERS EFFECTIVELY)

TELE based at Yale’s Sustaining Family Forests Initiative has developed an outreach project planning protocol for identifying landowner-centric outcomes related to conservation goals, a message generation framework and monitoring follow-up. One of the pioneer programs in applying marketing techniques to landowner outreach over a decade ago, TELE’s resources provide a strong foundation for outreach projects to think through their audience and outcomes early in their implementation and to continually gauge success and improve results. Outreach grants could systematically provide funding for TELE training for RCPs, land trusts and conservation practitioners who have not received it.

UMASS AMHERST

UMass Amherst and partner institutions have done significant research on conservation-based estate planning and created publications (such as “Your Land, Your Legacy”) supporting owners to proactively engage in succession planning for their land—or to pursue conservation if that is their goal. With an aging landowner cohort in New England and the prospect of many high-priority lands changing hands in the next two decades, dedicated funding for proactive outreach, as well as a module of estate planning resources for landowners will be a key ingredient for success to meet Wildlands & Woodlands goals. Particularly when 65 percent of owners say their goal is to keep all or most of their land in one parcel, and 49 percent want to keep it undeveloped (Catanzaro, Markowski-Lindsay, Leahy, Sass & Ferrare, 2016), creating outreach campaigns based on key points in the owner decision cycle (such as retirement age or other key life events like funding college

education), could help to scale up estate planning support and engage more owners in pro-active planning for their land assets.

- Pairing of existing conservation-based estate planning resources with targeted outreach campaigns to test messages to landowners at key life stages or age cohorts. Annually offer a module of estate planning resources that can rotate in central locations throughout New England to allow motivated landowners who most need planning support to avail themselves of curated resources such as long-term care options, family facilitation or tax advice from professionals who are conversant in property law and land conservation options. Develop an RCP Network landowner support group or help line that could provide quick response upon request for family communication issues that may arise as estate planning ensues.
- Support for RCPs to compile and routinely update region-specific contact lists of estate planning attorneys with conservation experience, resources for family facilitation, long-term care insurance specialists and tax advisors and accountants. These contacts are always in demand, but deep lists of qualified professionals are not always readily available when needed. According to the MassConn 2017 Conservation Awareness Index, 84 percent of respondents said they DID NOT know of “an estate planning professional who is familiar with land conservation,” thus indicating the need to develop a network of these kinds of experts available to refer interested landowners. Development of regional professional development (through conferences and training programs, etc.) to continue building the ranks of conservation-minded professionals from the estate planning fields would be worthwhile.

WOW (WOMEN OWNING WOODLANDS)

The national WOW network, funded through the U.S. Forest Service with support from TELE and the Forest Stewards Guild to identify effective social networking outreach to this crucial segment of the landowner audience, deserves investment for expansion into new areas. In addition, several RCPs and other collaborative partnerships have pioneered robust peer-to-peer social networks focused on outreach to landowners within high-priority conservation landscapes (Cold Hollow to Canada, North Quabbin Regional Conservation Partnership, etc.). This experience could be applied more systematically in other areas, especially if targeted training was provided in “how to do peer-to-peer right,” as was observed at the Outreach Symposium.

womenowningwoodlands.net

catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9064

Conclusion

No one can predict exactly how New England’s forests will fare over the coming half-century, but we can make educated guesses based on solid research. The New England Landscape Futures Project seeks to model how current trends and potential future scenarios for land and energy development may affect the region’s natural landscape. With the “Forests as Infrastructure” scenario, we could increase by 20 percent the percentage of tree species with high commercial and wildlife value, double the amount of local forest products harvested, protect water quality, increase the amount of carbon stored in our forest by 35 percent, and reduce forest fragmentation by 25 percent (Thompson et al., 2014, p. 3-4).

Interviews with natural resource professionals about these scenarios underscored the important dynamic of the private ownership of forests as both a barrier and an opportunity (McBride, Duveneck, Lambert, Theoharides, & Thompson, 2018, Abstract): “The stakeholders overwhelmingly viewed ecological and social issues as interconnected rather than as distinct systems. They perceive the central challenges to sustainability to be: lack of funding and government support, increased development pressures, changing landowner demographics, and the difficulty of accounting for aggregate impacts in a dispersed planning context. The reduced ability of landowners to derive market values from their land was an overarching concern, with parcelization, fragmentation, and poorly planned development viewed as having a disproportionate impact on the character of the land and the potential to exacerbate the negative impacts of other drivers such as climate change. Perceived opportunities for promoting sustainable futures include ... realigning monetary incentives to recognize the collective benefits that forested landowners provide.”

Effective, strategic and sustained outreach to the owners of these forests will be crucial to making the scenario of a fully-functional, forested future a reality.

Download the full “From Engagement to Action” report at newenglandforestry.org/connect/publications/from-engagement-to-action

Scaling Up Strategic Landowner Outreach in New England

Recommended Stakeholder Actions	Land Trusts / RCPs	Public Agencies	Academic Researchers	Funders
Sustain Outreach Efforts	Build pro-active outreach into concrete plans to achieve W&W Vision outcomes	Seek opportunities to systematically offer large-acreage owners useful resources	Investigate hypotheses about timing of inflection points for landowner decisions	Fund bridge grants to keep up outreach momentum between high-profile projects & maintain continuity to owners
Build a Tool Belt: Best Practices Become Business as Usual (avoid funding competition between RCPs)	Identify gaps in regional resources and strategically offer/ implement programs to fill outreach gaps; evaluate ROI	Provide synthesis products to allow easier use of ownership statistics, parcel mapping data and other public info for outreach by partners	Support broader adoption of useful tools, such as estate planning resources and family facilitation	Support outreach “non-sexy” basics in grant proposals, including staff/ organizational capacity (messaging, mailings, landowner events, tracking)
Network With Other Practitioners to Speed Learning / Implementation and Share Resources	Create hubs to distill knowledge, allow practitioner resource sharing, and coordinate regional training, such as TELE, peer-to-peer programs	Seek to simplify bureaucratic steps to enrolling landowners in funding programs	Partner with conservation organizations to apply research findings to the field; pair research & extension	Coordinate grants and cycles to avoid repetitious funding streams & improve efficiency of outcomes; support communities of practice
Innovate for Even Greater Future Success	Embrace pro-active outreach tactics to prioritize prospect owners, parcels, rather than waiting for landowners to come to us	Abandon protocol with diminishing results (such as management plans that owners never implement because they lack \$)	Routinely partner with outreach practitioners to pilot promising applications of social science research about landowner motivation	Support outreach experimental efforts such as digital marketing tactics to identify prime prospects; invest in social media for outreach to next generation owners
Use Social Science to Understand Landowner Motivations and Responses	Apply & enhance peer learning techniques to recruit a corps of “ambassador” landowners who can inspire others	Seek opportunities to reduce landowner barriers to action (both perceived and actual)	Frame academic studies to provide actionable results for practitioners: research that works—answers what we don’t know	Fund practitioner training to implement peer learning programs and other proven avenues for engaging cohorts of landowners
Monitor and Report on Metrics	Integrate all RCP conservation priority maps to create a W&W “greenprint”	Develop landowner outreach measures of success, rather than just acres	Provide guidance to practitioners to vet outreach approaches for academic vigor	Encourage evaluation measures that last beyond the funding cycle & propel next steps

References

- Butler, B. J., Hewes, J. H., Dickinson, B. J., Andrejczyk, K., Butler, S. M., & Markowski-Lindsay, M. (2016). USDA Forest Service National Woodland Owner Survey: National, Regional, and State Statistics for Family Forest and Woodland Ownerships with 10+ Acres, 2011-2013. A Technical Document Supporting the Forest Service Update of the 2010 RPA Assessment. *Res. Bull. NRS-99. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2737/NRS-RB-99>
- Catanzaro, P., Markowski-Lindsay, M., Leahy, J., Sass, E., & Ferrare, K. (2016). Their Land, Their Legacy: A Guide to Helping Inform Landowners' Decisions about the Future of Their Land. University of Massachusetts Amherst, The University of Maine, The University of Vermont and Cornell University for USDA.
- Foster, D., Fallon Lambert, K., Kittredge, D., Donahue, B., Hart, C., Labich, W., ... Fahey, T. (2017). *Wildlands and Woodlands, Farmlands and Communities: Broadening the Vision for New England*. Petersham, MA: Harvard Forest, Harvard University. Figure 9.
- Kittredge, D. B. (2004). Extension/ Outreach Implications for America's Family Forest Owners. *Journal of Forestry*, 102(7), 15-18. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/jof/102.7.15>
- Labich, B. (2014). Northeast Regional Pilot Demonstration Project to Strengthen Forest Product Markets, Forest Stewardship, and Forest Conservation – Task 2: New York-New England Family Forest Owner Engagement Initiative, Final Report Summary: Highstead Foundation.
- Ma, Z., Kittredge, D.B., Catanzaro, P. (2011). Challenging the Traditional Forestry Extension Model: Insights from the Woods Forum Program in Massachusetts. *Small-Scale Forestry*, 11(1), 87–100. doi: 10.1007/s11842-011-9170-2
- McBride, M.F., Duvneck, M.J., Lambert, K.F., Theoharides, K.A., & Thompson, J.R. (2018). Perspectives of Resource Management Professionals on the Future of New England's Landscape: Challenges, Barriers, and Opportunities. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 188, 30-42 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2018.10.019>
- Morgan, W. (2017). Social Marketing Definition. *International Social Marketing Association*. Retrieved May 22, 2019 from <https://www.i-socialmarketing.org/social-marketing-definition#.XOWXNFJKjIU>
- Perschel, R.T., Giffen, R.A., & Lowenstein, F. (2014). *New England Forests: The Path to Sustainability*. 29 pp. Littleton, MA: New England Forestry Foundation. Summary of R.A. Giffen (Ed.), (2014). *New England Forests: The Path to Sustainability*, Technical Reports. Littleton, MA: New England Forestry Foundation.
- Snyder, L.B., & Broderick, S.H. (1992). Communicating with Woodland Owners: Lessons from Connecticut. *Journal of Forestry*, 90(3):33–37 Google Scholar.
- Thompson, J., Lambert, K.F., Foster, D., Blumstein, M., Broadbent, E., Almeyda Zambrano, A. (2014). *Changes to the Land: Four Scenarios for the Future of Massachusetts*. Petersham, MA: Harvard Forest, Harvard University. 38 p.
- Tyrrell, M. L. (March 2015). Understanding Connecticut Woodland Owners: A Report on the Attitudes, Values and Challenges of Connecticut's Family Woodland Owners. Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry.

Thank You to Our Funders and Partners

This report was written and produced with the support of the **Overhills Foundation** and would not be possible without the collaboration of numerous partners. **New England Forestry Foundation** extends a huge thank-you to the many colleagues from our original core partners, **American Forest Foundation** and the member organizations of the **MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership**, particularly **Opacum Land Trust** and **Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary**, who have contributed to this outreach initiative in countless ways and steadfastly approached this project with a spirit of collaboration. We are also grateful for guidance and cooperation from the **Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science** and to generous grants from the **Wildlife Conservation Society** and **USDA Forest Service** that propelled the climate change outreach components of this project as well as early support from the **Fieldstone Foundation** and **The Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment**. The desire of our partners, funders and colleagues to support the region's landowners—and to keep learning how best to do so—is greatly appreciated!

The authors are also grateful to the following people for their contributions to the MassConn Woods Landowner Outreach Initiative and review and production of this report:

Ed Hood, Madeline Jennison, Christine Cadigan, Maria Janowiak, Elizabeth Vranas, Lynn Riley, Brian Hall, Tinsley Hunsdorfer, Beth Gula, Kadie Moonitz, Alison Scheel, Jerry Greenberg, Caroline Kuebler, Nathan Truitt, Kelley Dennings, Morgan Smith, Sonya LeClair, Katie Blake, Katherine Hollins, Purnima Chawla, Bill Labich, Brett Butler, Amanda Robillard, Paul Catanzaro, David Kittredge, Mary Tyrrell, Hallie Schwab, Jennifer Ohop, Leslie Duthie, Matthew Pooler, James Gage, Lindsay Suhr, Cynthia Henshaw, Michael Hveem, Douglas Emmerthal, Daniel Peracchio, Christopher Martin, Peter Church, Jennifer Fish, Dan Donahue, Dan Evans, Carmine Angeloni, Jim DiMaio, Jacqueline Kulig, Scott Gerrish, Eric Hansen, Christopher Riely, Steve Broderick, Warren Church, Ingrid Aarrestad, Andy Rzeznikiewicz, Jeff Stefanik, Whitney Beals, Penny Flynn, Carson Hauck, Sarah Brodeur, Kate Hauske, Doug Hutcheson, Chris Capone, Jeffrey Ritterson, Tom Worthley, Lois Bruinooge, Bill Reid, Amy Paterson.



NEW ENGLAND
FORESTRY
FOUNDATION