

FALL 2014

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COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA 2.0

By Charlie Hancock

Hi friends, and welcome to the Fall 2014 edition of our quarterly newsletter! We hope that this edition of *Connections* finds you looking forward to cooler days, crisp nights, and the slow transition as the landscape is painted in a pallet of reds, oranges and yellows.

We've been doing a lot of soul searching at CHC of late. As the organization heads into our seventh year we've been reflecting on the original Vision and Goals of the partnership to measure our successes, address our weaknesses, and chart a course for the next seven years. In doing so, we've re-tailored the original Vision and Goals of the organization to reflect a more concise description of our dream for the future of our region, and to provide metrics for the success we're working to achieve. We're the same CHC, just with stronger focus, renewed commitment, and revitalized energy. You can check out the amended Vision and Goals at our website, www.coldhollowtocanada.org.

With our renewed commitment in mind, Cold Hollow to Canada hosted a gathering in August to bring together members of the CHC Steering committee and representatives from our partner organizations, including the Vermont Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Lands, the Staying Connected Initiative, Vermont Natural Resource Council, and

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CHC STEERING COMMITTEE

Bakersfield:

Mary Schwartz and
Forrest Dunnivant

Enosburgh:

Nancy Patch, Chris Damato
and Ward Heneveld

Fletcher:

Corey Brink

Montgomery:

Charlie Hancock,
Chair

Richford:

Bill McGroarty and
Lenny Tamulonis

PHOTOS: JOANNE WAZNY



Appalachian Corridor Appalacien (of Quebec). During an evening full of great food and big ideas, opportunities to leverage greater resources for the work in our region were identified and connections were formed toward common goals. Seeds for future projects that were sown over the course of the evening include projects around Wood Turtle Habitat, and expanding the range of our Forest Songbird Initiative to our neighbors in Quebec. Plans for expanding our outreach to new stakeholder groups in the outdoor recreation community and tourism industry were also discussed. Insights were shared about funding opportunities to sustain existing programs, as well as to launch new ones. The general consensus at the end of the night was that our Regional Conservation Partnership is truly the future of conservation planning, in the words of Aesop, “In union there is strength.”

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. Inside you'll find an update on CHC's Keeping Track Initiative, an article on Low Impact Logging, a re-cap of the recent gathering of the Cold Hollow Woodlots Project in Enosburg, and the poetry of one of our members. Don't forget to check out the upcoming events, including Mary Holland with Naturally Curious in Montgomery, Ben Kilham—the Bear Man!—in Richford, and Sue Morse of Keeping Track in Enosburg. Also stop by the website to also check out a new page describing our Climate Change Resiliency project, as well as other upcoming events this season.

Thanks, and happy fall.

– The CHC Steering Committee



JOANNE WAZNY

KEEPING TRACK UPDATE

By Nancy Patch

Over the last five years, Cold Hollow to Canada has worked very closely with the Keeping Track organization. Keeping Track® Monitoring Programs (KTMP) trains citizen volunteers and professionals alike to detect, identify, interpret and record the tracks and other signs of the animals that are critical to local ecological health.

Trained trackers gain valuable skills in identifying habitat types and designing and monitoring study areas, in order to document:

- The presence or absence of sensitive, endangered or other target species
- Repeated uses of specific areas which could lead to the identification of critical habitat areas and/or travel corridors
- Positive or negative changes in the status of animals inhabiting an area, and corresponding changes in habitat size and quality
- The need for both immediate and long-term conservation planning.

Using this documentation, the monitoring teams can provide the information needed to help prevent the destruction of important animal habitats, as well as to make sure the community gets the most from its limited conservation resources.

CHC has now collected data from four transects, two in Enosburgh, one in Richford and one in Montgomery. We also have 10 people signed up for a new training to start October 4th. These new trackers include citizens that live in the CHC region, and our Canada neighbors, and will expand our transect base adding new energy to existing



JOAN HILDRETH

teams. The other great news is we have teamed up with three UVM seniors to analyze the data that has already been collected on the active transects. After 5 years we have enough data to start showing trends in animal presence and movement. The students will:

- 1) Enter data that has been collected but not entered onto the website for all visitors to see.
- 2) Analyze the data to show trends and outcomes, using a variety of tools to present the data.
- 3) Provide one complete report to CHC, with sections separated that can be independently provided to the towns of Enosburgh, Montgomery, and Richford.
- 4) Compare this project with other citizen science programs, i.e. the North American Breeding Bird survey.

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SUSAN MCGINLEY

The reports are expected to include the data analysis, detailed information on the focal species; moose, bear, bobcat, fisher, mink, otter, lynx, including things such as habitat needs, territories, life spans, reproduction etc. The student researchers will also describe the challenges to wildlife habitat integrity across the Northern

Forest from fragmentation, climate change, encroachment and other impacts. CHC can then use this information to bring to the towns to advance town planning and land conservation. The information we are gathering is incredibly useful and what the volunteer trackers are doing in the region can make a difference.

LOW IMPACT LOGGING AND CUT TO LENGTH OPERATIONS

By Nancy Patch

Low impact logging can mean different things to different people who utilize very different harvesting systems. However, there are some practices that are generally present in a low impact logging operation regardless of equipment. These include:

- Having a written forest management plan
- Working with a forester to mark and administer the harvest or at a minimum to provide advice
- Planning roads and trails prior to harvest
- Use directional felling techniques
- Minimize ground disturbance
- Minimize damage to the trees left after the harvest

- Follow VT State Acceptable Management Practices for water quality
- Have good communication between forester, landowner and logger, including a written contract

Low impact logging may also mean that the forest management implemented will meet current needs without compromising the future forest. This is the concept of sustainability. This strategy includes removing the lower quality trees first, and harvesting the trees without skinning or damaging the best high value trees left behind. Logging costs are generally higher when employing low impact logging because future value takes a priority. The higher value of the future product and the protection of the existing ecosystem is an investment that pays back now and in the future.

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JOANNE WAZNY



Low impact logging often takes into consideration a more holistic approach that includes sustaining local community values, favors local markets, and adds value to the woodlot over time. Practices that meet these goals include:

- Removing inferior or low value trees to improve long term timber value
- Hiring a forester to oversee the job
- Employing a logger who you know uses low impact equipment and ensures minimal stand and site disturbance, adding value to the future stand
- Organizing or joining a local forestry co-operative

Some of the equipment used to conduct low impact logging includes horses, small tractors, conventional cable skidders, dozers and forwarders, and Cut-to-Length harvesters with forwarders. Horse logging and small farm tractor logging is limited by length of skid and value of the timber. There are very few horse loggers operating commercially today and farm tractors are mostly used when the landowner themselves are doing the harvesting. There are many small cable skidder operators still in business today, but having a high skill level and

deserved reputation are essential. There are fewer forwarder or cut-to-length operators in our region because of the cost of the equipment and the lack of training. These last harvesting systems are probably the most economical for larger woodlots and the best choice for our terrain and soils especially since climate change causes warmer and wetter conditions. The cut-to-length operations that utilize a forwarder have a lighter impact because the trees are not dragged out of the woods, but rather loaded onto a bunk and carried. The machines have tracks which distribute the load to minimize rutting and ground disturbance. The Cut-to-length harvester allows the logger to stay in a cab, safe from any dangers associated with hand felling. Choosing the right equipment and logger for your woodlot is a very important decision and one that your forester should be involved with. Since there is good economic and ecological gains from using this more modern equipment, efforts should be made to train loggers in their use. To that end, CHC plans to participate in discussions with the Tech centers and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to find ways to help train future loggers from our communities. Those of you who would like to find out more may contact CHC.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Attention Readers!

Would you like to submit an article for *Connections* or notify us of an upcoming event?

If so, please email your information to info@coldhollowtocanada.org and put 'Connections Newsletter Submission' in the subject line.

We'd love to hear from you!

A PEER TO PEER APPROACH TO WOODLANDS MANAGEMENT

By Ward Heneveld



JOANNE WAZNY

In last winter's *Connections* there was an article that talked about the potential for improved woodlands management through peer to peer groups and offered the example of 12 landowners in Enosburgh who have started to cooperate across their property boundaries for the management of their forested land. The group has now met four times, each time on a different property. Among us we have a total acreage of approximately 2,000 acres.

At our get-togethers we have enjoyed a meal and discussed the management of our forested land. We've spent most of the time together walking and talking in the woods. So far, our events have focused on learning about each other's properties as we walk through them together guided by the two foresters in our group, Nancy Patch and

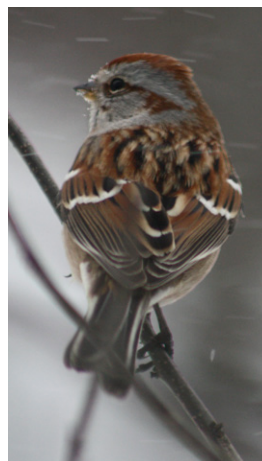
Charlie Hancock. In the woods Charlie and Nancy have described what's there and how the variety in the woods contributes to the woods' resilience and its health as an animal habitat. Together, we've looked at the composition of each other's woodlots, examined closely what's in the vernal pools and growing under the trees, assessed the amount of damage done by wind and ice storms over the last few years, and learned names of everything from large trees to invasive plants and small ferns and how to differentiate among them. After the meal at one of the gatherings we spent time releasing the apple trees in an overgrown orchard, and on our most recent walk we compared the regeneration among different blow-down sections of our host's woodlot. We will meet again later this year to visit another neighbor's woodlot.

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More targeted cooperation is also occurring under Nancy and Charlie's leadership. Since all of the land-owners in the group have land management plans in Vermont's Land Use Program, we've been able to complete an assessment of how well each existing plan considers climate change challenges. The foresters used a template provided by the US Forest Service for the assessment, and we discussed the overall results from the assessment at our last group gathering. In addition, a bird assessment of each property has been completed with the help of Steve Hagenbuch from the Audubon Vermont, and a synthesis of the individual reports is being prepared.



JOANNE WAZNY

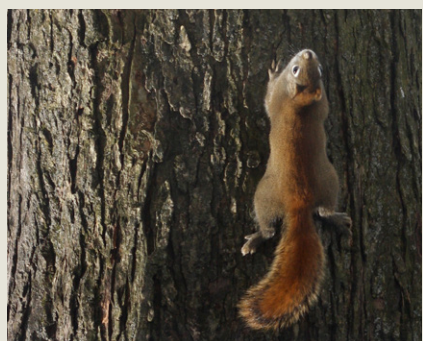
Those of us involved are delighted at how much we are learning and at the introduction in detail to each other's land. Where this will lead is not clear, but the friendship, cooperation, and appreciation for our woods grows each time we get together.

DEBATE

By Geof Hewitt

*On the stack of cherry firewood
cut in a sweat last August
2 Squirrels alternate and squabble
for dominion. The off squirrel
soothes his feelings foraging
under the hanging feeder.*

*He urges the chickadees
to nudge the feeder, chucks at them
to spill their seed
while the lordly squirrel preens at the top
of my wood, and with piggish eye
regards his peer.*



*Tails up, they also engage
in races across the crusted snow
in and out of brush piles and up a giant dead pine
for a stand-off on the second lowest limb.*

*Last spring 2 downy male woodpeckers
in a mating altercation
tumbled repeatedly to the ground
until I pounced on them and captured one.
He blinked, repentant
as I cupped and admonished him*

*in the ways of peace,
then released him to the sky where
without missing a beat his wings unfolded
and carried him back to the fight.*

Selected from "The Perfect Heart" and printed by permission from the author.

Note: Geof and his wife Janet own property in the Cold Hollow to Canada region and are active in the Enosburgh Cross Boundary project. They have owned this property for decades, once living there in a cabin they built but later finding work and a living in other parts of VT.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BAKERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the last Monday of every month at 1:00 PM in the Town Hall Building, 40 East Bakersfield Rd, Bakersfield.

ENOSBURGH CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the fourth Monday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Cold Hollow Career Center, 184 Missisquoi St., Enosburg Falls.

MONTGOMERY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the first Wednesday of every month from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Montgomery Town Office, 98 Main St (VT Route 118), Montgomery Center.

RICHFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:00 PM in the upstairs conference room of the Arvin A. Brown Public Library, 88 Main St, Richford.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY COMMITTEE

Meets the third Thursday of every month from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Locations vary so visit www.vtwsr.org for up-to-date information.

COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA STEERING COMMITTEE

Meets the third Monday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Cold Hollow Career Center in Enosburg Falls or Bakersfield Library. We rotate the location, so please let us know if you'll be joining us. It'd be great to see you there.

Mary Holland with Naturally Curious
A Naturalist's Journey through
12 Months of the Year
Thursday October 16th at 6:30
at the Montgomery Grange Hall

Loon to Lynx: Celebrating
the 40th Anniversary of
the Endangered Species Act
An all-day symposium (9am to 4:30pm)
sponsored by VT Agency of Natural Resources
Thursday, October 23
at ECHO Aquarium and Science Center,
One College St., Burlington
Visit the Loon to Lynx website
(<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/site/html/L2L.htm>)
for details and registration info.

Ben Kilham, the Bear Man
Thursday November 6th at 6:30pm
at the Richford Town Hall

Sue Morse
Cougars Coming East
in December in Enosburg
(date, time and location
to be announced)

**Don't forget to check coldhollowtocanada.org
for updated Upcoming Events*

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