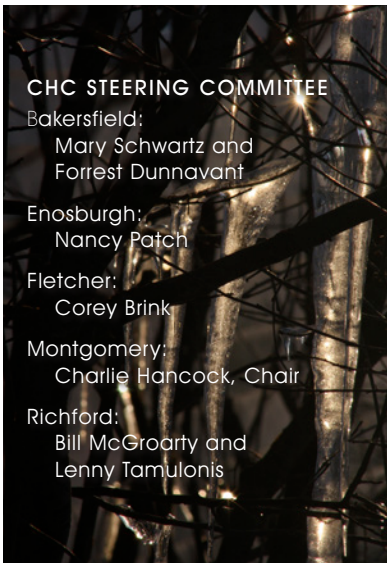
CONNECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA FOREST LINK

WINTER 2012

INSIDE



PHOTOS: JOANNE WAZNY

A Foundation for Growth

By Charlie Hancock

Hi friends, and welcome to the Winter edition of *CONNECTIONS*, the quarterly newsletter from Cold Hollow to Canada. We hope that this edition finds your wood piles topped off and your skis waxed as we settle back and wait for the landscape to turn white again. Our Keeping Track teams will be back out on their transects in the next few weeks, and with the return of the snow those participants in the Wild-paths project will be back monitoring the connectivity zones in our area to gather data on the movement of mammal populations in our region. Interested in joining a team, or curious to learn more about the projects? Check out the tracking page at our website at www.coldhollowtocanada.org. We've got a number of other irons in the fire, lining up presentations and seminars for the winter and spring, and we're still working to launch the *Cross Boundary-Land Owner Cooperative* project this coming year which was detailed in our Spring 2012 newsletter (don't forget you can always find past newsletters at the website!).

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This year CHC enters its 5th year as an organization. From a small gathering of community members armed with magic markers and maps discussing what we value about the place we call home, CHC has grown to have engaged hundreds of people from across our region (in both the US and Canada) in our work celebrating the natural heritage of this place and working to protect it. We continue to expand our horizon with the projects planned for the coming year, and reflect that none of this could have happened without your engagement and continued support. For that we truly thank you…but now we're asking for a little bit more.

With this edition of *CONNECTIONS,* CHC is launching our first ever fundraising campaign to help develop a foundation to build the capacity of the organization, and to support future programs across our region. This winter, we're asking you to buy an oak tree. In addition to providing a source of mast to sustain the wildlife in our region, a source of timber to sustain the wood products economy in our communities, and a source of strength to sustain the ecological health of our soils and waterways, the mighty oak tree also symbolizes a source of adaptation in a changing world. As the climate continues to shift, and species ranges move in response through the coming decades, oak will likely become a more prominent member of our forest community. Through supporting CHC, you can give the species a leg-up as we assist in the migration of this native and expanding species. Details and an order form can be found below, and thanks in advance.

We hope you enjoy this edition. Inside you'll find information on Marten, Forest Certification programs, and the new BIOFINDER, as well as a list of upcoming events in our regions.

Happy Solstice,

The CHC Steering Committee

Fundraiser and Forest Protector

Consider Helping **Cold Hollow to Canada** while also helping our Forest survive Global Warming through assisted migration of a native and expanding species.

Buy a red oak for $5.00 each to plant yourself or give to CHC to plant somewhere in our region. Primary sites would include town forests, upland riparian areas, or on private land.

****

Name:_____

Address:_____

Phone number and/or e-mail:_____

⇨ **Place order by January 5th.** ⇦

Choose your option:

Red oak to be picked up in spring ____ Quantity _____ x $5.00 $ Subtotal _____

Red oak to be planted by CHC ____ Quantity _____ x $5.00 $ Subtotal _____

Total $ Enclosed _____

Cut out and send a check made out to Cold Hollow to Canada and send to:
P.O. Box 405, Montgomery Ctr., VT 05476
You will be contacted for pick-up location in the spring

Marten and Fisher: Our Native Mustelid Cousins

By Nancy Patch

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE

The American Marten or Pine Marten is a member of the weasel family that can be found in the northeast part of Vermont but which may be moving into the Northern Green Mountains. In September members of CHC and citizens of the region were lucky to have marten researcher Jill Kilborn present her work to us. Jill has provided us with a summary of her work to date, which is printed later in this newsletter. As an introduction to Jill's work I would like to provide a brief description of the Marten and compare it to our more abundant resident, the Fisher.

Martens and Fishers have an overlapping range, but the Marten range is further north, with the Northern half of Vermont and the eastern Adirondacks at its southern edge. The Marten range extends north to encompass most of Canada and Alaska. The Fisher range includes all of Vermont and down into PA and Maryland, with its northern range stopping at the southern edge of the Northwest and Yukon Territiories in Canada.

Both the Fisher and Marten are members of the weasel family but are shorter bodied than the other weasels. The Fisher is the larger of the two with a darker coloration. Their fur is typically dark brown with black at the legs and tail. The Marten is a light-dark brown, or gold with darker brown legs and tail. The Marten also often has large patches of cream to gold on their chins and throats. Fisher ears are pointed while Marten ears are round. Both animals are trapped for their fur in some parts of the country. Marten had been called American sable in the past in reference to their fine fur. **Neither trapping nor hunting is allowed for Marten in Vermont. Fisher may be trapped in the month of December but not hunted.**

Habitat preferences for both Fisher and Marten can be similar, with a preference for conifer dominated forests with continuous cover. Both require abundant structure near the ground which provides habitat for foraging and resting sites. Martens especially take advantage of subnivean cavities in the winter to forage for prey. Fisher tend to avoid areas of deep snow in winter as they are a heavier animal. More research is necessary to define successional requirements for Fisher and Marten, but Marten can not tolerate large opening or early successional habitat. Researchers Chapin and Payer found that the population of Marten in Maine dropped precipitously when timber harvesting led to greater than 60% of the forest in early successional stages (young stage of forest growth after clearcutting). Martens will avoid regenerating clearcuts for decades. Structural complexity seems

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE

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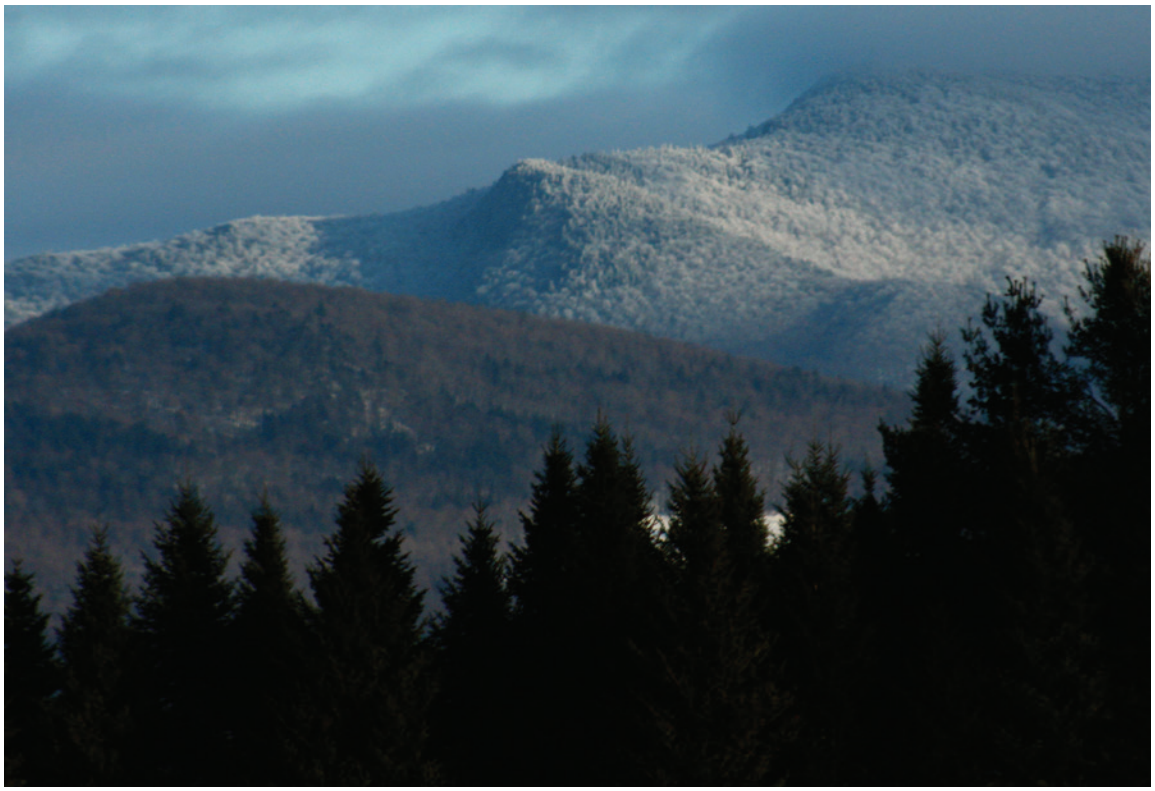
to be the most important characteristic of both Fisher and Marten habitat. Structural complexity includes multiple aged trees, large trees with den potential, large down trees used for denning, foraging and resting, dense understory where primary prey such as snowshoe hare can be found. Large Aspen can be a preferred tree for denning. If you are a landowner, retaining or enhancing structural complexity in the forest will help the Fisher and may even encourage the Marten to move in as it expands its range. Forester managers will also need to consider strategies for protecting conifer refugia and connectivity to mitigate climate change stress to our conifer forests.

Please contact us through our website if you want to know more about Marten or Fisher.



JOANNE WAZNY

Tracking Marten in New Hampshire

By Alexej Siren, UNH and Jillian Kilborn, NH Fish and Game

Recently New Hampshire Fish and Game has been working with the University of New Hampshire to learn more about the potential impacts of high elevation industrial wind development on American marten in northern New Hampshire. The specific objectives of the study were to examine marten movements in high elevation habitats, across seasons and the landscape. Data collection and analyses have also been used to examine how snow compaction on roads and trails created by the wind development may be impacting wildlife in the area and lastly developing a cost effective method to determine marten abundance and distribution statewide. All this work will be shared to help other states, such as Vermont, help manage marten where they have been identified.

As part of the NH study, 34 marten have been captured, and 7 are still being monitored using radio telemetry and remote dataloggers. The 3 dataloggers were placed along one of the developed ridgelines and are continuously monitoring the use of high elevation spruce fir habitat by the marten. Early datalogger results have shown changes in marten use of these areas during different seasons, turbine and road construction periods, with changes in marten territories and changes in pulsing food resources. Specifically, marten were detected in spruce fir habitats more often during winter, and the least detections coincided with the peak wind construction period (summer 2011). There is also evidence that marten shift territories to include more spruce fir habitat when space becomes available and use spruce fir more often when a food resource becomes available (e.g., mountain ash berries).

Preliminary analysis also seems to indicate that winter use of high elevation habitats is changing due to species historically unable to access the habitats utilizing the compacted road and trails to gain access. Cameras have also been used to effectively census the population in the study area.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME

Methodologies to individually identify marten based on their throat patches will be used to help determine marten abundance within the study area, and potentially statewide.

For more information on this study or marten in New Hampshire contact:

Jillian Kilborn
Wildlife Biologist
NH Fish and Game, Region 1
629B Main Street
Lancaster NH 03584

(603) 788 3164
jillian.kilborn@wildlife.nh.gov
www.wildnh.com
www.facebook.com/nhfishandgame

For more information or to report a marten sighting in Vermont contact Chris Bernier at Chris.Bernier@state.vt.us.

Going Green: The Opportunity for Forest Certification

By Charlie Hancock

Forest certification, or 'Green Certification' as it's sometimes called, seeks to identify forestland that is managed to meet agreed-upon standards, and label products originating from those forests. This allows the consumer to differentiate between the various sources of wood that may arrive on the market. The goal is to promote forest practices that are environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically prosperous over the long term; in other words, sustainable forestry. The Tree Farm program (established in 1941) was an early certification scheme designed to draw public attention and support to active management that's based on the principles of sound forestry. A newer, global step in forest certification spawned from the concern around the rapid deforestation of tropical forests, leading to the establishment of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Initiated in 1993 by a partnership of ENGOs and social activists, FSC now certifies an increasingly diverse range of ownerships through-out the world. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) was created by the forest products industry in response to FSC, originally a self-regulating program, it now also has a third party auditing component. Other systems have been developed as well, such as the National Forest Associations Green Tag, and the Pan European Forest Certification scheme. While each system is built around an individual framework with different metrics and performance standards used to determine certification, they all share the common theme of independent verification that management is directed to minimize harm to the forest systems worked in, and the communities they support. Under each system the landowner drives the individual goals, targets, and management plan for the parcel or land base, but the certification body sets specific performance criteria (standards of management and indicators by which to measure them) and oversees the assessment of the process to ensure conformance through an auditing program which starts in the office and ends in the field to ensure application of practices on the ground.

Green certification presents a number of opportunities to landowners and forest managers. Certification provides a positive image for forestry, and influences how the public views management activities. It also provides credibility to environmental claims made by landowners. Wood products from certified forests can also obtain price premiums from buyers, increasing income to landowners. Certification can also allow landowners to capture new markets and market advantage as the demand for "green" building materials grows through parallel programs like LEED building certification. Certification also comes with some challenges. Managers need to ensure that all performance standards are met throughout the operation, as well as adapt as the standards of certification change and evolve. The material from certified forests must also be carefully tracked from the stump to the final market through a detailed chain-of-custody system, which can be tricky to develop and maintain. While there's been tremendous growth in the past decade, there's also limited demand for certified wood in today's market as most consumers aren't yet aware of what certification means. Perhaps the biggest challenge to certification (especially to non-industrial owners, like the smaller family forests in our region) is the overall cost to the landowner. Whereas the cost to a large ownership (with multiple thousands of acres) might equate to around $0.40 an acre, the cost to an ownership on 20–100 acres could equate to $50 or $100 per acre, potentially making it cost prohibitive. In response to this challenge,

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FSC has worked to develop innovative models to provide a variety of opportunities for smaller owners to realize the economic benefits of stewardship and gain access to markets for FSC-certified wood products through efficient, low-cost group programs.

As innovators continue to develop more efficient and cost effective strategies for the certification of smaller family forests like the ones that dominate our landscape, and as the demand for certified wood grows and more wood users in our region look to find local, sustainable supplies, the value of certification will continue to increase. This will provide for the recognition of sustainable forestry in our region, strengthen our local economies, and ensure that the sound management of our forests is the norm going into the future. So next time you're at the lumber yard, or buying new furniture or flooring, or purchasing another box of paper for your printer, look for the seal of certification. And if you don't see it, ask why. This future is only possible if we, the consumer, demand it.

JOANNE WAZNY

BioFinder

Developed by Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

Written by the BioFinder Team

BioFinder is a web-based map tool identifying Vermont's lands and waters supporting high priority ecosystems, natural communities, habitats, and species.

The most comprehensive assessment of its kind in Vermont, **BioFinder** will allow ANR staff, our partners, planners, developers, educators and the public to see the relative contribution to the state's biological diversity of sites small and large, across the state. Its goal is to further our collective stewardship and conservation efforts. For ANR staff, **BioFinder** will be a great first place to look when reviewing Act 248/250 and other development applications.

At its core, **BioFinder** is 21 datasets representing various scales and aspects of terrestrial and aquatic biological, ecological and natural resource information. A co-occurrence analysis prioritizes those areas of greatest overlap where natural heritage and ecological value is high.

This proactive effort on our part will make it easier for statewide, regional and municipal planners and large-scale developers to incorporate ANR priorities into their development plans and thereby avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to Vermont's environment. And students, educators and the general public can use **BioFinder** to explore the distribution and richness of Vermont's rich landscape and associated natural resources.

For ANR staff, **BioFinder** will be a great first place to look when reviewing Act 248/250 and other development applications. In particular, this project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Vermont Clean Energy Fund to develop a map that identifies areas that are potentially unsuitable for large-scale renewable energy development. ANR is now required by the new Vermont Energy Legislation to use this information when reviewing these sorts of projects.

And, BioFinder is coming your way…soon.

CHC hopes to have a presentation in our region soon after its launch in early January. Stay tuned.

JOANNE WAZNY

Upcoming Events

Bakersfield Conservation Commission

Meets the last Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Building, 40 East Bakersfield Rd, Bakersfield.

Enosburg Conservation Commission

Meets the fourth Monday of every month at 7:30 PM in the Emergency Services Building, 83 Sampsonville Rd (Rte 105), 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 Committee

Meets the fourth Monday of the month at 6:00 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.

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

Christmas Bird Count
January 5, 2013

The **National Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC)** is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of citizen science involvement. It is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the US, Canada and many countries in the Western Hemisphere, go out over a 24 hour period to count birds.

Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15 mile circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. The new pilot CBC in Eastern Franklin County will include the towns of Enosburg Falls, Richford and Montgomery and is supported by all three town Conservation Commissions. If you would like to sign up as a volunteer or to learn more about the CBC please contact Eddy Edwards at 802-933-5327 or plan on attending the pre-count meeting on December 18, 2012 at the AA Brown Library in Richford at 7pm.

JOANNE WAZNY