



# Connections

The newsletter of Cold Hollow to Canada Forest Link: Winter 2010



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## Special points of interest:

- Check out our new column (page 4) that, each month, will offer you insights into resources available to you for help managing your land.
- If you'd like to be more involved with CHC, consider representing your town on our Steering Committee



Edits and layout by  
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## Welcome, Winter

Greetings friends. Welcome to Winter and the third edition of our quarterly newsletter! Inside you'll find out about coyote activity in Richford, what a forester really does (besides play in the woods all day), and how to identify a tree when the leaves aren't there to help. We'd also like to take this opportunity to check in on what Cold Hollow to Canada has been up to since our last newsletter went out.

On October 19<sup>th</sup> CHC partnered with the Staying Connected Initiative to bring Sue Morse of Keeping Track and her amazing wildlife museum up to Jay Peak. Over 100 community members from more than six towns turned out to see mounts, pelts, skulls, tracks and—of course—the unforgettable presentation of Sue's amazing wildlife photography from all over North America. It was a great success. Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time to pull that event off and to everyone who came out to enjoy it!

CHC's partnership with the Vermont Natural Resource Council (VNRC)—a collaboration on land use planning in our

region which we introduced in our last newsletter—is picking up speed. This fall, the Enosburg and Montgomery Planning Commissions met with experts from VNRC to begin a discussion on shaping planning and zoning strategies to maintain healthy forests and wildlife popula-

tions while also encouraging 'smart' growth around town. CHC hopes that by facilitating the discussion in our communities, VNRC can provide the technical assistance skills necessary to identify and draft

land use and zoning strategies and non-regulatory approaches that will help protect the resources each unique town identifies as important (for more on this partnership checkout out our website – [www.coldhollowtocanada.org](http://www.coldhollowtocanada.org)).

Also, we're happy to report that this year's Keeping Track group had its first tracking day on December 11<sup>th</sup>. In addition to folks from the CHC region, this year's group includes folks from Quebec and towns to our east like Troy and Jay.

Thanks for following our newsletter; we hope you enjoy this wintry edition.

Have a joyful New Year,  
Charlie Hancock, CHC Chair



Photo by Charlie Hancock

*Lots to explore at Oct 19 event in Jay*



## My Coyotes in Richford

by Lenny Tamulonis, Richford resident

Several years ago on a snowy morning in late fall, a group of us started out on a trek to explore a parcel of forest my wife and I had just bought in Richford. A logging company had planned to buy the 100 acre woodland and clear cut it and then sell it for development, but luckily we were able to outbid the company and get these acres into a conservation program. This was important to us because it abutted land we already owned and were conserving.

A little way off the dirt road, we came across some dark patches on the thin snow cover. "It looks like a deer kill," someone said. We gathered around the trampled snow and saw tufts of fur and a few scattered bones and several scat deposits. Coyotes, we agreed. It was obvious there had been more than one coyote involved and not much remained. Whatever the coyotes had left behind had been taken by fishers, crows, foxes, and other forest scavengers.

My interest in coyotes grew as the seasons changed. I noticed them more in the colder weather – maybe because it's easier to pick out their signs in the snow or because they mate in winter and make more noise during those frosty nights. Their calls can be long drawn-out howls ending in a yip or series of yips or even a bark or two. I started to find coyote tracks near the muddy stream banks on the edge of the hayfield. At first I thought they were dog tracks since our neighbors sometimes let their dogs run free during the day, but these were much larger than the tracks made by the midsized canines our neighbors keep as pets, and the scats contained seeds from berries and occasionally bits of bone and hair.

Frequently, the difference between coyote and dog tracks can be subtle and even experienced observers will have difficulty recognizing them for what they are. Coyote's nails are sharp and fine and the nails on the two center toes at the top of the pad are close together; the nails on the other toes may not even show in the track. Generally, the toes are more aligned and straighter than a dog's which may be splayed with thicker, blunter nails.

I wondered why these animals are specifically called



Courtesy Jon Way, Eastern Coyote Research

"eastern" coyotes and if there was a difference between them and their western cousins. It looks like western coyotes migrated to the northeast by traveling up and across Canada and along the way mated with eastern or grey wolves. Tests conclusively show wolf DNA in eastern coyotes and this wolf/coyote crossing has made these eastern coyotes bigger – the males can be as large as 50 lbs while their western relatives reach 40 lbs. Some researchers have even taken to calling them "coy wolves" instead of eastern coyotes.

They are survivors (they've been here since the Pleistocene era nearly 2,000,000 years ago) and will eat almost anything to stay alive: insects, berries, fruit, birds, rodents and other small game. Occasionally, if they are hungry enough, they will successfully hunt something as large as a deer in the winter. There is a belief that these animals are voracious predators that will kill goats and smaller farm animals as well as impact the deer population, but this is generally false. They are more interested in rodents and varmints than livestock and will take down sickly and weak deer, so they actually are a help and not a threat to farmers and hunters.

Sometimes on the edge of the meadow under the shelter of the trees, we've found what look like temporary coyote beds in the snow but these must have been made by visitors just passing through since coyotes are markedly territorial.

This year, in October, we heard their distinctive howls in the early morning dark and it was reassuring. The season had changed and once again our friends were letting us know they were back.



## What is a Forester, and What Can They Do to Help You?

by Nancy Patch, Franklin-Grand Isle County Forester and CHC Steering Committee member, Enosburgh

There are two main types of foresters in Vermont who work with private landowners. County foresters are public employees who work for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Consulting foresters are privately employed and work for landowners directly.

Your Vermont **County Foresters** are state employees who are available to provide information, technical assistance, and outreach to the people of Vermont about managing and stewarding forestland. County forester offices are conveniently located around the state. Whether you are interested in timber harvesting, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation improvements, or all of the above, your County Forester can guide you. Although limited in the amount of field work they can do for any one landowner, they can accompany you on a walk in your woods to help you discover what's there, discuss your goals and objectives for the forest, and talk about what forest management activities you might consider to meet your goals and objectives. County Foresters are able to provide you with a listing of natural resource professionals who provide management services. They can update you on state and federal programs including NRCS Stewardship planning, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Environmental

Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the VT State Use Value Appraisal Program. County Foresters also often provide outreach to non-profit organizations and schools especially including outdoor walks and presentations but also indoor discussions and displays.

**Consulting Foresters** work in the private sector and provide a variety of services including forest

you need to take special care when hiring someone. The County Foresters all have a list of Consulting Foresters in their areas. A consultant's livelihood is based on satisfied clients. The forester you hire serves you and represents your best interests in all matters concerning your woodland. Depending on the type of project, their fees are usually based on either the

amount of time required to perform the job or the acreage of woodland involved. Costs should be one consideration in choosing a consultant, but a forester's experience and education, performance record, reputation, and understanding of your objectives are equally or, as I would argue, more important. There is no single

*best* way to manage your forest land. Choose a consultant who understands your personal needs and with whom you feel comfortable. You may ask for references, and as the Franklin-Grand Isle County Forester, I recommend asking for a sample management plan when seeking the services for development of a plan. Lastly, I strongly recommend that when a commercial sale is to take place you have the trees marked (for cutting) by a professional forester, whose charge it is to work in your interest to maintain equity in your forest and improve the quality of the forest both economically and ecologically.



Photo by Jo Anne Wazny

management planning, timber value appraisal, boundary marking, timber stand improvement, wildlife habitat improvement, recreation enhancement, sugarbush development, administration of timber sales (contract negotiation, timber marking, marketing, road layout, close-out), timber tax depletion accounting, wetland protection and restoration, and just about anything else that interests you in the forest. In Vermont, Foresters are not required to be licensed as they are in our neighboring states of New Hampshire, New York, and Massachusetts. Here, foresters are regulated by the marketplace so

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# No Leaves, No Problem: Easy Winter Tree ID

Article by Charlie Hancock, CHC Chair, Montgomery, with Photos by John Shane at UVM

It's all about **buds and bark**. Sounds like I could be talking about a cooler full of beer and a black lab, but I'm actually talking about the best way to identify trees in the winter.

Let's start with **buds**. Each tree species has a uniquely shaped or colored bud—long and skinny, short and fat, light, dark or stripped. Say you're in the woods next week and you're looking at two trees, trying to decide which one is a sugar maple and which one is a red maple. Look up—are the buds (located at the ends of the fine twigs) big, fat and red? Or are they small, pointy and brown? While maples leaves can sometimes look similar, their buds are *WAY* different. Sugar maple have chestnut brown buds that are relatively small and sharply pointed. Red maple buds are red and round. *Really* round. These bad boys are so fat there's no way—once you know what you're looking for—you'll get the two mixed up. American beech also have distinct buds. Their buds are light brown, long and very skinny. We used to call these mouse stogies, because they're just about the right size for Mickey.

Speaking of beech, let's talk **bark**. Bark's a bit tougher, but once you pick up on a

few easy things you're all set. First, is the bark smooth, or is it rough and fissured? Not only does American beech have unique buds that give it away, but it's one of the only species in our region (and the only large tree species) that has smooth bark. Look's kind of like an elephant's hide. What if the bark on your tree isn't so smooth? Each species of tree has other traits that will give it away. Red maple have distinct cat faces that you'll only see on this species, and black cherry have bark that some people say looks like burnt potato chips.

One other way to id some trees is the **scratch and sniff** test. No joke! Find a yellow birch (with that peeling golden yellow bark) and scratch up a twig. Smells like wintergreen! Find a black cherry and do the same thing and you'll get a fetid almond scent. Not all trees have a distinct smell, but don't hesitate to keep that trick in your bag.

Features like buds, bark, and smell can all give you a clue to a tree's identity. So get outside! The more time you spend in the woods the better you'll get—not only tree id, but also at reading the landscape's story which, in Vermont, is quite a unique tale.



Round red maple bud & "cat face" bark



Pointy sugar maple bud & black cherry "burnt potato chip" bark



Long American beech bud and smooth bark



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### Bakersfield Conservation Commission

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

### Enosburg Conservation Commission

Meets the fourth Monday of every month at 7:30 PM in the Emergency Services Building, 83 Sampsonville Road (Rte 105), Enosburg Falls.

### Richford Conservation Committee

Meets the first Thursday of the month in the upstairs conference room of the Arvin A. Brown Public Library, 88 Main Street, Richford.

### Wild and Scenic River Study Committee

Meets the third Thursday of each month from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Locations vary so contact 802-393-0076 or visit [www.vtwsr.org](http://www.vtwsr.org) for more information.

### Walk in the Woods: Deeryard Management

**Saturday, January 8** at 9:00 AM at 290 Vreeland Road in Fletcher. Vermont Woodlands Association and Vermont Fish & Wildlife host Deeryard Management for private forest landowners. The tour is free and open to the public but pre-registration is appreciated. Please call 747-7900 or email [info@vermontwoodlands.org](mailto:info@vermontwoodlands.org) to register. Visit [www.vermontwoodlands.org](http://www.vermontwoodlands.org) for directions.

### Bobcats, Black Bears, Birds, Moose and More: A Wildlife Habitat Perspective on Winter Tracking

**Sunday, January 30** from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Audubon Vermont and Keeping Track come together this winter to offer a full day tracking workshop in the winter woods. Winter's snow and ice offer the opportunity to read the story of wildlife in winter. The tracks and signs of birds and mammals remind us that wildlife rely on healthy forest habitat for their survival. Fee is \$35 and Pre-registration is required: 802-434-3068.

### Vermont Farm Show

**January 26th-28th** in Barre VT. The three-day event boasts 200 exhibits, product competitions, meetings and special events. <http://www.vermontagriculture.com/FarmShow/index.html>

### Apple Tree Pruning, Invasive Species Control and Mast Tree Release

**March 12** from 8:00 AM—1:00 PM at the Bertrand Sugar House, Highgate VT. Dave Adams, VT Fish and Wildlife biologist, and Bill Mayo will lead a workshop looking at work that the Bertrands have done to enhance wildlife habitat and promote forest health. Space is limited to 20 participants, so contact Joe or Nancy at 802-868-2676 or [mapledude61@yahoo.com](mailto:mapledude61@yahoo.com) to register or Lisa at 802-388-3880 for more information.

Don't forget to check [www.coldhollowtocanada.org](http://www.coldhollowtocanada.org) for updated Upcoming Events



Wintry Photos by Jo Anne Wazny

