



# The Stewardship Network: New England 2016 Partner Input Sessions Report of Findings Spring 2016



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## **Project Background**

In March, 2016, staff from UNH Cooperative Extension hosted three meetings with collaborating partners involved in the Stewardship Network: New England (TSNNE) initiative. Meetings included:

3/9/16	Squam Lakes Science Center, Holderness, NH
3/10/16	Hampton Beach State Park, Hampton, NH
3/11/16	Fox State Forest, Hillsborough, NH

## **Participation**

The invitation-only input sessions drew participation by twenty (20) individuals representing 18 organizations. Invites included New Hampshire-based staff and volunteers who have posted an event on the TSNNE calendar in it's first two years, and/or those who have participated in a previous TSNNE stakeholder meeting since 2012. Participating organizations included:

- Amherst (NH) Conservation Commission
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
- Distant Hill Gardens Environmental and Horticultural Learning Center
- Harris Center for Conservation Education
- New England Wildflower Society
- NH Audubon
- NH Soak up the Rain
- NH State Parks
- Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
- Sivio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge
- Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
- Squam Lakes Conservation Society
- Squam Lakes Science Center
- The National Park Service
- The Nature Conservancy – NH Chapter
- US Forest Service

## **Purpose of Input Sessions**

The purpose of the sessions was to learn from partners how they value TSNNE, what is working and what needs improvement, how partners might participate in regional hubs, and how partners feel about their role in the Network. Feedback generated at the sessions will inform a survey to a wider group of organizations who use or are involved in TSNNE (planned for 2016).

## Findings

### What do you value about TSNNE?

- Connects volunteers to opportunities
- Participants and organizations can see and learn about other stewardship opportunities around the state. They learn from these and can replicate.
- TSNNE is professional, positive and staff is an asset.

### What about TSNNE is working?

- Email, website (interactive, use to recruit and highlights new opportunities)
- Training opportunities
- Working for volunteers because they are participating, training
- Staff of TSNNE

### What about TSNNE is challenging?

- Attracting younger participants
- Geographic scope – partners want to understand and probably expand participation in NH. Market to surrounding states to get volunteers in NH.
- Partners are looking for information on who is participating.
- Partners want to understand long-term benefits (membership, funding).

### What else should TSNNE be providing for partners?

- More training and education and differentiate on website.
- Clarify what type of volunteers are needed by skill level.
- Connections to students to encourage participation (internships, surveys).

### Do you think new regional hubs would be valuable, and if so, would you participate?

- Share volunteer opportunities by region (calendar, map).
- Partners not looking for more meetings – does not appear to be strong support for new hubs.

### Partner Role in TSNNE

- Partners are happy to give feedback as they have (focus groups, through staff).
- No strong sense of needing an advisory group.

## Next Steps

Based on feedback and discussions at these input session, TSNNE will embark on a survey-based evaluation to further refine and understand the value of TSNNE to partners and to identify emerging needs around stewardship and volunteerism among participating organizations and public agencies.