



The Stewardship Network: New England Web Meeting

Compiled Comments & Input

February 15, 2017



Compiled by: University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
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About the meeting

On Feb. 15, 2017, UNH Cooperative Extension hosted a web-based meeting for organizations interested in whether the Stewardship Network: New England (TSNNE), currently operating in New Hampshire, could expand to other New England states. An earlier meeting on November 17, 2016 included 25 attendees representing 21 organizations. This meeting collected input, ideas, and possible functions of a future expanded network, and ended with a desire to move forward, a recognized need to get more organizations involved in all states, and a need to make future meetings more accessible, especially for agency staff who are less able to travel across state lines for meetings. Detailed notes from this first meeting are available online at the TSNNE website:

http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/sites/default/files/full_report_stewnet_fostering_mtg_nov17_2016.pdf

After sharing notes with those involved in the Nov. 2016 meetings, TSNNE staff arranged for a web-based meeting to take place on Feb. 15, 2017. Participants and staff shared the following invitation/announcement with a wide range of conservation and agency groups in Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts. Few contacts were available in Rhode Island, a recognized gap.

A recording of the web meeting is available here: <http://bit.ly/2mFA2Vt>



Web Meeting: **Fostering a Culture of Stewardship:**
Identifying Priorities for an Expanded
Stewardship Network: New England

When: **Wednesday, February 15th 2017**
12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Hosted by: **University of New Hampshire**
Cooperative Extension



REGISTER TO ATTEND

Join from your computer at home or at work!

During this interactive session, we will provide a short overview of the existing Stewardship Network: New England model, an initiative based at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. Conservation groups in neighboring states (Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts) have expressed interest in broadening the Network beyond New Hampshire, and a few representatives will share their perspectives as panelists in the web meeting. The goal of the 1-hour session is to invite feedback on the Network expansion idea and help prioritize the functions of an expanded network.

We invite participation from conservation commissioners, land trust staff, citizen science groups, state and federal agencies, and volunteer organizations interested the care and study of lands and waters in New England. **Please RSVP** by clicking the “Register Now” button, or use this link:

<https://unh.zoom.us/webinar/register/d4a87ee3b823d5a04ac87b605f06faf5>

More Information

- [A Network for All of Us](#) – a short video about the Network in New Hampshire
- [Review participant input from an earlier 11/17/16 meeting held at UNH](#)
- [About the Stewardship Network: New England model](#)

Can't attend this meeting but still interested? [Sign up here](#) to receive notifications about regional expansion as the initiative progresses.

Panelists for Feb. 15 web meeting:

Jessica Burton is the Executive Director of the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative based in Portland, Maine. The Collaborative is a service center and network of 19 conservation organizations committed to accelerating conservation in Southern Maine by providing technical and administrative support and expanding meaningful partnerships.

Malin Clyde is the Project Manager for the Stewardship Network: New England (TSN:NE) and an Extension Specialist in Community Volunteer Development at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. She is based in Durham, NH and has worked for Extension for 16 years focused on natural resources, volunteer training, and community outreach. She founded TSN:NE in 2013 based on a model from the Midwest.

Charlie French is the Program Leader for UNH Cooperative Extension’s Community and Economic Development Program. Charlie will be facilitating the meeting on Feb. 15.

Karen Lombard is the Director of Stewardship and Restoration for The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts and is responsible for the management and monitoring of the nearly 9000 acres of TNC fee and easement lands in that state.

Emily Lord is the Stewardship Outreach Coordinator for the Stewardship Network: New England at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. She is in charge of all communications, marketing, and data management for the Network, and is based in Durham, NH.

Kathleen Wanner is the executive director of the Vermont Woodlands Association, a statewide landowner membership organization with its main office in Rutland, VT. VWA fulfills an education, outreach, and advocacy mission for private woodland owners and consulting foresters.

Who Participated?

A total of 72 people registered for the event, with 77 participating, with an additional six (6) panelists. Many participants took part in a series of online polls where they shared information about their organizations, their experience, and their priorities for an expanded Network.

Participants reported their primary work being in five states: Massachusetts (19), Maine (9), New Hampshire (8), Vermont (7), and Connecticut (2). The largest number of participants were affiliated with not-for-profit organizations (25), followed by municipal, state or federal agency staff (7), educational institutions (6), Other (4), and volunteers (3). Groups and organizations represented (54) included:

AMC-SNER	Massachusetts Wildlife, NHESP
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	MassDEP Central Region Wetlands Program
Arnold Arboretum	MDAR
Bakersfield Conservation Commission	Mount A Conservation Program
Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Nantucket Conservation Foundation
Broad Brook Coalition, Northampton, MA	Nature's Notebook, MassAudubon
Casco Bay Estuary Partnership	New England Wild Flower Society
Connecticut Land Conservation Council	Newtown Trail Crew
Emerald Necklace Conservancy	NH Sea Grant
Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership	OARS
FBH	Orleans conservation commission
Franklin Land Trust	Polatin Ecological Services
Franklin Watershed Committee	RIDEM Division of Fish & Wildlife
Friends of Casco Bay	Sheffield Land Trust
Got Weeds?	Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance
Gulf of Maine Research Institute	Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
Hilltown Land Trust	Stowe Land Trust
Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Sudbury Valley Trustees
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	The Nature Conservancy ME
Maine Drinking Water Program	The Nature Conservancy VT
Maine Natural Areas Program	The Trustees of Reservations
Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry	UNH Cooperative Extension
Marginal Way Committee, Ogunquit, ME	Upper Valley Land Trust
Mass Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program	UVM Extension
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	Waldo County Soil and Water Conservation District
Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens Partnership	West Fairlee Conservation Commission
	White Pine Programs
	Wildlands Trust

About 30% of respondents (18) were completely new to the Stewardship Network: New England and had not used any of the Network's tools or resources. The remaining participants were familiar with the Network in the following ways:

27 had seen the Network's events calendar on the web

23 had attended a meeting or event hosted by the Network in New England

20 had read the Network e-bulletin

14 had downloaded Network training guides

10 had posted an event on the calendar to recruit volunteers

5 had participated in the Garlic Mustard Challenge

Your Questions, Our Responses

After a short presentation about how the Stewardship Network: New England functions in New Hampshire, participants offered questions for Network staff. A selection of questions that went unanswered include the following – [with a response from Network manager Malin Clyde offered here, in writing.](#)

Q: We have a new trails group and want help with all aspects of volunteer management. How can the Network help?

MC: We've heard from many groups that help with trails is an important need, so volunteerism around trails has become a theme of the TSN:NE. Right now, your group can download our free "Trail Maintenance for Volunteers" guide, which you can use to train volunteers in your community. In addition, you can recruit volunteers by posting a workday or training on our online calendar. This will give your event a web-presence (you can use the URL to share information about your event) and offers a free online registration system for your event.

Q: How is TSN:NE different from Facebook or Meetup?

MC: In launching the Network, we looked at different options for recruiting volunteers on behalf of our partners, and found that our partners needed more than help using social media. In facilitated stakeholder meetings with over 100 conservation groups, we learned about their needs in stewardship, volunteers, and citizen science. We heard they want help recruiting volunteers, but they also want help training volunteers, registering volunteers online, using social media, raising awareness about stewardship, and more. These needs led us to create a custom database-driven system to help us learn about volunteer behavior, curate content, and supplement the calendar with articles, stories, training guides, workshops, and (as funding allows) technical assistance services for partners planning stewardship projects.

Click here for more on technical assistance:

<http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/technical-assistance-working-volunteers>

Q: Can you describe your "place-based" approach to recruiting volunteers?

MC: Over 170 partner organizations create the content for our online events calendar, but we do the legwork to recruit new volunteers. To build our database of over 2,200 volunteers interested in stewardship and citizen science, we go to events, use social media, publicize through the press, speak at events, reach out to businesses and schools, and push event

notifications and stories out through a weekly bulletin that is curated to highlight the most interesting events happening in our region (NH).

Q: How did the shared internship work and what role did TSN:NE play?

MC: UNH Extension recruits, hires, and pays the shared intern (with grant and philanthropic funds). Regional partners apply to host the intern for 2-3 week periods throughout the summer, and are selected to create a comprehensive learning experience for the student. We've partnered with federal, state, and municipal conservation partners, as well as land trusts and local land managers. To date, the internships have been for UNH students (our home institution). We've found this to be a successful model that capitalizes on the strengths of Extension (recruiting, hiring and supervising students) and our partners (planning projects, teaching on-the-ground skills).

Q: Can you speak to the role of citizen science in completing the adaptive stewardship feedback loop, with some examples?

MC: The idea of connecting citizen science data with community decision-making is at the forefront of new efforts in the national citizen science community. The potential is strong, but is not always practiced. Check out the online edition of a Journal of Biological Conservation paper (Network manager Malin Clyde is a co-author) called "Leveraging the power of place in citizen science for effective conservation decision making" that contains an assessment of New England citizen science programs and the demonstrated use of their data by decision-makers. There is room for improvement to make this feedback loop complete, as you say. We have a new resource available online called "Tips for working with citizen science volunteers" that shares research-based best practices for citizen science programs and coordinators:

<http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/resources/tips-working-citizen-science-volunteers>

Q: Has the term "stewardship" confused volunteers who might not be familiar with the term?

MC: We like the word "stewardship" because so many diverse groups – those focusing on trails, water quality, forest and wildlife conservation, land trusts, backyard gardeners, farmers – can relate to the word stewardship. It's a big tent word. We are working to increase the brand recognition of the Stewardship Network in New England (and optimize search terms) as well as make sure the Network is listed on other volunteer opportunity websites such as VolunteerMatch.com.

Priorities for an Expanded Network

Using a list of possible functions of an expanded Stewardship Network developed by participants of the earlier (Nov 2016) meeting, the last part of the web meeting offered a final poll for participants. Participants selected three from a list of eight choices, to help paint a picture of priorities of the participating organizations. Ranked choices were:

Top Priorities for Network Functions:

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Shared Calendar (clearinghouse for volunteer events) | 29 |
| 2. Conference related to stewardship, citizen science & volunteers | 27 |
| 3. Collaboration on stewardship efforts, such as the Garlic Mustard Challenge | 25 |
| 4. Training for volunteers (best practices/shared training) | 22 |

5. Accessing funding for stewardship or citizen science	18
6. Tracking and sharing data on volunteer participation	8
7. Sharing tools	8
8. Weekly e-bulletin for communicating with volunteers	7

Next Steps

The next steps for the Network will be to take the questions, comments, functions, and priorities gathered from these two meetings with New England organizations and come up with a business plan for an expanded Network. During 2017, we will work with academic advisors from the University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy, UNH Cooperative Extension, and volunteers from partner groups in other states to develop a governance structure, a potential timeline, and a financial model to share with other states.

Want to stay involved?

If you are receiving this, you are already on our “Network Expansion” contact list so you’ll receive regular updates on the progress of this effort. Others can add themselves to that list using this link: <https://unhoutreach.tfaforms.net/217752>

Learn more and Join the Network: Receive weekly bulletin of volunteer opportunities and stewardship stories and sign up for The Compass, our quarterly newsletter for stewardship, citizen science, and volunteer partner organizations.

<http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/join-network>

Read a summary from the Nov. 17, 2016 partner meeting about Network expansion:

<http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/resources/participant-input-comments-nov-17-2016-meeting-fostering-culture-stewardship>

Read about Stewardship Network research into how our partners value the Network:

What Our Partners Say: <http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/resources/what-our-partners-say-2016-stewardship-network-partner-research>