

## **New Hampshire NRCS (NH NRCS) partners with University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) and local foresters to improve forest management and create jobs in the Granite State**

In a state that's 85% forested, managing this important resource is essential for long-term sustainable use and enjoyment. Forest management is important for private landowners, wildlife habitat, forest products industry as well as recreation and tourism. There's tremendous interest in forest management plans and implementing those plans. NH NRCS is collaborating with UNH Cooperative Extension to work with private foresters through the USDA's Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program.

Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are individuals, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, or public agencies outside of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that help forest land owners and agricultural producers develop conservation plans and apply practices on the land. These NRCS-certified professionals provide convenient access to technical services, quality work, and professional one-on-one technical assistance to landowners or producers who participate in USDA conservation programs. Technical assistance includes conservation planning and design, installation and checkout of approved conservation practices. NRCS has traditionally provided these technical services and will continue to do so.

The TSP program matches the public interest in conservation, technical expertise in the private sector and the government's financial commitment to improve and maintain our private working lands. NRCS and our locally-led partners, such as UNH Cooperative Extension and conservation districts, are committed to getting technical assistance out quickly and efficiently. NH has over 40 TSPs registered to develop Forest Management Plans and provide technical assistance during installation of management practices.

### ***From 2009 through 2011:***

- \$563,305 paid to TSPs to write conservation plans. (USDA NRCS Protracts)
- \$246,846 paid to landowners to implement practices detailed in TSP-written plans. (Protracts)
- Completed TSP-written conservation plans covered 26,837 acres. (USDA IDEA)
- Over 200 Forest Management Plans written by TSPs (Protracts)
- 100 more TSP Forest Management Plans are in progress (Protracts)

These plans continue to be a key piece in supporting high-quality forest planning and management for NH. "The TSP program helps sustain the needed number of local foresters in tough economic times as well as the development of high-caliber plans for conservation programs for forest land owners", says Karen Bennett, UNHCE Forest Resources Specialist.

Typical management practices recommended in Forest Management Plans include thinning, control of non-native invasive species, crop/mast tree release, erosion control on forest roads and trails, stream crossings and a variety of practices to improve wildlife habitat. "EQIP Conservation Activity Plans also provide a good partnership opportunity for forest stewardship programs offered by UNHCE", Bennett adds.

NH NRCS also works with local TSPs to offer plans to NH producers for prescribed grazing, nutrient management, Ag energy (audits), integrated pest management, transition to organic production, irrigation water management, and fish and wildlife habitat management.