

Natural Resources Conservation Service

New Hampshire Strategic Watershed Action Teams

Trout Unlimited is currently working with NRCS, NH Fish and Game and the Cheshire County Conservation District to develop high priority fish passage projects on state and private lands. Over one hundred crossings have been surveyed in recent years. Currently the partnership is working to develop strategies for each crossing. As part of a greater effort for the Connecticut River Blueway, the Ashuelot River is an important tributary with a large conservation focus for wildlife, land protection and water quality projects.



Above: an example of a concrete box culvert which blocks about a mile of critical headwater stream habitat. A simple solution for improving fish passage at these locations is to “backwater” the box culvert by placing larger stones adjacent to the lip of the culvert which increases the water depth inside the culvert during low flows. This method also reduces the velocities at the entrance of the culvert.

Trout Unlimited provides technical expertise to the **Wetland Reserve Program** (WRP) and continues to develop permits, and on-the-ground direction, for wood addition projects to order 1 and 2 streams. This provides improved fish habitat, as well as reducing flood velocities which are a problem due to increased storm durations, and intensities, due to global climate change.

NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) is continually working with NRCS to provide information on uncommon plants and wildlife. NRCS staff uses a GIS data base provided by NHB to prescreen projects. When conservation practices coexist with uncommon species, our agencies work together to find solutions which allow landowners to avoid impacts to the species.



Above: NRCS Resource Conservationist, Rachael Philips-Tibbett's, works with NHB Botanist, Pete Bowman (center), and Private TSP Forester, Peter Ferrell, to identify *Small Whorled Pagonia* (*Isotria medeoloides*), a federally threatened plant vs. *Indian Cucumber* (*Medeola virginiana*), which Pete is showing. The site visit was made to determine the locations of the rare plants in an effort to avoid them before wildlife patch cuts were created. The site visit proved successful, and a small population was discovered and flagged.

NH Fish and Game - New England Cottontail biologist, Heidi Holman, works with a private contractor (below) to describe improving the habitat on 50 acres of shrubland. Heidi worked with NRCS to develop the first signed Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) with the private landowners and NRCS. This site will be one of the first private lands to have actively bred New England Cottontails released.



Trout Unlimited and NH Fish and Game work with NH Department of Transportation Engineers, NRCS, the Silvio Conte Wildlife Refuge, and the Cheshire County Conservation District to look at an important tributary of the Ashuelot River. The newly formed partnership aims to improve fish passage on public lands, in combination with private lands, to improve habitat, as well as the connection of the stream to the floodplains which helps mitigate the impacts of larger rain events.

