



Woodlands *for* Wildlife

Volume 16 August 2007

A newsletter of Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife, Inc.

The Blue Jay, the Acorn and the Oak

by Richard Norman
Class of 2003

I own 110 acres of northern hardwoods in a valley west of Mount Mansfield. There were no oaks in my area, so when I built my home in 1978 I planted 6 red oaks around the house. They prospered and grew while I gradually cleared 30 acres to raise sheep. About the year 2000, the oak trees began dropping acorns.

Several years later I began finding small oak trees along the forest edge about 300–400 feet from the mature oaks. I assumed squirrels had done the work.

Then I read a book titled “Oak, The Frame of Civilization” by William Bryant Logan, which traces the origin of the oak from 65 million years ago and describes its importance to human civilization and wildlife in general.

The jay has been intimately connected with the oak for thousands of years. Equipped with an upper bill adapted for tearing the acorn husks and an expandable esophageal chamber capable of carrying 4 whole acorns at a time. Jays will transport acorns as far as a mile, usually to a place on a forest edge close to where they have their nests.

In contrast, squirrels carry acorns 100 feet from their source. Jays bury the acorns individually for food during the winter months. It is estimated that each Jay will bury as many as 4,500 acorns each year. Only one in four acorns are retrieved for food.

The Jay’s activity explains why oaks have a dispersal rate of 1-2 miles a year. At
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Expanding Role for Local Contact Cooperators

by Lisa Sausville, Executive Director

Everyone leaves the three-day Coverts Cooperator Training pumped with new ideas and filled with excitement. As time passes and our busy lives take over, it can be challenging to stay connected to the goals of Vermont Coverts. Understanding that, Bob Hawk, a Coverts Cooperator from the spring class of 2001, established the Local Contact Cooperator (LCC) program.

The idea was that the LCCs would work to maintain a relationship between the local cooperators, thereby maintaining personal connections and involvement with the organization. Making this connection would help to keep the organization viable and growing, another way to see the Coverts mission realized. Glen Macy (1999), past LCC for Franklin County notes “the LCC program provides a forum for Cooperators to share accomplishments in their own woodlots and gain inspiration from what neighboring cooperators have accomplished in theirs.”

The program had some regional suc-

cess and a few failures as it worked to establish a presence in each county. The LCCs met once a year to discuss the program and learn ways to reach out to Cooperators within their county. In 2005 Bob Hawk stepped back from his leadership role. With nobody at the helm, the program faltered.

At the March 2007 Council Retreat, the LCC program was identified as a key program needed to keep Cooperators connected with the organization. A committee was established to oversee the program and coordinate efforts with the Executive Director to begin the rebirth of this important effort. The committee has met to evaluate the program, identify interested LCCs in each county and develop a strategy to establish active programs throughout the state.

Each County now has one or two individuals (see list on page 3) that have agreed to serve and carry out the functions of an LCC. These include: welcoming new cooperators in their local area following the spring and fall train-
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President’s Message:

Forest Products, Invasive Plants and Soil Health

Forest products. Invasives. I hear both subjects a lot these days. There is considerable emphasis in some circles on increasing Vermont’s output of forest product, from veneer to saw logs to firewood to pulp wood to chips. There also is considerable concern over an apparent increase in invasive plants in the woods, including buckthorn, Russian

olive, barberry, honeysuckle and others.

Could it be that these two issues are related? That an increase in wood product extraction is related to an increase in invasive plants? It seems reasonable to me that the answer to these questions might well be “yes”.

For starters, invasive plants often ap-
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LCC Role Expanding
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ings, provide a link between the local area and the Executive Director, energize the local cooperators (through work days, walks or whatever appeals to cooperators), organize the local group to assist with local workshops, identify new cooperators, publicity and outreach. These functions are simply a skeleton for the LCC program. Each LCC brings to the position their individual talents and skills, thus adding to the strength of the program.

Introductions to Cooperators

LCCs will soon be provided with a list of Cooperators in their respective counties. LCCs will be contacting you soon to introduce themselves, verify contact information and garner your interests for activities. They may invite you to attend a potluck and brainstorming session or a walk in the woods. Please join in. John McNerney (fall 2002) hosted a “walk-in-the-woods” on his land in Addison County led by Cooperator Larry Orvis (1990). John notes “It was amazing to me to see him pick out features and wildlife food sources I had walked right by on numerous occasions.”

Vermont Coverts is a strong organization and our strength lies in our Cooperators. The LCC program is for each of our members. You will find great satisfaction as you become more involved and work to reach out, connect with friends, neighbors and other landowners in your area. John McNerney noted the social aspect of an outing: “It was an interesting mix of people: it seemed everyone had something unique to offer.” Chomping at the bit to get started? Contact your LCC and let them know your interests. If you are looking for other ways to become involved with Vermont Coverts please contact the office at 802-388-3880 or e-mail Lisa Sausville (lisa@vtcoverts.org).

LCC LIST by COUNTY

- Addison**
Larry Orvis (1990)
Larry.orvis@state.vt.us
Jennifer Turner (2003f)
jent@gmavt.net
- Bennington**
Roland Smith (1998)
docponds@sover.net
Solon Rhode (2005f)
shrhode@yahoo.com
- Caledonia**
Barry Lawson (2000)
Lawson384@charter.net
Jeff Frampton (2003s)
spitfire@sover.net
- Chittenden**
Mary Cheney (2003f)
mcheney@gmavt.net
Steve Hagenbuch (2006s)
Steven_hagenbuch@antiochne.edu
- Essex**
Jayson Benoit
emp@sover.net
- Lamoille and Franklin**
Jay Allen (2005f)
jallen@vtlink.net
Richard Norman (2003f)
cnorman@atg.state.vt.us
- Orange**
Walter Malmquist (2002f)
wmalmquist@kingcon.com
Anne Peyton (2005s)
anne@yellowbrickroadconsulting.com
- Orleans**
Farley Brown (1995)
fbrown@sterlingcollege.edu
Trevor Evans (1998)
treefarm@together.net
- Rutland**
Bob Hill (1985)
Skylane313@aol.com
Peter Upton (2001f)
Peter.d.upton58@alum.dartmouth.org
- Washington**
Tovar Cerulli (2007s)
Tovar.cerulli@gmail.com
- Windham**
Andy Sheere (2003s)
fgforestry@vermontel.net
- Windsor**
Christina Marts (2003f)
Christina_marts@nps.gov

Blue Jay
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this rate it does not take much to start an oak forest.

To assist the process, I tag young oaks I with colored tape to identify and avoid injuring them. I transplant those located in less favorable sites to pots and care for them close to the house for a year or so.

It's important to transplant them when they are just sprouting to avoid injuring the vigorous tap root when digging them up. After a year or so, when I think they are strong enough, I transplant them to forest edges that I created with the sheep pastures. I use cedar posts and fencing to protect these young oaks from sheep and deer browsing until they are tall and strong enough to be on their own.

President's Message
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pear when a forest site is disturbed, which occurs to varying degrees when wood products are harvested. Further, numerous invasive plant species thrive in poor or depleted soils, where native species languish.

Role of Soils

Professor Thom McEvoy, in *Positive Impact Forestry* (Island Press, 2004), discusses the increasing importance researchers are placing on the role of soils in forests. McEvoy teaches that harvesting wood products mines nutrients from forest sites, and that essential nutrient levels may reach such a low point that inputs of mineral supplements are advisable. McEvoy also urges that only main stems be harvested, and that, with a few exceptions, branches, twigs, buds and leaves be left. The latter tree structures are nutrient-rich and hence return considerable nutrients to the soil.

The findings of Laval University (Quebec) Professor Gilles Lemieux and ecologist Céline Caron support McEvoy and teach that chips of deciduous ramial wood are a strong soil builder. Ramial wood is the tree structure smaller than three-inches in diameter, i.e., stems, twigs, leaves and buds. Deciduous ramial chips are significantly more beneficial than those from conifers. Adding ramial wood chips to soil improves and maintains structure and fertility. It leads to an increase in water retention and a reduction in disease and pests.

So consider that forest management may start simply with improving soil. Subsequent steps are minimizing disturbances and harvesting only large stems. Then comes removing invasive plants. Hopefully any new invasives will be increasingly sparse.

2007 Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Saturday, September 8th, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Ed Kehoe Conservation Camp, Lake Bomoseen, Castleton, Vermont

The Annual Meeting of Vermont Coverts will be held in conjunction with the Fall Training Workshop. Attending the Annual Meeting is a great way to stay connected with your Covert cohorts and learn a few new things along the way.

SCHEDULE:

10:15 – The day will start with a presentation by Landowner Incentive Program Coordinator Jane Lazorchak. Jane will help us to understand natural communities. She will be presenting each participant with a copy of “Natural Communities of Vermont” a wonderful book to use when discussing Vermont Coverts and land management with neighbors, friends and family.

11:15 – Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Biologist Jens Hilke will speak on Community Conservation Planning. Participants will receive a copy of “Conserving Vermont’s Natural Heritage: A Guide to Community-Based Planning for the Conservation of Vermont’s Fish, Wildlife, and Biological Diversity.”

12:15 – Lunch and awards will take us through to a quick

business meeting where we will hold elections for membership on the Vermont Coverts Council.

2:00 – Our afternoon speaker is Mark Freeman, a graduate student from the University of Vermont. Mark will present, “An Evaluation of Bobcat Habitat Movement in Northwest and Central Vermont.”

3:30 – Join us as we head to Peter Upton’s property in Hubbardton for a forest tour to see how he is managing his 192 acre parcel.

5:00 – Wrap up and head home (unless you want to join the Training Class for dinner back at Kehoe – nominal fee associated).

Annual Meeting Proxy and Registration Form
Please return to Vermont Coverts, P.O. Box 81, Middlebury, VT 05753
No later than Tuesday, September 4th

If you are a Coverts Cooperator and **CANNOT** attend the Annual Meeting, please return this proxy form to the above address. Your proxy is important to ensure that we gather a legal quorum to conduct elections to the Coverts Council.

I, _____, a member of Vermont Coverts, hereby constitute JAMES BRUCE ENGLE or RICHARD NORMAN as my lawful proxy to attend and vote on my behalf at the Annual Meeting of Vermont Coverts held at the Ed Kehoe Conservation Camp on the afternoon of Saturday, September 8, 2007, or at any adjournment thereof.

Given this _____ day of _____, 2007
(date) (month)

Signature: _____

Annual Meeting Registration Form

Name of attendees: _____

Number of people staying for lunch: _____

Number of people staying for dinner: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ (Suggested donation for lunch is \$15)

VERMONT COVERTS:
Woodlands for Wildlife, Inc.

Executive Director: Lisa Sausville
Lisa@vt.coverts.org 802-388-3880

VERMONT COVERTS COUNCIL

Jay Allen, *Jeffersonville*
James Bruce Engle, *Peacham, ex officio*
John Evans, *Dummerston*
Susan Houston, *Craftsbury Common*
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Nancy Richardson, *Charlotte Fall '06*
Newsletter Editor: John Evans
Associate Editor, Lisa Sausville

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Sept 7-9 Coverts Fall Training Workshop, Ed Kehoe Conservation Camp, Castleton.
- Sept 8 Coverts Annual Meeting, Ed Kehoe Conservation Camp, Castleton, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Sept 29 Making More of Your Backyard Forest, Montpelier High School 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Morning program includes presentations by Steve Sinclair, Director of Forests for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and Thom McEvoy, Extension Forester and Professor, University of Vermont School of Natural Resources. Afternoon tours in Hubbard Park will focus on forest inventory and stewardship. For information contact: Katherine Forrer, 802-223-2389, ext.25.

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