

Highstead

To the Members and Friends of Highstead



History presents a unique opportunity for New England – a second chance to determine the future of its forested landscape. At Highstead we've demonstrated that our programs can help advance conservation towards a forested future that benefits both nature and society. Seizing on this confluence of historic opportunity and emerging capacity, Highstead will increasingly focus on advancing the appreciation of natural landscapes and assisting the collective action of individuals and organizations towards conservation at local, regional and even national scales.



Today, New England is the nation's most heavily forested region and also one of its most densely settled. When colonial settlers confronted with New England's vast forests, they cleared broad areas to support a growing population. By the mid-1800s, large regions were deforested and many forests were reduced to isolated woodlots. However, with the subsequent westward shift of agriculture trees established on abandoned farmland and New England reforested.

This historical legacy presents a rare opportunity to craft a thoughtful future for nature and society. But, we must act now. For the first time in a century and a half, every state in New England is declining in forest cover due to development.

In May 2010 a group of seventeen scholars from Connecticut to Maine released *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape* with a simple message: the six New England states should take the bold, prudent and economically conservative step to protect their woodlands, farmlands and natural landscape. In this vision more than 70% of the region would remain forested to provide natural infrastructure to sustain life, jobs, communities, recreation and everyday enjoyment.



David Foster is Director of the Harvard Forest at Harvard University and President of the Board of Highstead Foundation.

This vision will not be achieved by academics or by governments. It must be promoted by all citizens and communities that benefit from our private and public forests. Here Highstead will play an important role. New England has a huge capacity for conservation comprised of landowners, conservation organizations and municipal, state and federal boards and agencies. As indicated on the following pages Highstead programs are augmenting and catalyzing this capacity by advancing conservation partnerships, science, outreach and training.

Mindful of opportunity, imperative, and vision Highstead is focusing its activity to advance a future for New England that is a regional model for the regreening East and the nation.

¹ See wildlandandwoodlands.org for information and a copy of the report.



From the
Director

Bill Toomey



To Members and Friends of Highstead

Wildlands and Woodlands, A Vision for the New England Landscape: Highstead's Role

In 2005, Harvard Forest released a report entitled *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the Forests of Massachusetts*. This report had a guiding influence on Highstead's direction and was instrumental in the development of our Forest Ecology Program in 2006, and our Regional Conservation Program in 2007. Since then, the Massachusetts's Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership has grown to include over 60 organizations. With the release of the 2010 Harvard Forest report, *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape*, there is an opportunity for Highstead to expand its role in achieving this vision across the New England landscape and beyond.

Over the next several years, Highstead will promote the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision in New England in the following ways:



Wildlands and Woodlands Outreach: Highstead will assist Harvard Forest with the Vision's outreach efforts including a Wildlands and Woodlands Conference in June, workshops and seminars at the Land Trust Alliance Rally in Hartford in the fall, and talks and presentations at venues throughout New England.

Woodland Councils and Regional Partnerships: Highstead will continue to provide staffing for the Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership as it expands throughout New England and will continue to assist in the creation and development of new woodland councils and partnerships.

Policy and Planning Approaches: Highstead will work with local and regional planning agencies to help integrate land use planning with conservation priorities.

Wildlands and Woodlands, Tracking Forest Change: Highstead's Ecology program will assist in the development and implementation of a science-based monitoring protocol for use on landscapes across New England. Highstead will also be a participating site in a network of long-term monitoring sites that will be established across the New England landscape.

Looking forward, this year promises to be filled with significant opportunities to advance large-scale conservation, ensure science is shaping conservation action, and educate visitors about ecologically-based land management. Thank you for your continued interest and support of Highstead.

Happenings and News

You are invited

Highstead welcomes members and non-members alike to participate in these events. If we do not already have your email address, please send it to info@highstead.net.

Saturday, June 12th:

Highstead Open House and Trails Day

10:00 am to 1:00 pm:

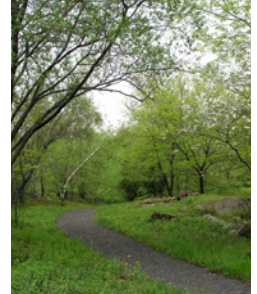
Walking trails will be open for self-guided tours and visits to the Laurel Collection in bloom. For those who prefer a guided tour, Highstead Ecologist, Ed Faison will lead a walk for visitors from 10:30 to 12:30.

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm:

Wildlands and Woodlands:

Applying the Vision to the Southern New England Landscape

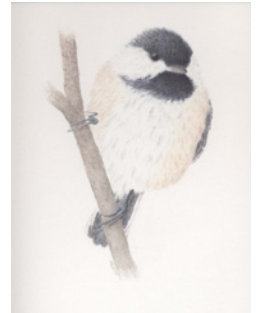
David Kittredge, Ph. D., is a distinguished Professor of Forestry and the Extension Forester at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Dr. Kittredge is one of the primary authors of *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape* that was released to the public in May 2010. He will be discussing this subject and its relevance to the southern New England landscape.



September 11th – October 29th:

Art Exhibition: Songbirds of the Eastern United States

Guild of Natural Science Illustrators - Greater New York Chapter. Viewing is weekdays from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.



Artist : Susannah K. Graedelor

Saturday September 11th:

Songbirds of the Eastern United States

10:30 am to 1:00 pm:

Artists from the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators - Greater New York Chapter will be at Highstead to discuss their work on display at the Highstead Barn. Join us for a special informal presentation in which they will enlighten us about the subject matter and share personal experiences that inspired their work.



Artist: Linda Thomas

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm:

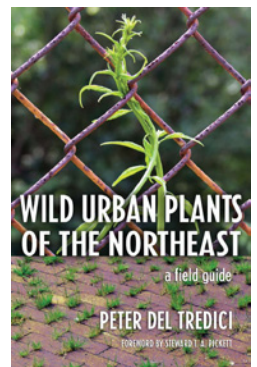
Robert Askins, Ph. D., is a Professor of Biology at Connecticut College and an international authority on the ecology of birds. He will be discussing the history, biology and conservation of songbirds in the Eastern United States.

Saturday, September 25th:

Woodland Conversation

Afternoon

Peter Del Tredici, Ph. D., Senior Research Scientist at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and Lecturer in Harvard's Department of Landscape Architecture, will discuss his new book entitled "Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast, a field guide". Autographed copies of Peter's book will be available.



Fall 2010

Wildlands and Woodlands:

A Vision for the New England Landscape

David Foster, Ph. D., is Director of the Harvard Forest at Harvard University and President of the Board of the Highstead Foundation. Dr. Foster is the primary author of *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape*. He will discuss the compelling opportunity to protect the forests of New England and the need to rethink the way that we live in and conserve our landscapes across America.





Regional Conservation

Bill Labich
Regional Conservationist



Highstead: Supporting and Strengthening Wildlands and Woodlands at the Grassroots

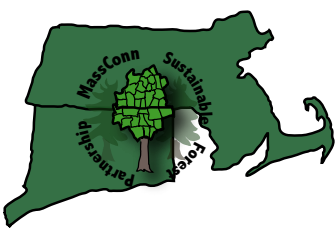
Using the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision as a guide, Highstead has been working collaboratively with over 100 partner groups in New England to coordinate grassroots activities to advance forest conservation. Collectively these efforts are building the local capacity and volunteer base necessary to realize the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision in many regions across New England. Highstead pursues this work primarily with *Woodland Council* groups and with the *Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership*.

Woodland Councils are regional partnerships of land trusts, town boards and commissions, environmental groups, landowners and foresters. These partnerships “enhance communication and outreach, increase efficiency, advance land protection, and provide networks of support, information, and expertise to landowners and community leaders” (2010 New England Wildlands and Woodlands Vision). The work of these partnerships is diverse. Many assist landowners in advancing their desire to protect their land from development and learn more about the ecology and management of their woodlands. Others engage in tree planting, trail development, and restoration projects.

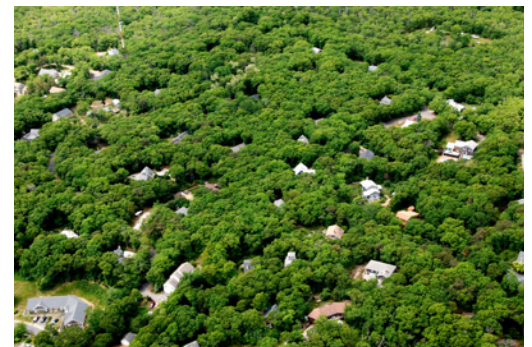
updates and insights among members. Between meetings, Bill manages the Wildlands and Woodlands website and listserv, and assists leaders in developing woodland councils and advancing forest conservation and management.

The Partnership’s initiatives have developed the following:

- Land protection projects across multiple ownerships
- Forums for established regional partnerships to support emerging ones
- Outreach programs for landowners and towns
- Forest climate policies
- A CT-MA-RI discussion on southern New England forest management issues



The Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership is a growing informal association of groups committed to tripling the pace of conservation in southern New England. Working closely with a thirteen-member steering committee, Bill Labich, Highstead’s Regional Conservationist, coordinates the Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership and organizes meetings that include topical speakers and shared





Each of these efforts seeks to increase one or more of the following:

- The pace and coordination of land protection
- Resources available for conservation activities
- The number and diversity of people and organizations that are engaged in forest conservation
- The share of forested lands being managed as woodlands
- The percentage of total forest and farm products consumed that are grown locally
- The number of municipalities contributing to forest conservation goals

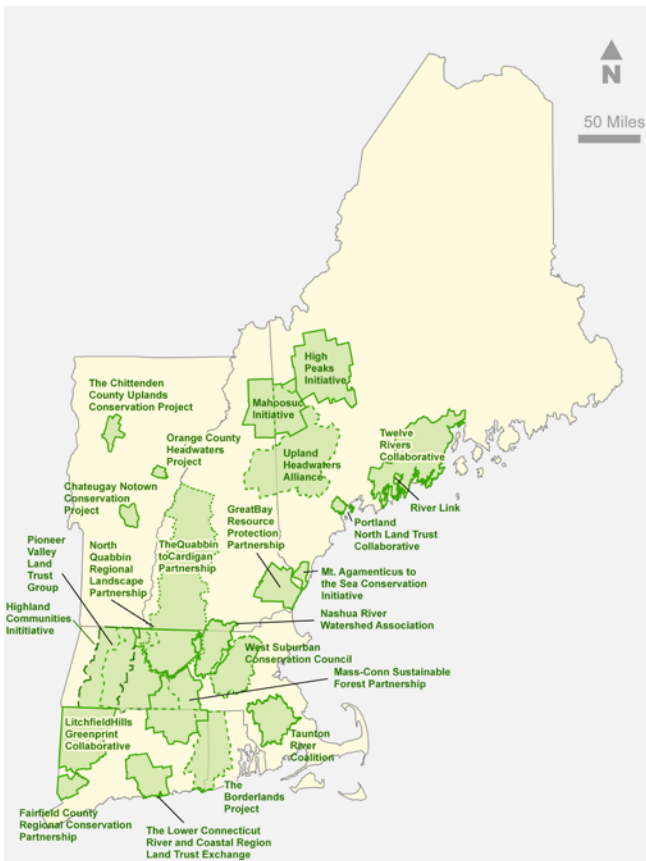
20 Woodland Council-groups, Two New Partnerships and One New Coordinator!

This past year Bill Labich met with over 20 regional conservation partnerships to learn from their organization and success. Although differing in history and specific mission, each partnership shares similarities and strengths:

- Over 90% have dedicated coordinators and over 50% have steering committees
- Over 50% attribute the partnership to increased funding, capacity, and success in land protection
- Most begin and gain momentum by producing outreach programs for forest landowners
- All want to share collective insights with other groups

Highstead is working to convene these groups and others at the New England Wildlands and Woodlands Conference on June 4, 2010 and at the October 2010 Land Trust Alliance Rally in Hartford Connecticut.

Over the past year, new partnerships have formed in Connecticut and in Boston suburbs. The Mass-Conn Sustainable Forest Partnership hired its first part-time coordinator, Claire Dacey, to facilitate landowner outreach programs in this state boundary region. This effort is being funded by a grant from the US Forest Service awarded to a CT-MA Woodland Council initiative in conjunction with Highstead.



New England Regional Conservation Partnerships



Forest Ecology

Ed Faison
Highstead Ecologist



Wildlands and Woodlands Stewardship Science: On-the-ground analysis of forest dynamics and management

In two journal entries from 1860, Henry Thoreau compared the attributes of one of the last uncut forests in eastern Massachusetts to the surrounding and ubiquitous logged woodlots and regenerated old fields.

“[in the uncut forest], I was struck by the orderly arrangement of the trees as if each knew its own place...As if in the natural state of things, when sufficient time is given, trees will be found occupying the places most suitable to each, but when they are interfered with, some are prompted to grow where they do not belong... That is, our [interfered] forest generally is in a transition state to a settled and normal condition”

“A peculiarity of this [uncut forest] as compared with much younger woods, is that there is little or no underwood and you walk freely in every direction, though in the midst of a dense wood. You walk in fact under the wood... Such a wood must have a peculiar fauna to some extent.”

Thoreau’s descriptions are perhaps the earliest comparison of managed “woodlands” and unmanaged “wildlands,” in New England, a pursuit continuing 150 years later in the Wildlands and Woodlands Science initiative. This systematic, long-term forest monitoring program accompanies the Harvard Forest’s Wildlands and Woodland’s Vision and is spearheaded by Highstead and other organizations.

right:
Unmanaged Forest Reserve
at Highstead.



far right:
Forest managed for recreation
and aesthetics at Highstead

In our landscape “wildlands” are forest reserves, areas protected from human influence and left to be shaped primarily by natural disturbances, regardless of past land use history.

“Woodlands” are similar to the woodlots of Thoreau’s day; forests actively managed for wood products, wildlife habitat, aesthetics and recreation.



At its core, Wildlands and Woodlands Science seeks to address many of the same observations embedded in Thoreau’s journal entries, but set within the context of our 21st century landscape with its novel forest disturbances and stressors. Some of the questions Wildlands and Woodlands Science hopes to address include the following:

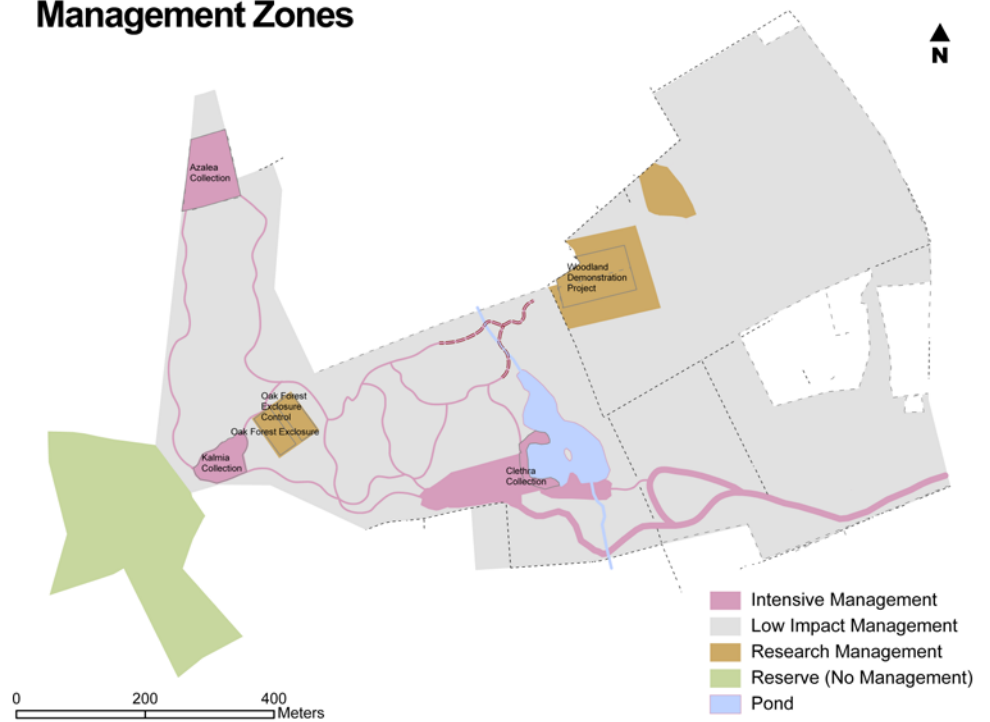
- Will wildlands develop a different flora and fauna and a different structure (i.e. a more open understory) than woodlands as a result of being exposed primarily to natural disturbances rather than human disturbances?
- How long does it take unmanaged forests to develop the mature trees, large wood, tip up mounds and other natural structures of old growth forests?
- Are unmanaged reserves more resistant and resilient to the impacts of climate change, introduced plants and forest pathogens, windstorms, acid rain, and high deer densities than their managed counterparts?
- How can we incorporate lessons from nature into our management of forests?

In short, Wildlands and Woodlands Science is an on-the-ground evaluation of the consequences of, and recovery from our forest management choices today and in centuries past.

Highstead is one of eight core sites in New England that has adopted the Wildlands and Woodlands Science monitoring approach. In the fall 2009 newsletter, we described the grid of permanent forest plots established at Highstead and the changes that we have documented in our forest over the past five years. As part of its new

landscape management plan, Highstead has established a 14-acre forest reserve free of trails and habitat manipulations of any kind as a reference or “control” for the nearby managed forest dissected by woodland paths, plant collections, and habitat manipulations (i.e. fenced exclosures). Using the grid of permanent forest plots, we will monitor how the vegetation in the reserve diverges (or not) from the woodland over time. Additional Wildlands and Woodlands Science locations occur from north-central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire through northeastern Vermont and

Management Zones



northern Maine. The methods employed at all locations are the same, and data from these and future sites will be available on-line for land managers, foresters, conservationists, and scientists interested in the outcomes of forest management decisions and the long-term health and recovery of our forests.

Welcome to Highstead

Highstead

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Programs 2010



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New England Landscape**
David Kittredge, Ph. D.

**Songbirds of the
Eastern United States**
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Greater New York Chapter

Ecology of Migratory Song Birds
Robert Askins, Ph. D.

Woodland Conversation
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