



# Northeast Forests and Rivers Fund

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## PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Sylvamo

## ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,800 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of more than \$10 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

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New England cottontail

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Sylvamo announced a 2024-year round of funding for Northeast Forests and Rivers Fund projects. Ten new grants to restore and sustain healthy rivers, forests and grasslands totaling nearly \$2.1 million were awarded. The 10 awards announced leveraged more than \$3.1 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of nearly \$5.3 million.

The program seeks to restore the quality and connectivity of stream and riparian habitats with a focus on improving habitat for river herring, Atlantic salmon, brook trout and wood turtles, improving management of forest blocks to enhance age and structural diversity, resulting in improved forest conditions for native wildlife, with a focus on improving habitat for golden-winged warbler and New England cottontail, and promote hayfield management that allows for successful grassland bird breeding, with a specific focus on habitat for bobolink.

(continued)

**Adding Wood to Enhance Habitat for Atlantic Salmon and Wood Turtles in the Upper Narraguagus River (ME)**

Grantee: Project SHARE  
 Grant Amount:..... \$286,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$246,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$532,000  
 Enhance stream habitat in West Branch Brook, a cool-water tributary of the Upper Narraguagus sub-watershed, using strategic placement of wood additions and additional material including small boulders. Project will enhance 1.8 miles of instream habitat, providing 118 habitat units for Atlantic salmon, brook trout and wood turtles, and provide species response monitoring to determine success.

**Conducting Landowner and Farmer Outreach for Grassland Birds along the Connecticut River (NH, VT)**

Grantee: Windham County NRCD  
 Grant Amount:..... \$170,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$50,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$220,000  
 Create a network of conservation districts in southern Vermont and New Hampshire along the Connecticut River to provide outreach, education, technical assistance, and financial assistance to landowners and farmers to build strong relationships and enable them to apply for NRCS cost-share funding. Project will work with landowners to improve habitat for grassland birds, including bobolink, on 140 acres.

**Creating and Maintaining Young Forest for Native Wildlife in Southern Maine (ME)**

Grantee: Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve  
 Grant Amount:..... \$138,600  
 Matching Funds:..... \$210,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$348,600  
 Coordinate agencies and stakeholders in southern Maine to increase young forest habitat for New England cottontail and other forest-dependent wildlife, including American woodcock, eastern towhee and chestnut-sided warbler. Project will restore, maintain or create 200 acres of young forest habitat for wildlife, work with conservation partners toward land protection goals, and provide training and outreach to communities.

**Enhancing Northeast Forest Resilience and Habitat Management Using Large Forest Blocks (NY, VT)**

Grantee: The Ruffed Grouse Society  
 Grant Amount:..... \$297,800  
 Matching Funds:..... \$279,400  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$577,200  
 Launch the development of a strategic 28,600-acre forest block at Paul Smith’s College in New York to create diverse habitat structure for forest birds, leveraging this work to reach forest practitioners and landowners. Project will advance large-scale forest block management in northern New York and Vermont to propel golden-winged warbler conservation forward and leverage Working Lands for Wildlife funding on private lands through the NRCS.



Wood turtle

**Implementing Strategic Wood Additions in Brook Trout Priority Areas of the Upper Connecticut (NH, VT)**

Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council Connecticut River Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:..... \$190,500  
 Matching Funds:..... \$190,500  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$381,000  
 Implement multiple shovel-ready installations to restore habitat and enhance resilience for brook trout populations by adding 2,750 pieces of large wood to 41 stream segments almost entirely within brook trout strongholds and persistent population patches in the upper Connecticut River watershed. Project will restore the quality of almost 13 miles of headwater streams in brook trout priority areas of New Hampshire and Vermont.

**Managing Invasive Plants to Enhance Nesting Habitat for Grassland Birds, Including Bobolink (NH, VT)**

Grantee: Vermont Center for Ecostudies  
 Grant Amount:..... \$89,300  
 Matching Funds:..... \$89,500  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$178,800  
 Conduct targeted outreach and site visits to 65 grassland landowners in the Champlain Valley and Connecticut River Valley to provide invasive-plant management guidance. Project will enroll 30 landowners in implementing management recommendations from a professional, ensure that existing grassland bird habitat doesn’t become unsuitable for breeding due to inundation by invasive plants and aid in developing standardized guidance for this newly emerging issue.



Bobolink

**Partnering with Ag Allies and Maine Landowners to Enhance Habitat for Priority Grassland Birds (ME)**

Grantee: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
 Grant Amount:..... \$218,200  
 Matching Funds:..... \$243,700  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$461,900  
 Implement the Ag Allies program, a statewide initiative that focuses on the protection and enhancement of habitat for grassland birds, including bobolink, by helping landowners and farmers make sustainable, bird-friendly management changes in haying practices and improve nesting success of grassland birds. Project will place 3,000 acres under improved management and restore 37 acres of degraded habitat.

**Removing Stream Barriers and Building Technical Capacity to Benefit Aquatic Species in Maine**

Grantee: Maine Audubon Society  
 Grant Amount:..... \$214,600  
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,500,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,714,600  
 Complete 12 new road-stream crossing replacements following the USFS Stream Simulation methodology and provide hands-on training for 300 road professionals through the Stream Smart program. Project will restore 20 miles of aquatic and riparian habitat connectivity on municipal and private lands in the priority watersheds where critical populations of brook trout, Atlantic salmon and river herring occur.

**Restoration, Outreach and Monitoring for Wood Turtles along the Connecticut River (CT, MA, NH, VT)**

Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council Connecticut River Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:..... \$229,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$145,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$374,000  
 Restore habitat for wood turtles, conduct outreach to private landowners so they can sign up for cost-share funding from the NRCS and other conservation programs, and implement a wood turtle monitoring program in target areas within the Connecticut River watershed. Project will place 16 acres under improved management, restore 6.6 acres of riparian habitat and create or enhance five nesting sites for wood turtles.

**Restoring Upland Forest Habitat for Priority Birds through Collaborative Conservation (CT, NY, VT)**

Grantee: National Audubon Society  
 Grant Amount:..... \$260,800  
 Matching Funds:..... \$222,700  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$483,500  
 Leverage Audubon’s past work to enhance golden-winged warbler habitat and develop the Forester Training and Endorsement program to connect Audubon with private landowners to deliver bird-friendly young and mature forest management resulting in on-the-ground implementation. Project will create management plans for 2,000 acres of private forestland, improve habitat for focal birds on 1,050 acres, monitor 500 acres for golden-winged warbler response and engage 300 landowners.



Golden-winged warbler