

The Massachusetts Keystone Project

formerly COVERTS

Important people making the conservation difference

How Do We Make Habitat Happen?

The Massachusetts Keystone Program:
A Grassroots Effort to Provide Habitat Education
and Habitat Enhancement on Town and Private Conservation Lands



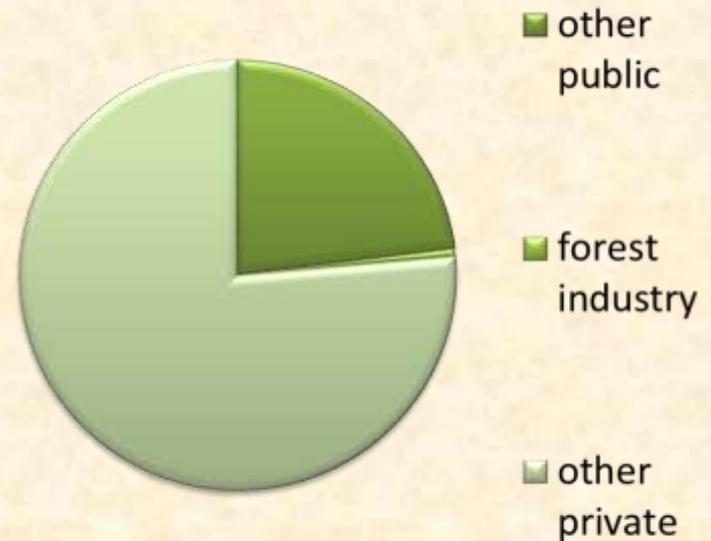
Paul Catanzaro
Extension Assistant Professor

Dave Kittredge
Professor & State Extension Forester

MA Forest Ownership

Butler 2006 - National Woodland Owner Survey

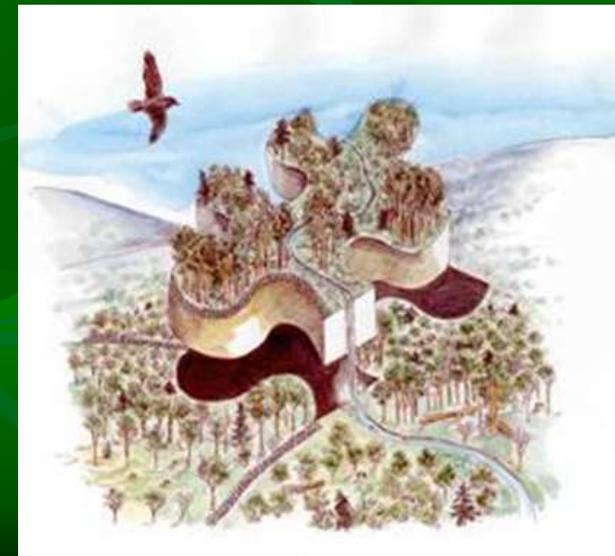
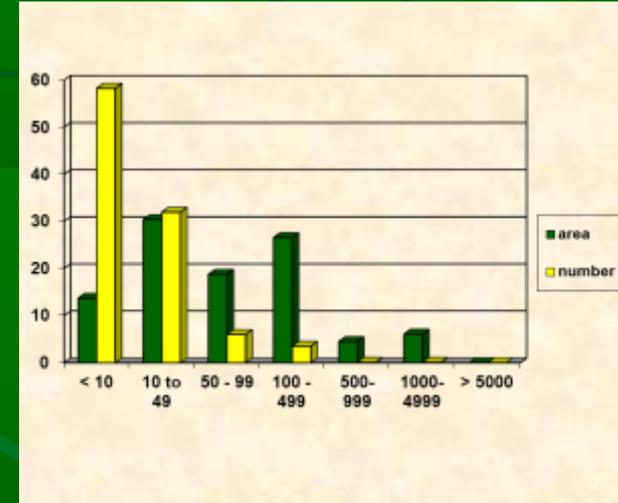
- 70% of the forest is in “private” ownership, including trusts, families, and individuals

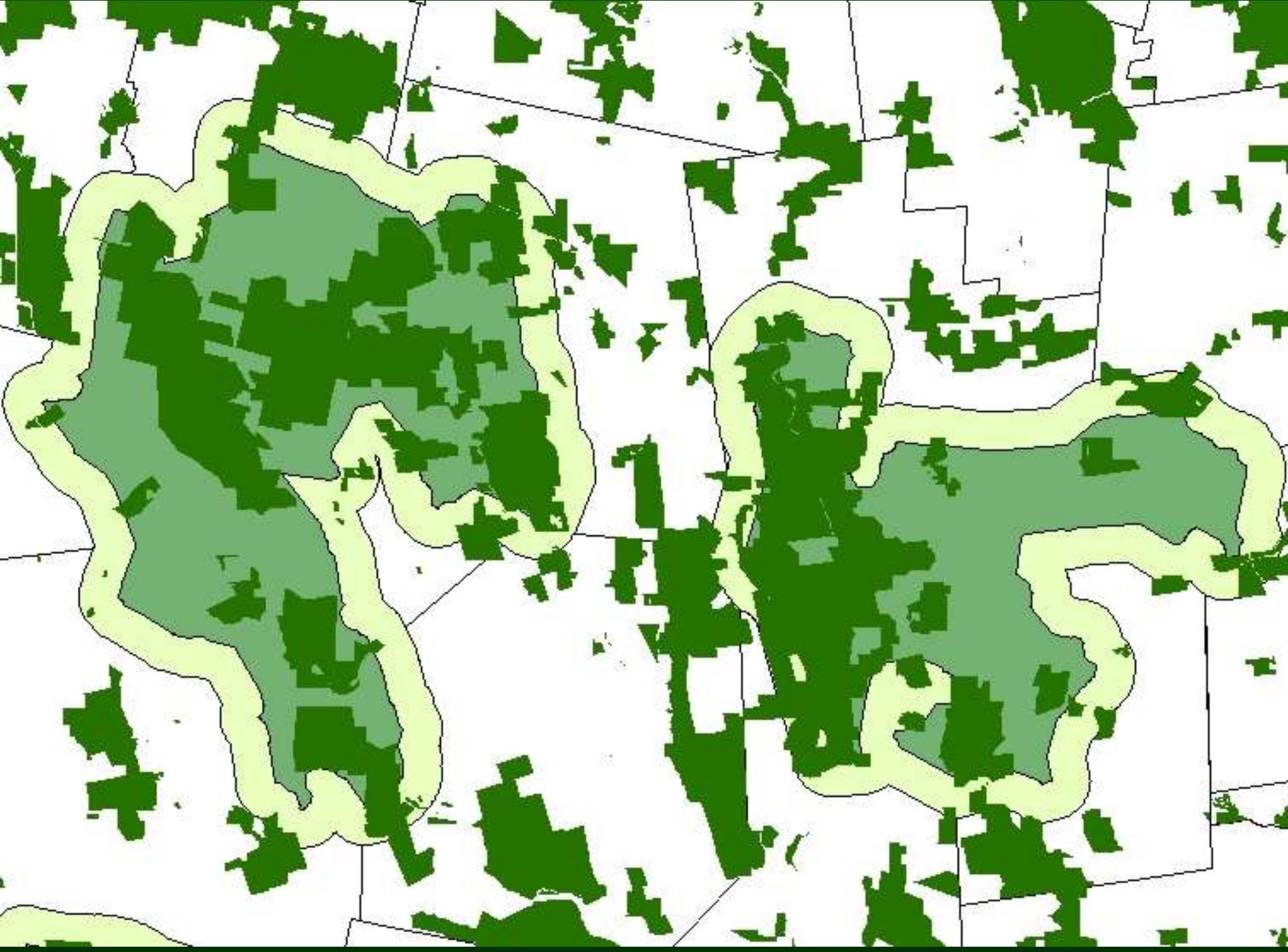


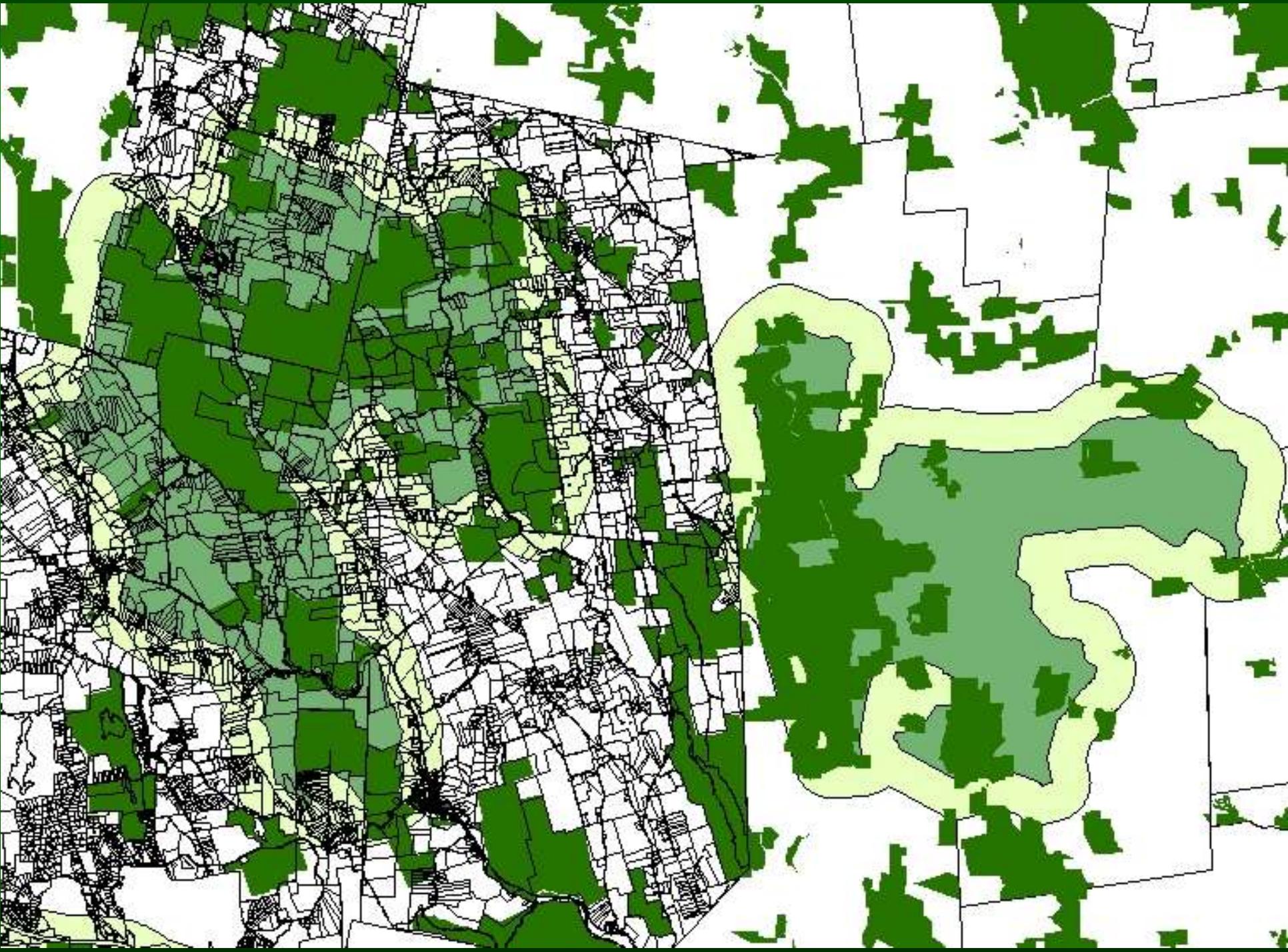
Number of Family Forest Ownerships in MA

(Kittredge et. al. 2005)

- 46,554 people > 10 ac.
- Representing 86% of private woodland (2.2 million acres)
- 42.5 acres/ownership (>10ac)
- 17.9 acres/ownership (>3 acres)





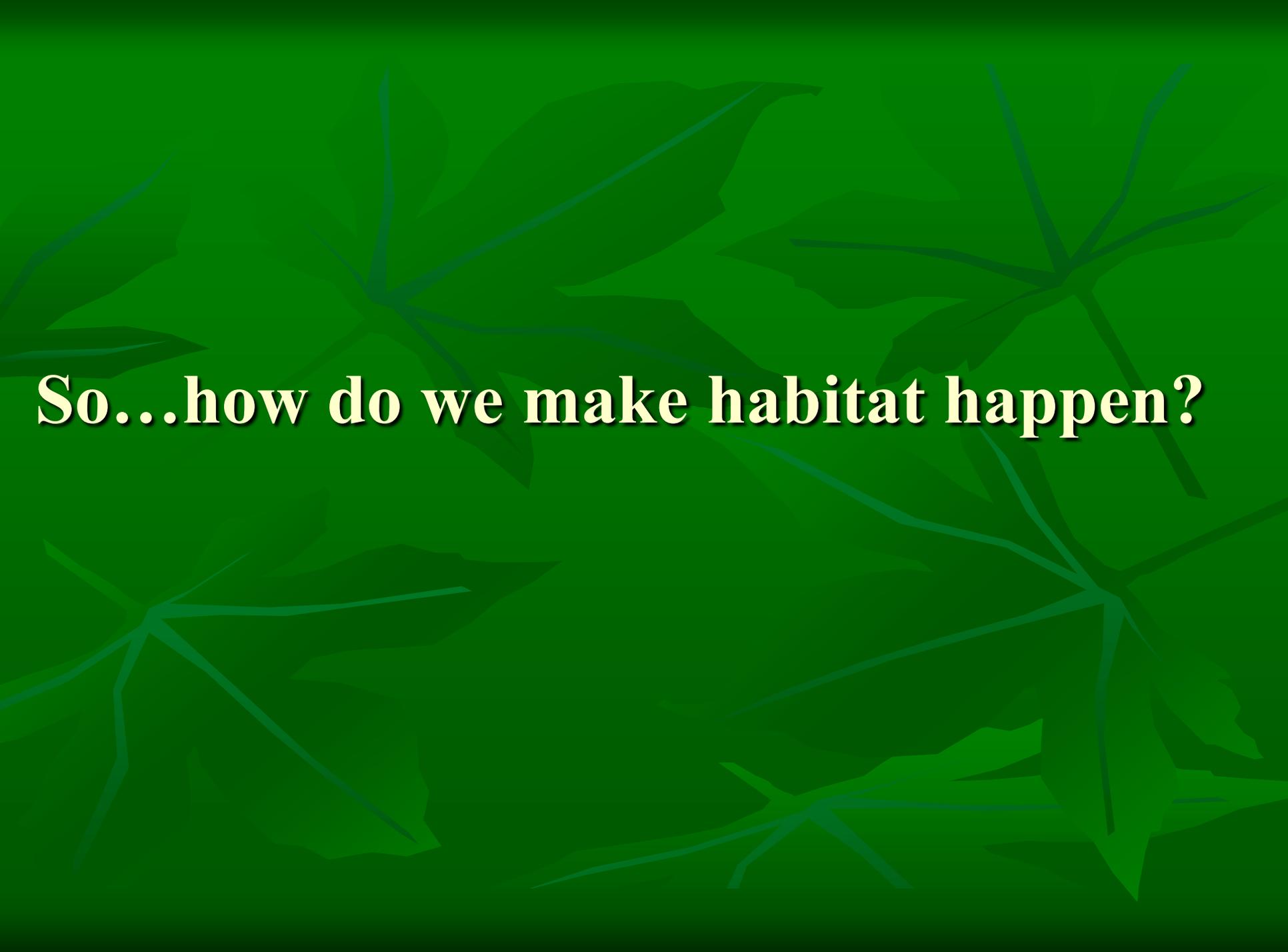


Top Ownership Objectives

(preliminary findings Catanzaro et. al.)

1. To enjoy beauty or scenery (79%)
2. To protect or improve wildlife habitat (72%)
3. For privacy (70%)
4. To protect nature or biodiversity (66%)
5. To protect water resources (58%)





So...how do we make habitat happen?

The “Other” Science of Conservation



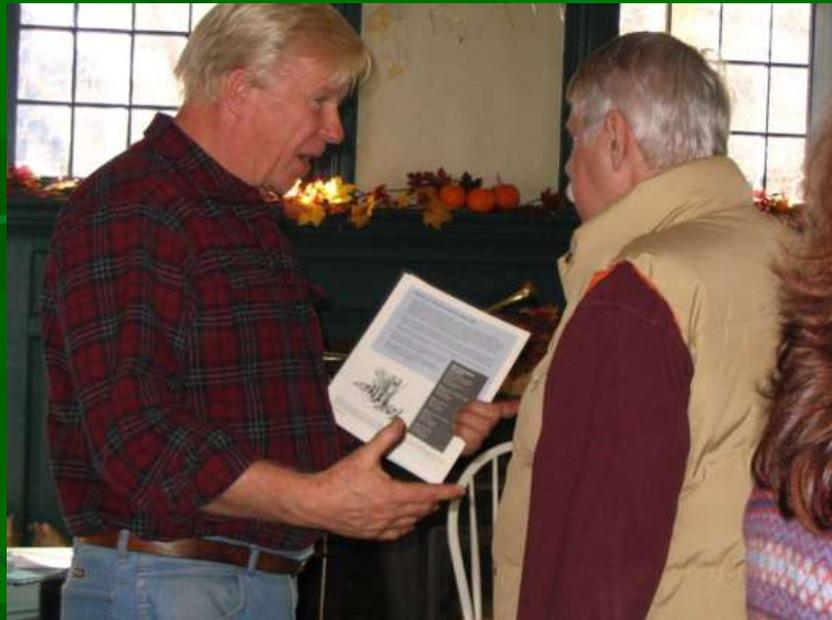
We don't need to reach everyone!

- Diffusion of Innovation – Everett Rogers
 - Some people will adopt new ideas faster than other
- The Influentials: How 1 in 10 Americans Tell the Other 9 What to Do,
R.J. Roper and Associates
 - **Opinion leaders** are highly influential in the decisions of their peers
- Bowling Alone – Robert D. Putnam
 - Social capital matters. Personal relationships provide access to information.



When decisions do arise, landowners often turn to friends and neighbors

Butler 2008



Why Friends and Neighbors?

- Trusted
- Unbiased
- First hand experience
- Know local information
- Know us
- Share our values
- Available for time sensitive decisions



Most significant predictor of openness to conservation: they knew their neighbors.

- *UMass/University of Wisconsin
Landowner Survey*



Social Capital! Personal relationships matter!

**As professionals, we can't assume
that we are the best
or even most credible messenger!**



However.....

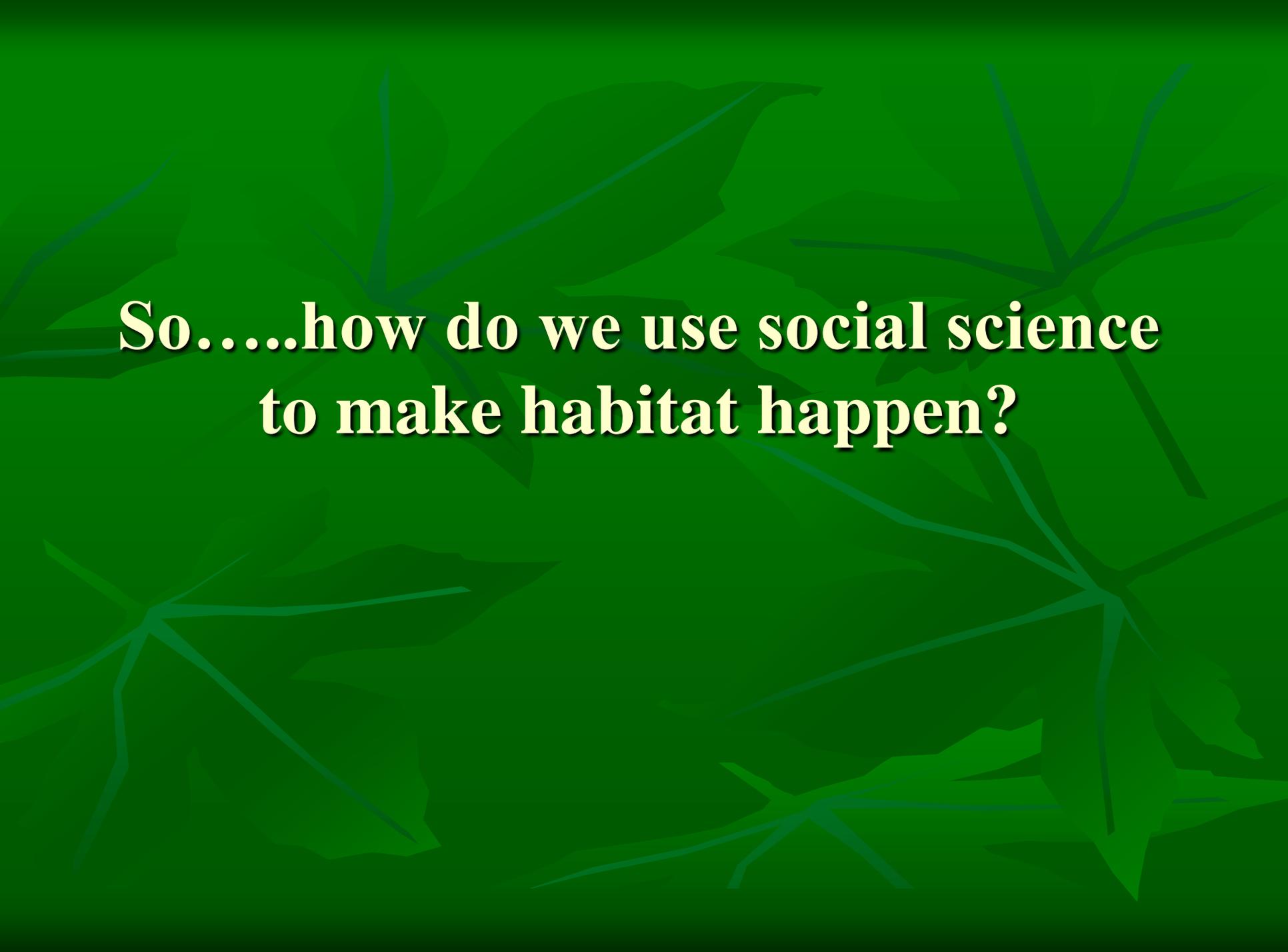
**“I need the information (codified knowledge)
AND
a friend to talk to about it (tacit knowledge).”**

Central MA Landowner



Kueper, A.P., E.S. Sagor, D.R. Becker. 2013. Learning from Landowners: Examining the Role of Peer Exchange in Private Landowner Outreach through Landowner Networks. *Society and Natural Resources* 26(8): 912-930.

Kittredge, D.B., M.G. Rickenbach, T.G. Knoot, E. Snellings and A. Erazo. 2013. It's the Network: How Personal Connections Shape Decisions about Private Forest Use. *Northern Journal of Applied Forestry* 30(2): 67-74.

The background of the slide is a dark green color with a pattern of lighter green, stylized leaf outlines. The leaves are scattered across the frame, some overlapping, creating a naturalistic feel.

**So.....how do we use social science
to make habitat happen?**

Background

- “Coverts” started in CT & VT in the ‘80s
- Initial funding from the Ruffed Grouse Society
- Massachusetts focuses training on:
 1. community opinion leaders
 2. strategic professionals
 3. promoting diverse projects



The Massachusetts Keystone Project

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Important people making the conservation difference

Keystone Species: A species with a disproportionate influence on its environment.

Keystone Cooperator: An individual with a disproportionate influence on his/her environment.



The Goal of Keystone

- Seed into each community, trained opinion leaders that help inform the forest conservation decisions of their neighbors, community, and organizations.



"Much better knowledge base and appreciation for the role of managing forests specifically for wildlife." Keystone Cooperator

Recruitment & Selection

60 – 80 applications per year

- **Acres**
 - ✓ Impacts on land they owned
 - ✓ Impacts on land their involved with
- **Potential to influence the decisions of others**
 - ✓ Connectedness within a community
 - ✓ Evidence of past success
 - ✓ Unique knowledge or experience
- **Diverse Perspectives**
 - ✓ Male : Female ratio (50:50)
 - ✓ Statewide coverage
 - ✓ Different roles/perspectives
- **Recommendations**

Next Keystone training:

April 14th – 17th, 2016

Applications:

www.MassKeystone.net

Applications Due:

March 7th, 2016

Program

Retreat Style: Thursday evening – Sunday afternoon

- Land use history
- Forest ecology
- Wildlife ecology
- Early and late successional habitats
- Elements of timber mgt.
- Land protection tools
- Invasive species
- Landowner decisions
- Landscape context
- UMass resources
- Outreach ideas
- Alumni success stories

"Every presenter was top notch!"

- Keystone Cooperator



Morning indoor sessions



John Scanlon and Trina Moruzzi leading field trips



Cooperators connecting at dinner

Expectations

- 30-hours of their time towards a forest conservation project(s) of their choosing
- Meet local needs
- Uses their skills and interests



"Thank you for a wonderful, educational, inspiring weekend. I come away with great motivation and courage to implement some new ideas!" *Keystone Cooperator*

The Keystone Network

- First training in 1988
- 25 classes of Keystone Cooperators
- > 500 people trained
- Communities across the state
- Periodic reunions
- Keystone list serve
- Updated resources



Western Massachusetts Reunion – Plehn Property

2013 Survey Results

Over a 12-month period....

- Average number of years since training **>10**
- Own or are involved with the management decisions on **143,840 total acres** of land.
- Total hours contributed: **44,635 (22 FTE)**
- Made contact with **15,033** people about forest conservation
- Referrals to people or resources: **1,742**

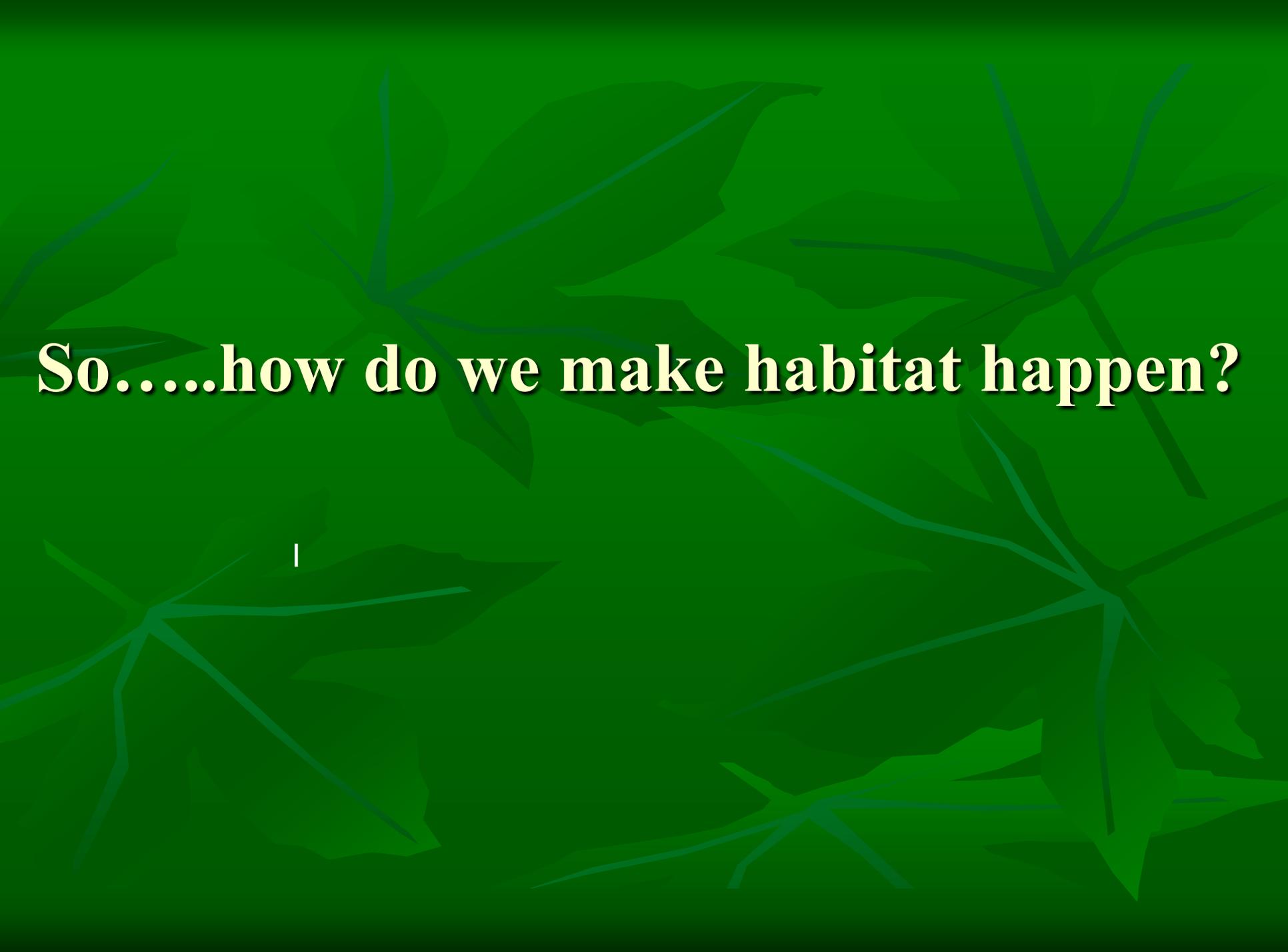
"Made me appreciate the range of possible decisions a landowner can take in managing a forest." Keystone Cooperator

Keystone Influence

How many of the reported hours are due to Keystone?

- Planning educational events for woodland owners (92%)
- Harvesting timber on land with which they are involved (86%)
- Referring woodland owners to other sources of information resources (83%)
- Providing information to media about forest conservation (76%)
- Distributing forest conservation information (75%)
- Wildlife enhancement on land in which you are involved (49%)

“Of many meetings on conservation that I have attended, this was the best!” Keystone Cooperator



So.....how do we make habitat happen?

|

Paul Strasburg - Worthington

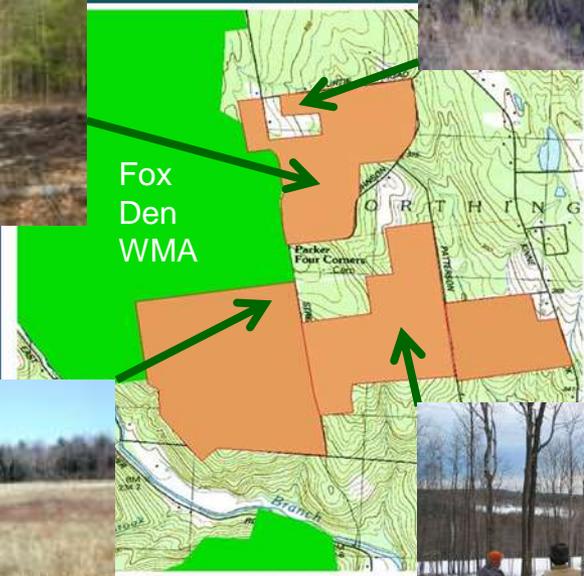
Land they own

- CR on 200+ acres abutting Fox Den WMA
- Early successional habitat creation in two different areas of the property
- Hosting research on restoring old-growth characteristics
- Hosts public outreach events

OG
Restoration
Plots



Fox
Den
WMA



Created
shrub
habitat



Neighbor Hattie Plehn (Keystone Cooperator)
Maintains grasslands – created shrub habitat



Created
grassland
habitat

Colin Novick

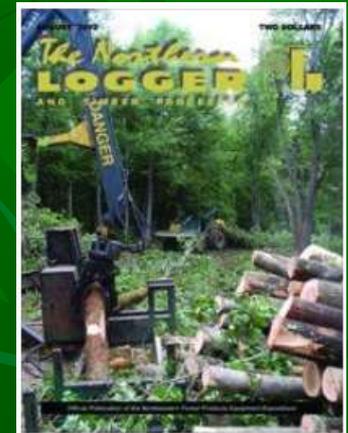
Greater Worcester Land Trust

Land They Influence

- Early successional forest openings at Cascades West (Holden)
- Wildlife meadow maintenance at Cascades West (Holden)
- Wildlife Meadow restoration and maintenance at Sibley Farm (Spencer)
- Early successional forest openings at Sibley Farm (Spencer)
- Invasive exotics suppression at Nick's Woods (Worcester)
- Harvesting timber from Trust lands (Holden and Spencer)
- Drafting Forest Management Plans on Trust lands (Worcester, Holden, Spencer, & Leicester)
- Lead ALB volunteer monitoring effort



Executive Director
Colin M.J. Novick



LIP funded Wildlife Opening
on GWLT Cascades West property



John O'Leary Describes LIP



Cooperators learn how to
implement wildlife practices

Michele Grzenda & Laurie Bent Weston

In a position to influence

- Initiated conversations about deer control methods
- Con Com recommended hunting to BOS
- Selectboard approved hunting option
- Con Com developed and implemented a deer hunting program, including a hunter proficiency test
- In addition, hunters donated a total of 33 hours of land management work last year
- Shared their experience with other communities
- Town is now considering expanding the program



Weston deer browse on arborvitae



Hunter proficiency test

Cause of Deer Morality in Weston	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Deer/car collisions	36	28	26	24	23	34
Deer harvested on conservation land	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	20	25
Deer harvested on private land	11	18	12	18	22	19
Total	47	46	38	60	65	78

Conclusions

- Must reach landowners beyond WMAs to meet our overall wildlife conservation goals
- Focus on opinion leaders and people in a position to make a difference
- “I need information and friend to talk to”



Keystone Field Trip to Phillipston WMA

Thank you!

www.MassKeystone.net

Keystone Sponsors

- MA Div. of Fish & Wildlife
- MA Chapter of TNC
- MA DCR
- Harvard Forest