

A. 4

Combined Report from:

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FOCUS AREAS

MassConn Central – Monson, Wales, Holland, MA; Union, Stafford, CT

Northern Connections – Palmer, Ware, Ludlow, Belchertown, New Braintree, Granby, West Brookfield, Brookfield, Warren, MA

Tri-State – Douglas, MA; Thompson, Putnam, Killingly CT; Burrillville, Glocester, Foster, Scituate, RI

STRATEGY #1

Using “Woodland Ambassadors,” conduct outreach to reach unengaged “Woodland Retreat” landowners within the focus areas. The general approach for this project was to conduct low-key, non-technical, peer-to-peer outreach through small group events such as Woods Walks and Woods Forums on Woodland Ambassador properties.

LANDOWNER GROUP TARGETED

The target audience members were previously unengaged “Woodland Retreat” landowners with 5-50 acres of forestland within the three focus areas.

DESIRED OUTCOMES FROM STRATEGY

The project goal for all three focus areas was to encourage previously unengaged “Woodland Retreat” landowners to take the first steps towards forest management and conservation by working with experienced, knowledgeable and committed forest owners (Woodland Ambassadors).

MESSAGES USED (AND HOW THIS TIES TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE)

The over-arching message, developed after TELE Training, was designed to attract Woodland Retreat landowners. The phrase, “You Love Your Woods – What’s Their Future?” was used throughout the course of the project.

MATERIALS AND CHANNELS USED (DISCUSS WHICH CHANNELS AND MATERIALS WERE USED AND WHY, REFERRING TO THE TELE WORKSHOP)

The Coordinators worked with each Woodland Ambassador to develop an outreach plan specific to each event. All materials included the message, “You Love Your Woods – What’s Their Future.” MassConn employed a variety of methods to reach Woodland Retreat Landowners, ranging from direct mail and email to list serves, personal communications, and social media posts. The Last Green Valley also used direct targeted mailings, based upon landowner connections, databases and the GIS maps, land trust mailing lists, one paid advertisement, two press releases, and one newspaper calendar listing. The numbers are reported in the Form B’s. Sample flyers and postcards are attached to this report.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

The Last Green Valley, Inc.'s project budget and general timeline:

Deliverable #1 - GIS/Mapping	2012	2013	2014	Totals
Database and GIS work Approx. 200 hrs@30/hr.	2000	4000		\$6,000
Total Cost Deliverable #1	\$2,000	\$4,000		\$6,000
Deliverable #2 – Ambassador Training				
Program Coordinator Assist w/ outreach & training for Ambassadors – 26+ hrs@30/hr	200	600		
Total Cost Deliverable #2	\$200	\$600		\$800
Deliverable #3 – Support Woodland Ambassadors				
Program Coordinator Support Ambassadors 400 hrs@30/hr		10,000	2,000	12,000
TLGV Financial Coordinator Administer Ambassador funds 33+ hours@30/hr		800	200	1,000
Direct Expenses Funds for Woodland Ambassadors to host programs/events/outreach 40 Ambassadors @ \$225	0	7,000	2000	9,000
TLGV Travel miles 585 (@ .555/mile)	108	108	109	325
Total Cost Deliverable #3	\$108	\$17,908	\$4,309	\$22,325
Total Contract Cost	\$2,308	\$22,508	\$ 4,309	\$ 29,125
Local Match				
TLGV Staff time (Lois Bruinooge) 200 hrs@45/hr	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
Woodland Ambassador time – 40 Ambassadors x 28 hrs. (8 hr training + 20 hrs events + prep) @ 25/hr		20,000	8,000	28,000
Total Local Match	\$3,000	\$23,000	\$11,000	\$37,000

MassConn/Opacum Land Trust's project budget and general timeline:

Deliverable #1 - GIS/Mapping	2012	2013	2014	Totals
Database and GIS work Approx. 300 hrs@20/hr.	2,000	4,000		\$6,000
Total Cost Deliverable #1	\$2,000	\$4,000		\$6,000
Deliverable #2 – Ambassador Training				
Program Coordinator Assist w/ outreach & training for Ambassadors - 40 hrs@20/hr	200	600		
Total Cost Deliverable #2	\$200	\$600		\$800
Deliverable # 3 – Support Woodland Ambassadors				
Program Coordinator Support Ambassadors 600 hrs@20/hr		10,000	2,000	12,000
Opacum Financial Coordinator Administer Ambassador funds 25 hours@30/hr		500	250	750
Direct Expenses Funds for Woodland Ambassadors to host programs/events/outreach 40 Ambassadors @ \$225	0	7,000	2,000	9,000
MassConn Travel miles 1035 (@ .555/mile)	115	285	175	575
Total Cost Deliverable #3	\$115	\$17,785	\$4,425	\$22,325
Total Contract Cost	\$2,315	\$22,385	\$ 4,425	\$ 29,125
Local Match				
Woodland Ambassador time – 40 Ambassadors x 28 hrs. (8 hr training + 20 hrs events + prep) @ 25/hr		20,000	8,000	28,000
Total Local Match		\$20,000	\$8,000	\$28,000

SUMMARY OF WHAT HAPPENED

GIS Mapping and Landowner Database Development

Landowner databases were obtained for each of the 22 towns within the three focus areas. GIS maps were developed for each focus area as well as for each individual town. The maps depict forest cover, permanently protected open space, and, where obtainable, parcel and landowner attributes. Digitized parcel data was not available for every town within the focus areas. The maps were reproduced both in .pdf format for use in communications materials and in printed form on 24" wide paper for display purposes to help build a shared identity within these focus areas. The Focus Area maps and a sample town map are attached to this report.

Woodland Ambassador Training

Both MassConn and The Last Green Valley assisted with the Woodland Ambassador training and implementation. The Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Council took the lead in organizing and publicizing the training sessions. Two full-day sessions were held on April 6, 2013 at George Washington Management Area in Gloucester, RI, and April 13, 2013 at Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary in Monson, MA. The training included sessions on:

- How the project fit into the "Big Picture"
- Emphasis on peer-to-peer education & learning
- Presentations from landowners who are already sharing their woods with others
- Time for ambassadors to talk about their motivations for participating
- How to plan an effective meeting
- Logistics and professional support
- Example of a Woods Walk.

Additional Woodland Ambassadors were recruited after the April training sessions. A total of 31 Woodland Ambassadors were utilized in this project for landowner outreach. Sample postcards and flyers advertising the Woodland Ambassador training are attached to this report.

Woodland Ambassador Outreach

Both MassConn and The Last Green Valley worked with Woodland Ambassadors to develop and implement each of their outreach/technical assistance plans. Each Woodland Ambassador hosted at least one event on his/her property. The Woodland Ambassadors were provided with:

- Reimbursement of expenses, up to \$225-250 per Ambassador
- Access to professionals
- More Than A Woodlot* reference book
- Sample press releases (attached)
- Event planning and budget worksheets (attached)
- Sign in/liability release forms (attached)
- Reimbursement forms (attached)
- Survey/evaluation forms (attached)
- Small group meetings
- Landowner databases and municipal maps (samples attached, see above)
- Design and production services
- Encouragement and inspiration.

Twelve events (8 woods walks, 4 estate planning/woods forum events) were held in the MassConn and

Northern Connections Focus Areas, drawing 218 people. Ten woods walks were held in the Tri-Corner Focus Area, drawing 87 people.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS/ ADAPTATIONS

This project involved multiple partners from three states that had never worked together; we spent considerable time building the project from the ground up. As a result, a lot of time went into planning the project, leaving us with a short implementation timeframe for outdoor events that were weather dependent. All decisions were made by committee, which also increased the planning timeframe. We also had to develop the infrastructure for this project (maps, landowner databases, survey databases, all materials) from scratch, which took additional time.

The compressed time frame also made it difficult to make mid-project course corrections. A number of forest outreach projects were going on simultaneously in Rhode Island. When it became apparent that The Last Green Valley's contractor was too busy to produce the results desired in this pilot project, there was little time left to implement changes. The Last Green Valley did reallocate funds and hire an additional coordinator to assist with the Woodland Ambassador outreach in Connecticut, particularly in spring 2014.

We did not train as many Woodland Ambassadors as expected. We ended up with 31 Ambassadors for all the focus areas instead of the goal number of 80. In part, this was a function of the short window for training; we only offered two Woodland Ambassador training dates in April, 2013, and both were full-day sessions. Potential Woodland Ambassadors may have been more likely to attend a half-day session if given more date choices. The 22-town focus areas were also likely too small to draw the expected numbers. The Last Green Valley returned \$8,944 to the larger project budget when it became apparent that we would not spend the money on Woodland Ambassador expenses. In the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas, even though there were fewer Ambassadors than expected, more money was spent on advertising and other expenses for each event.

The Woodland Ambassadors that we did train needed more hand-holding than expected. We attempted to provide comprehensive packets to the Woodland Ambassadors so that they could plan their own events, but most needed considerable guidance and assistance. The Coordinators spent a considerable amount of time designing mailings, flyers, and advertisements.

Busy schedules that were weather dependent made it hard for Woodland Ambassadors to commit to holding more than one event on their properties instead of the goal numbers of 2-4 events per Ambassador. People who tend to volunteer for this type of project have busy lives, other commitments, and seasonal constraints (e.g. "can't do it in the spring, I'm sugaring"). On average, Woodland Ambassadors in the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas spent about 40 hours each, planning and hosting one event.

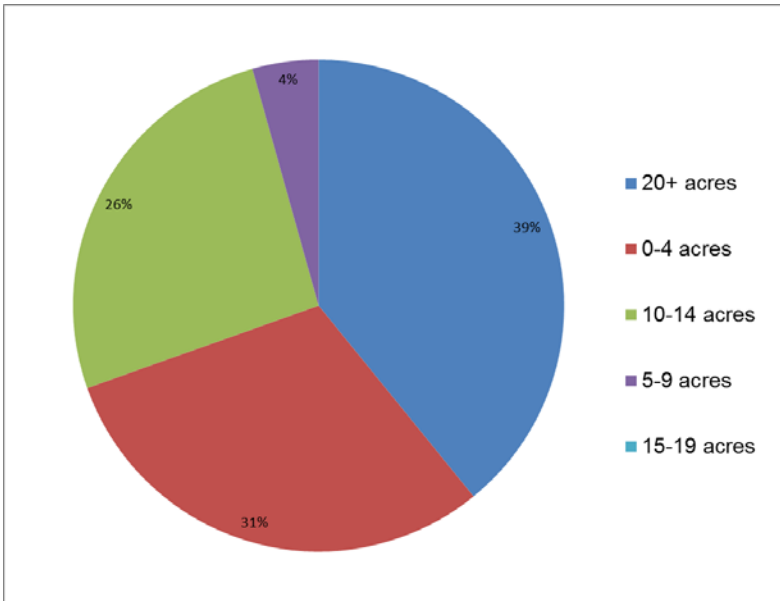
ACTUAL OUTCOMES:

BY THE NUMBERS (See Form B's, below)

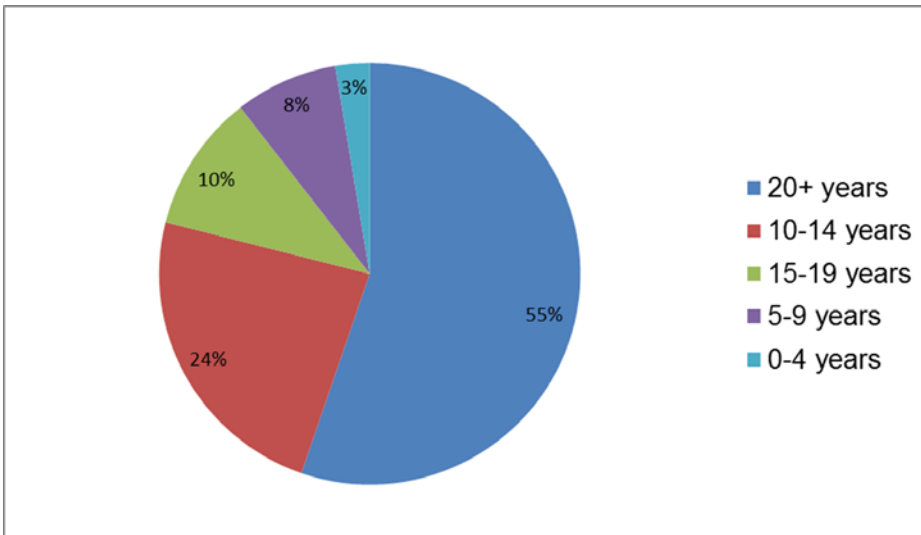
WHAT WERE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY SAY

Thirty-one Woodland Ambassadors participated in landowner outreach by hosting an event on his/her property. Woodland Ambassadors in MassConn's Focus Areas hosted twelve events and were able to reach 218 landowners. Woodland Ambassadors in the Tri-State Focus Area host ten events and reached 87 landowners.

In all Focus Areas, most attendees who completed surveys owned 20+ acres, followed by 0-4 acres. While we did not target small landowners (0-4 acres), a significant number attended events in all Focus Areas. The acreage breakdown for the Tri-Corner Focus Area is as follows:



Most survey respondents in all of the Focus Areas have owned their land for more than twenty years. In the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas, 0-4 years was the second most common response. In the Tri-Corner Focus Area, 89% of the survey respondents have owned their land for 10 or more years. The breakdown for the average length of ownership in the Tri-Corner Focus Area is:



The targeted marketing approach and message was successful in attracting Woodland Retreat landowners. The majority of attendees who completed surveys in all Focus Areas were Woodland Retreat landowners. In the Tri-Corner Focus Area, they own their woods for enjoyment of the scenery (average 9.1 on a scale of 1-

10), privacy (9.4), and recreation (7.4). They do not own their woods to generate income/financial investment (1.9) and don't describe themselves as uninvolved (2.8).

The results were similar in the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas. The majority of majority landowners own their land for scenery (average 8.40 on a scale of 1-10), privacy (8.54) and recreation (7.35).

The targeted marketing approach and message also worked to attract previously unengaged landowners. Prior to the event, about 50% of the survey respondents in the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas had not spoken with a consulting forester, obtained a forest management plan, or enrolled in a current use program. 61% had never been in touch with a land trust or government agency to discuss conservation options, and 80% had never consulted with an estate planning professional.

In the Tri-Corner Focus Area, 57% of the landowners had never spoken with a consulting forester, 72% did not have a forest management plan, and 49% had not enrolled in a municipal tax program. 74% of survey respondents had never contacted a land trust or government agency to learn about conservation options, and 92% had never consulted with an estate planning professional about the long-term future of their woods.

Most encouragingly, a significant number of survey respondents from all Focus Areas indicated a willingness to take additional steps leading to forest management and conservation after attending a Woodland Ambassador event. 47% of the Tri-Corner Focus Area respondents indicated a willingness to speak with a consulting forester, 36% are interested in obtaining a forest management plan, 50% are likely to enroll in a municipal tax program, 40% are likely to contact a land trust or government agency to learn about conservation options, and 31% are likely to consult with an estate planning professional about the long-term future of their woods.

In the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas, the average response was 6+ (on a scale of 1-10), indicating that the majority of survey respondents are likely to speak with a consulting forester (6.58), obtain a forest management plan (6.00), enroll in a municipal tax program (6.92), contact a land trust or government agency to learn about conservation options (6.40), and consult with an estate planning professional about the long-term future of their woods (6.48).

In all three Focus Areas, the municipal tax (current use) programs not only had a high rate of existing participation, but drew the most positive responses from landowners not already enrolled. If marketed correctly, using TELE-inspired language and the Woodland Ambassador approach, this topic may be of interest and provide a hook to engage more previously unengaged Woodland Retreat landowners.

MEDIA AND PRODUCTS (POST CARDS, FLYERS, LETTERS USED)

See attachments.

EVENT PRESS COVERAGE

MassConn had exceptional press coverage in the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas: eleven local and/or regional newspapers; one event had a reporter come out and interview Woodland

Ambassadors before event; one event had a reporter present and after a story was published; all events had one or several papers pick up the story/press release and printed it. The newspaper was the second most cited source of information where attendees in these Focus Areas learned about events.

The Tri-Corner Focus Area had limited press coverage, but 16% of the participants in the Tri-Corner Focus Area learned about the events via press releases and paid advertisements in newspapers.

LESSONS

As more partners are added to the mix, more time is needed to coalesce and plan a project of this magnitude. We were overly-ambitious from the start; no one at the table was able to provide a reality check that could have tempered group expectations.

The project was also dependent on buy-in from very busy people who were not able to commit to hosting 2-4 events. Even simple Woodland Ambassador events required an incredible amount of time, energy, and commitment from everyone involved. More than one event per Ambassador was not realistic. Partner teams (i.e. husband & wife) of Woodland Ambassadors worked well.

\$250 was not enough for large mailings, advertising and food combined. Advertising represented the highest costs per event. Some Woodland Ambassadors picked up the cost of refreshments themselves.

Collecting completed surveys is an art. Trite as this may sound, we could not get people to fill out the back of double-sided surveys. In the end, we used a one-sided, 8x14 paper and eliminated some questions in order to make it fit on one page.

The Woodland Ambassadors knew best how to reach the intended audience. Some were very successful in not sending formal invitations but instead relying on direct communications and flyering.

A combination of outreach methods (direct mail, list serves, flyering, direct communication and press releases) produced the best results in the MassConn Central and Northern Connections Focus Areas. Website and social media did not seem to be significant factors in attracting attendees.

The woods walks and informal events were generally well-received by attendees. The structure of having the Woodland Ambassador lead the walk/event, and be the expert but an approachable woodland owner just like one of the attendees was well-received. The Woodland Ambassador understands and is involved in the local community, and has built trust and credibility. Combining this model with "planting" experts in the crowd at the events worked well. The role of the expert was to be available for further detailed information about taking next steps if the attendees had questions.

Small, super-targeted follow-up events also worked well and helped those landowners who were ready to take the next step. MassConn hosted two follow up events, one with an attorney and one about how to choose a forester. They were small targeted events; attendees who expressed a high interest in taking action on their survey forms from the first event were called personally and invited to the follow-up events.

Specific Woodland Ambassador Comments:

Sandy Walsh - I really enjoyed spending time and sharing questions and wisdom about the full range of the responsibilities of forest and farmland ownership with other like-minded and positive individuals. If

anything, I wish I was part of a every single conversation that day (her event). Also, perhaps better one-on-one shared preparation to focus my answers to specific questions so I could be clearer to answer questions.

Grace Adzima

- Advertise, send flyers, invite personally
- Have Landowners present goals
- Have knowledgeable people to explain and answer questions
- Have handouts and contact information

John & Jane Freeman - Plan woods walks for Saturday mornings 9-10 starting time. Plus and minus aspect of a rain date. Talk geared to multiple skill levels. Important to have someone at the end of the crowd. Include as many experts as you can (foresters, botanists, etc.). Exhibits hold people's attention while crowd gathers. Have focus points along hike.

Maureen Doyle - We definitely should get the walk into the Walktober schedule for 2014! I liked how this planning was spread out (in time- it wasn't a rush deal). Katie had a great way of interacting with us all! I appreciated the fairly frequent contact (through email, phone calls). It was motivational.

Howie Fife - Need to find a better way to reach the potential landowners.

Ray Korny & Family

- Rain or shine- no rain date
- All attendees very interested in trails and conserving of forests
- Small groups are better to control and be personal with
- More general invitations (not to specific people)
- More groups should be invited- schools, grange etc.

Stan & Barbara Martowski

- Weather and time of year (vacation time) not good!
- People seemed to enjoy the event!
- Could have allowed more, did not fit everything in
- Do something else in addition to just a woods walk!

Jim DiMaio - Katie, Cynthia and I worked well together developing the theme, materials and sharing the workload. The subject matter was important to many landowners because we share in this problem. Need to have workshops that help landowners manage their lands. It was a lot of work during a busy time of the year for me. Cynthia and Katie are professional, deliver on their promises and excellent natural resource representatives. The effort was well worth it.

Lisa Mosczynski – We had an excellent woods walk. It was well attended and participants had lots of good questions. Word of mouth/personal invitation is best ask. We would do this again and we are happy to help others do so as well.

Roland Duhamel – Reach out to family, friends, and neighbors and business associates. Hope for good weather. Name tags on trees + visual aids are useful.

Ruth Strach - It was difficult to find a time that would work for people. Schedules (especially in spring) are already over-full. This walk was a good way to discuss property & management, conservation etc. – but worked well because it was a small congenial group. It's simply not possible with all of our other commitments to be able to do this on a regular basis. That being said, I think it was a worthwhile walk.

BENEFITS

Through this project, the TELE approach and messaging concepts were delivered to a wide variety of partners in the field.

We were able to train and inspire 31 Woodland Ambassadors, and we were able to reach 305 landowners, the majority of whom are Woodland Retreat Landowners. The landowner information collected through the surveys can and will be used to target next steps towards forest management and conservation.

The landowner databases and maps developed through this project are very important for future outreach efforts to engage additional landowners in the focus areas.

Multiple organizations were able to partner together for the first time because of this project. Some of those partners have begun to leverage their strengths and support each other's projects and grant applications. As the partnership continues to develop, larger-scale joint projects can now be considered that would not have been possible without the interaction fostered through this pilot.

Some of the partner organizations have strengthened their in-house organizational capacity to engage in forest conservation. For example, The Last Green Valley has developed its own Powerpoint presentation about the Wildlands and Woodlands vision, the SNEHF and its resources, and the Woodland Ambassador pilot project. This Powerpoint has been delivered to ten organizations in the past year, including senior centers and learning in retirement programs at local community colleges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to apply TELE principles for communicating with Woodland Retreat landowners. Arrange for additional training in targeted marketing to create better outreach materials.

Obtain funding for a dedicated outreach coordinator to work with Woodland Ambassadors in the SNEHF.

Build upon the momentum generated by the pilot project and continue to work with Woodland Ambassadors that have already been recruited in each of the Focus Areas.

Ask each Woodland Ambassador to host one event, then to be responsible for following up with their visitors to find out if they had taken any steps because of the event. Host a second, highly targeted event if attendees seem willing to take that next step.

Using the lessons learned, expand the program over time and geography to reach new Focus Areas within the SNEHF.

Continue developing the partnership between SNEHF pilot project member organizations.

FORM B

OUTCOMES BY THE NUMBERS for Southern New England Heritage Forest Partnership

Assessment of Woodland Ambassador Recruitment and Training All Focus Areas	Number
Number of postcards, other mailings, emails, listservs, social media and personal communications to prospective Woodland Ambassadors	500 postcards, plus personal contacts, website postings, flyers, and emails
Number of forest landowners trained to become Woodland Ambassadors	21 <u>9</u> 30
Number of trained forest landowners that commit to becoming Woodland Ambassadors (goal was 80 total - 40 Woodland Ambassadors for MassConn and 40 Woodland Ambassadors for Tri-Corner focus areas)	19 <u>12</u> 31
Feedback from Woodland Ambassadors about training program	Yes, evaluations compiled See Comments
Quality and quantity of media coverage for this phase of the project	1 reporter present (Norcross)

Completion of Focus Area Maps and Landowner Databases	Number
Tri-Corner: Douglas, MA Sitate, Foster, Gloucester, & Burrilville, RI Thompson, Killingly & Putnam, CT	8
MassConn Central: Monson, Wales, & Holland, MA; Union & Stafford, CT	5
Northern Connections: Palmer, Ware, Ludlow, Belchertown, New Braintree, Granby, West Brookfield, Brookfield, & Warren, MA	9
	22

<p>Assessment of Woodland Ambassador efforts to engage woodland retreat landowners</p> <p>MassConn/Opacum</p> <p>Focus Areas: MassConn Central and Northern Connections</p>	
<p>Number of woodland retreat landowners contacted by Woodland Ambassadors through mailings, emails, list serv, social media and personal communications</p>	<p>3356 (Direct mail)</p> <p>797 (Emails)</p> <p>3690 (List serves- land trusts, ag. commissions, tree farm)</p> <p>42 (Personal Communication with woodland ambassador)</p> <p>4 (Social media- posted to MassConn, Opacum Land Trust, East Quabbin Land Trust & Kestrel Land Trust website)</p> <p>0 (Newspaper ads)</p>
<p>Number of programs and events held by Woodland Ambassadors (the expectation is that each Woodland Ambassador will host between 2-4 programs or events)</p>	<p>12 (8 woods walks, 4 estate planning/woods forum events)</p>
<p>Number of participants at programs and events held by Woodland Ambassadors</p>	<p>218</p>
<p>Number of one-on-one conversations between Woodland Ambassadors and woodland retreat landowners that include some aspect of forest management</p>	<p>44 hours from April 2013-May 2014, outreach implementation period (this is based on reported hours from 3 woodland ambassadors) Majority of ambassadors spoke with neighbors on various forestry & land mgt. issues regularly as I learned from my time with them.</p>
<p>Quality and quantity of media coverage for this phase of the project</p>	<p>11 local and/or regional newspapers; 1 event had a reporter come out and interview Woodland Ambassadors before event; 1 event had a reporter present and after a story was published; all events had one or several papers pick up the</p>

	story/press release and printed it.
Feedback and commitment from Woodland Ambassadors to continue with outreach efforts beyond formal project	See attached comments
To the extent known in project short timeframe:	
Number of landowners who contact consulting foresters	7
Number of landowners who initiate forest management plans	3
Number of landowners who enroll in current use programs	1
Number of landowners who contact land trusts to learn more about their conservation options	3
Number of landowners who consult estate planning professionals	5

Assessment of Woodland Ambassador efforts to engage woodland retreat landowners	
The Last Green Valley, Inc.	
Focus Area: Tri-Corner	
Number of woodland retreat landowners contacted by Woodland Ambassadors through mailings, emails, list serv, social media and personal communications	<p>292 flyers mailed based upon landowner connections, databases and maps</p> <p>105 postcards mailed or hand delivered based upon landowner connections, databases and maps</p> <p>Mailing to 190 ECFLA/Wolf Den Land Trust members listing all CT events</p> <p>1 Paid Ad</p> <p>2 Press Releases</p> <p>1 Calendar Listing</p>
Number of programs and events held by Woodland Ambassadors (the expectation is that each Woodland Ambassador will host between 2-4 programs or events)	10
Number of participants at programs and events held by Woodland Ambassadors	87
Number of one-on-one conversations between Woodland Ambassadors and woodland retreat landowners that include some aspect of forest management	38

Quality and quantity of media coverage for this phase of the project	16% attendees learned about event through newspaper
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To the extent known in project short timeframe:	
Number of landowners who contact consulting foresters	2
Number of landowners who initiate forest management plans	1
Number of landowners who enroll in current use programs	0
Number of landowners who contact land trusts to learn more about their conservation options	0
Number of landowners who consult estate planning professionals	0