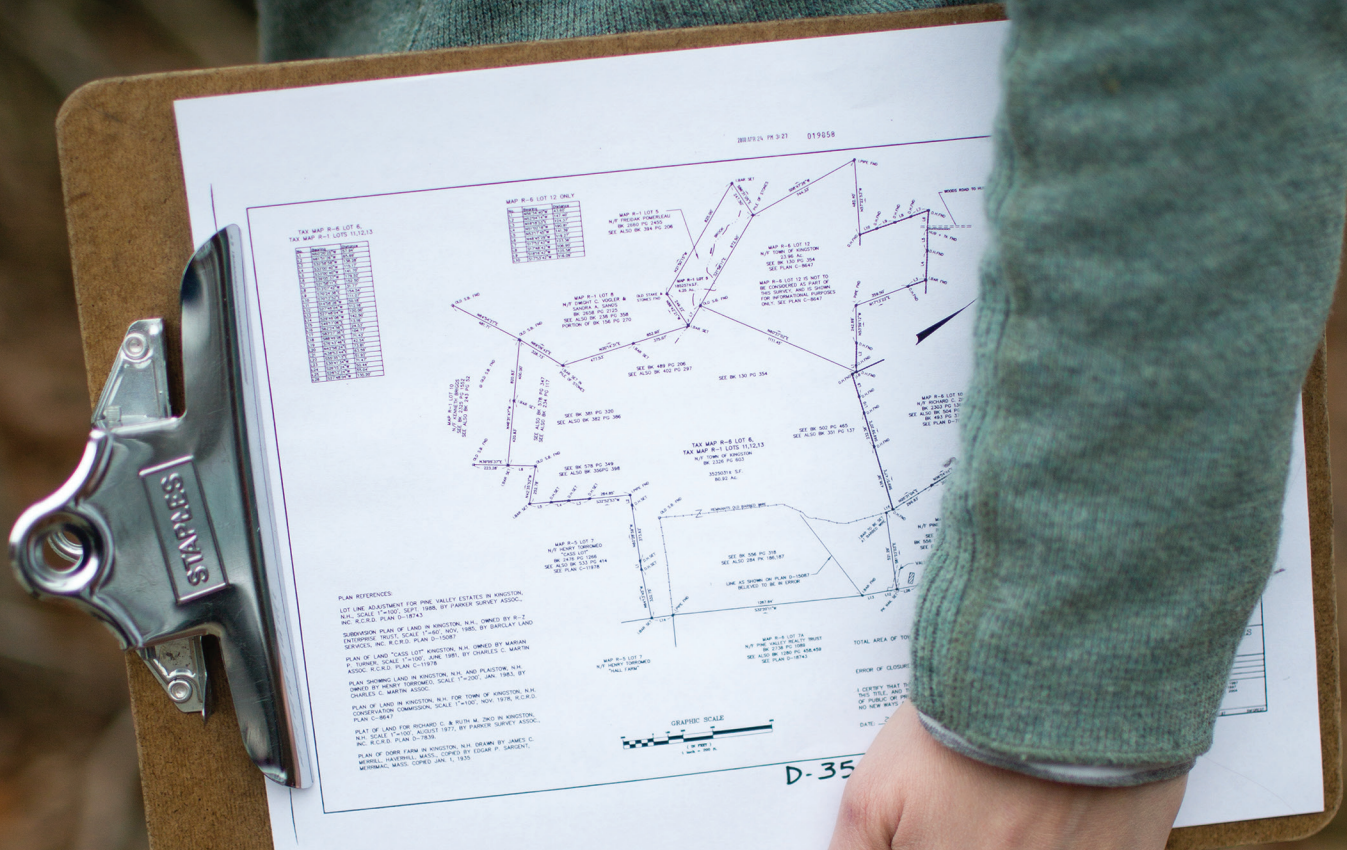




Extension

UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION STEWARDSHIP TRAINING GUIDES

How to Monitor Conservation Easements



Instructor Notes



How to Monitor Conservation Easements

A guide for organizations and towns training volunteers to monitor conservation easements.

Written by Emma Tutein, Haley Andreozzi, and Malin Clyde, UNH Cooperative Extension. December 2015. Revised June, 2018.

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Why Volunteers?

There are many reasons why having volunteers monitor conservation easements is a good thing:

- Increase capacity. Professionals can't always monitor every easement. Towns and small land trusts in particular often lack the budget and resources to monitor all their easements with paid staff.
- Good conservation easement monitoring benefits the entire conservation community.
- Volunteers care about their communities! They are passionate about conservation lands in their town and are interested in helping care for them.
- It's rewarding work, and we KNOW volunteers can do it.
- Volunteers love spending time in nature!
- **It's FUN!**



Introduction

Volunteers play an important role in conservation. Conservation commissions, land trusts, and other conservation groups have a strong need for skilled volunteers, but often lack the resources or capacity to organize and coordinate trainings on the wide range of stewardship topics. The Training Guides from Nature Groupie are the product of collaborative efforts by conservation groups in New Hampshire to share expertise and develop stewardship trainings in topic areas identified as priorities for volunteers skills. These guides can be used to train volunteers for your organization or group, and will help Nature Groupie's mission of increasing the capacity of conservation groups, agencies, and volunteers to care for New Hampshire's lands and waters.

This Training Guide – *How to Monitor Conservation Easements* – will help you host a workshop for natural resource volunteers that will cover the basics of monitoring conservation easements. Volunteers will review the basics of conservation easements, how to read the easement deed, best practices for monitoring easements, and safety considerations.

A note to conservation commissions:

If you are looking to train a group of volunteers to monitor conservation easements in your town, we strongly recommend partnering with a local land trust or other conservation professional. Because conservation easements are complex, legal documents, it is important to ensure that you are providing your volunteers with accurate, up-to-date information on how to monitor conservation easements. Visit www.nhltc.org to find your local land trust, or contact the Nature Groupie staff for more information on how to find a conservation professional or partner with a conservation organization.

A note to land trusts and conservation organizations:

Whether you already have an established volunteer conservation easement monitoring program and host regular trainings, or you are looking to create a new volunteer program to monitor your conservation easements, we hope you'll consider reaching out to the communities in your service area and invite their conservation commissioners to attend your training. Many towns lack the expertise and resources to monitor conservation easements properly. It is in the best interest of the conservation community as a whole to help ensure that all conservation easements are monitored to the same standard. Feel free to use any of the information and resources in this training guide to train volunteers with your organization or local communities.

Planning a Training

Stewardship Training Guides are available for any organization or town to use, but planning and executing a volunteer training will still take effort. The time spent organizing a *How to Monitor Conservation Easements* training to build a skilled base of volunteers can be an incredibly valuable use of your time. Here you'll find a sample training agenda and 4 simple steps to keep in mind when planning your volunteer training.

Sample Training Agenda

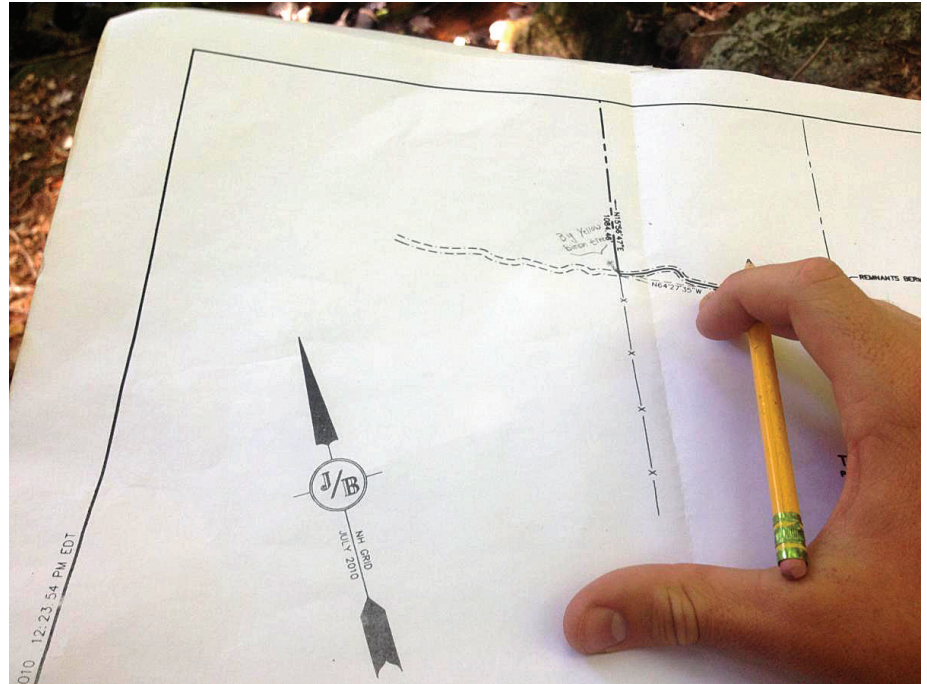
This training is best done with a combination of indoor and outdoor sessions.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY	TIME
Welcome and Introductions	Introductions (Instructors and Volunteers)	15 minutes
	Your Organization and Mission	
Conservation Easement Monitoring Basics	What is a conservation easement?	20 minutes
	Why do we monitor easements?	
	Safety Considerations	
Monitoring Procedures and Documentation	How to monitor easements	60 minutes
	Introduce monitoring form	
	How to handle potential violations	
Safety	Overview of safety considerations	20 minutes
Field Activity	How to interpret survey maps	1-2 hours
	How to interpret aerial photos	
	Compass and navigation tips & tricks	
	Walk a portion of an easement boundary	

Where to Hold Your Training

An ideal property will have the following:

- ▢ Landowner permission to use the property for the training
- ▢ Adequate parking for a large group
- ▢ Easy access
- ▢ A nearby indoor venue for the first part of your training
- ▢ An easement with features to highlight (i.e. clear boundaries and monuments, maybe a monument that is difficult to find to challenge your group)
- ▢ An existing survey map and aerial imagery

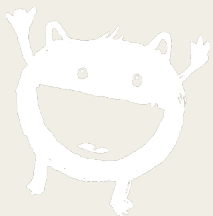


1. Choose the Location, Date and Time

You'll need both an indoor and outdoor location for your training. Your outdoor location should be a property with a conservation easement on which you can practice monitoring.

Because you will be training volunteers, we recommend holding your training on a weekend. This workshop typically takes about five hours to run. As such, you will want to make sure you either provide lunch or have volunteers bring their own.

The best time of year to hold this training is in the spring or fall, which are the recommended times to monitor easements. Both offer clear, unobstructed views through the forest and make teaching easement monitoring easier. Spring is especially recommended as you will be training your volunteers at the start of the monitoring season instead of the end.



2. Recruit Volunteers

Recruiting motivated volunteers who are excited about conservation is an important step in organizing your training. Here are some things to keep in mind when recruiting volunteers to monitor easements:

- **Think about group size.**

A recommended group size for this training would be anywhere from 6-20 people. If the group is much bigger you'll need additional trainers to assist in the field.

- **Recruit your pre-existing volunteers.**

Do you have volunteers who work on trails, serve on a board or committee, or even help with tasks around the office? There are many volunteers who currently work on other projects who might be excited to monitor easements if they had some training!

- **Use Nature Groupie's network registration system.**

When you post a volunteer training on Nature Groupie online calendar, you will automatically receive e-mails with volunteer contact information when someone registers for your training.



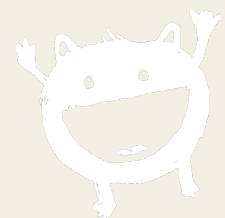
3. Pick Your Trainers

For this workshop we strongly recommend working with a conservation professional to lead the training. Connect with your local land trust or with Nature Groupie staff if you need help finding a conservation professional to partner with you on this training.

Having more than one leader is a good idea – it allows the volunteers to hear from a variety of people in your organization, and will ensure that one person doesn't get burnt out doing it all. Two leaders is likely sufficient for smaller groups; one or two more is also usually fine especially for larger groups, though you want to be sure that trainers don't overwhelm the group size.

4. Organize the Logistics

Making sure things run smoothly is an important part in setting volunteers





up for a successful training. Planning out the details in advance will make things much easier on the day of the training. Think about what you'll need for the day of the training.

Food

You can keep it simple, but offering food and drinks is a nice touch as volunteers arrive.

- ▣ While certainly not necessary, serving food is a nice ice breaker.
- ▣ Consider providing muffins or doughnuts in the morning, or cookies and fruit in the afternoon.
- ▣ Everyone enjoys a good snack, and don't forget something to drink. Coffee or cider always hits the spot.

Supplies

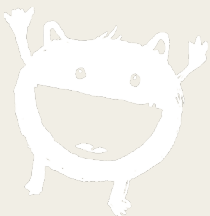
- ▣ An easel or whiteboard are good for brainstorming during discussions.
- ▣ You'll need compasses, survey maps, and aerial photos for the field activity.
- ▣ It's a good idea to have volunteers sign in so you can ensure the contact information you have is correct and also collect any additional information you need (name, address, e-mail address, etc.).
- ▣ Provide nametags for volunteers – this will make it easier for them to communicate with each other, and will help you use and learn the names of new volunteers. Don't forget your nametag, too!

Technology

- ▣ The indoor portion of this training will likely require a powerpoint presentation. Ensure that your venue can provide you with projection equipment and a screen, or be sure to bring your own.

5. Compile Volunteer Materials

There are volunteer materials available in *The Stewardship Training Guides* that will help volunteers to monitor conservation easements. These materials can be used as-is, or can be edited and adapted to fit the needs of your group/organization. See the following section for a list of materials for volunteers.



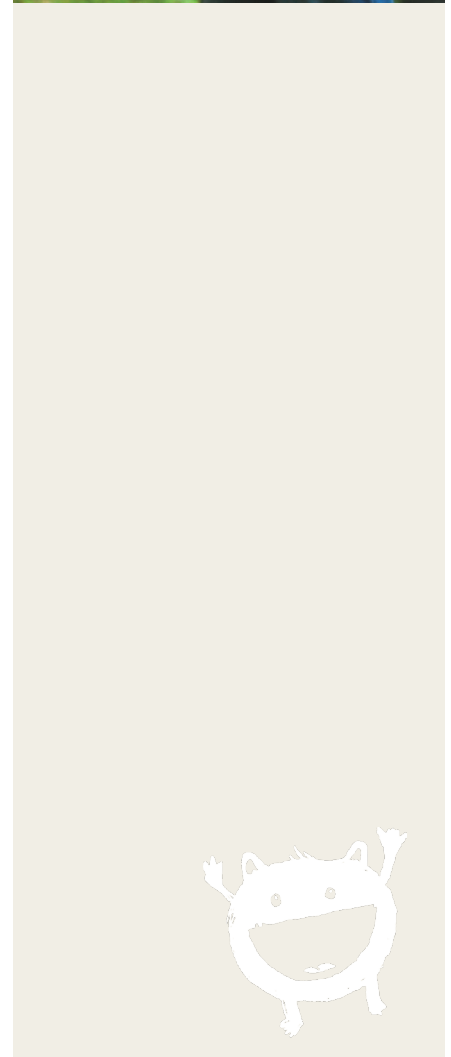
Materials for Volunteers

The following materials will help volunteers monitor conservation easements. These resources can be found on Nature Groupie’s website at naturegroupie.org.

Print these out and provide them to volunteers in a folder of materials; this will allow them to reference the guides, checklists, and tips as they prepare to monitor conservation easements.



VOLUNTEER MATERIALS	WHAT IS THIS?
<p>How to Monitor Conservation Easements: Volunteer Handbook</p>	<p>A step-by-step guide for volunteers on how to monitor conservation easements.</p>
<p>Sample Easement Monitoring Form</p>	<p>A sample form to be used during monitoring, which can be used as-is or adapted as needed.</p>
<p>Outdoor Skills for Conservation</p>	<p>Tips on becoming more comfortable navigating off-trail in the woods. Includes tips and tricks for reading survey maps, using a map and compass, and general safety tips.</p>

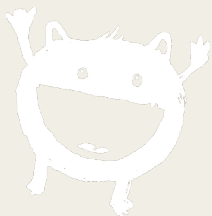




From the Team at Nature Groupie

We hope you find the *How to Monitor Conservation Easements* training guide and materials valuable to your work. Volunteer conservation easement monitors can be an exciting addition to a town or organization looking to steward their conservation lands. If you have any questions about the content, tips, and materials provided, contact:

Nature Groupie
UNH Cooperative Extension
224 Nesmith Hall, 131 Main St
Durham, NH 03824
nature.groupie@unh.edu
603-862-5327



Staying in Touch with Volunteers

After the training is over it's important to follow up with your volunteers. If appropriate, it's ideal if you can give your volunteer specific property assignments the end of the training. Have volunteers commit to a timeline for completing their monitoring assignments. Make sure they have all the documents and materials they need to monitor their assigned conservation easement well in advance of their planned monitoring visit.

It is critical to follow up with your volunteers after they have monitored their assigned conservation easement and submitted their report. Ask the volunteer if any questions or concerns arose during their visit. Review their report to make sure they didn't find any violations or issues while monitoring.

This guide is part of The Stewardship Training Guides series published by UNH Cooperative Extension, aimed at conservation organizations that want to work effectively with volunteers on stewardship and educational projects. Guides and materials are available for free download at naturegroupie.org

How to Lead a Nature Walk

Information for workshop instructors and organizers on how to train volunteers to lead nature walks on conservation lands.

Easement Monitoring with Volunteers

Information for workshop instructors and organizers on how to train volunteers to monitor conservation easements.

Off-Trail: Outdoor Skills for Land Conservation

Information for workshop instructors and organizers on how to train volunteers in field skills such as using a map and compass and global positioning system (GPS), understanding a survey, navigating in the woods, recognizing property boundaries, and more.

Basic Trail Maintenance and Construction – *available 2016*

Information for workshop leaders on how to teach basic trail construction and maintenance skills to volunteers.

Invasive Plant Identification, Mapping, and Control – *available 2016*

Information for workshop instructors and organizers on how to provide education and training to volunteers in recognizing, mapping, and controlling invasive plants in their communities.

Volunteer Workday 101 – *available 2016*

Information for those interested in working effectively with volunteers to accomplish stewardship tasks.

