

Critters Session  
1:30-3PM

# Foresters for the Birds 2.0

*A Forester Training and Endorsement Program*



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Audubon

VERMONT

# What I am going to cover:



- Mission and goals of Audubon
- Our stake in active forest management
- Foresters for the Birds 1.0
- Foresters for the Birds 2.0
  - (A.K.A Forester Training and Endorsement)
- How to become involved
- Feedback- Q&A



*Blackburnian Warbler, Shirley Donald*

# Strategic Initiatives



**Coasts**



**Working  
Lands**



**Water**



**Bird Friendly  
Communities**



**Climate**



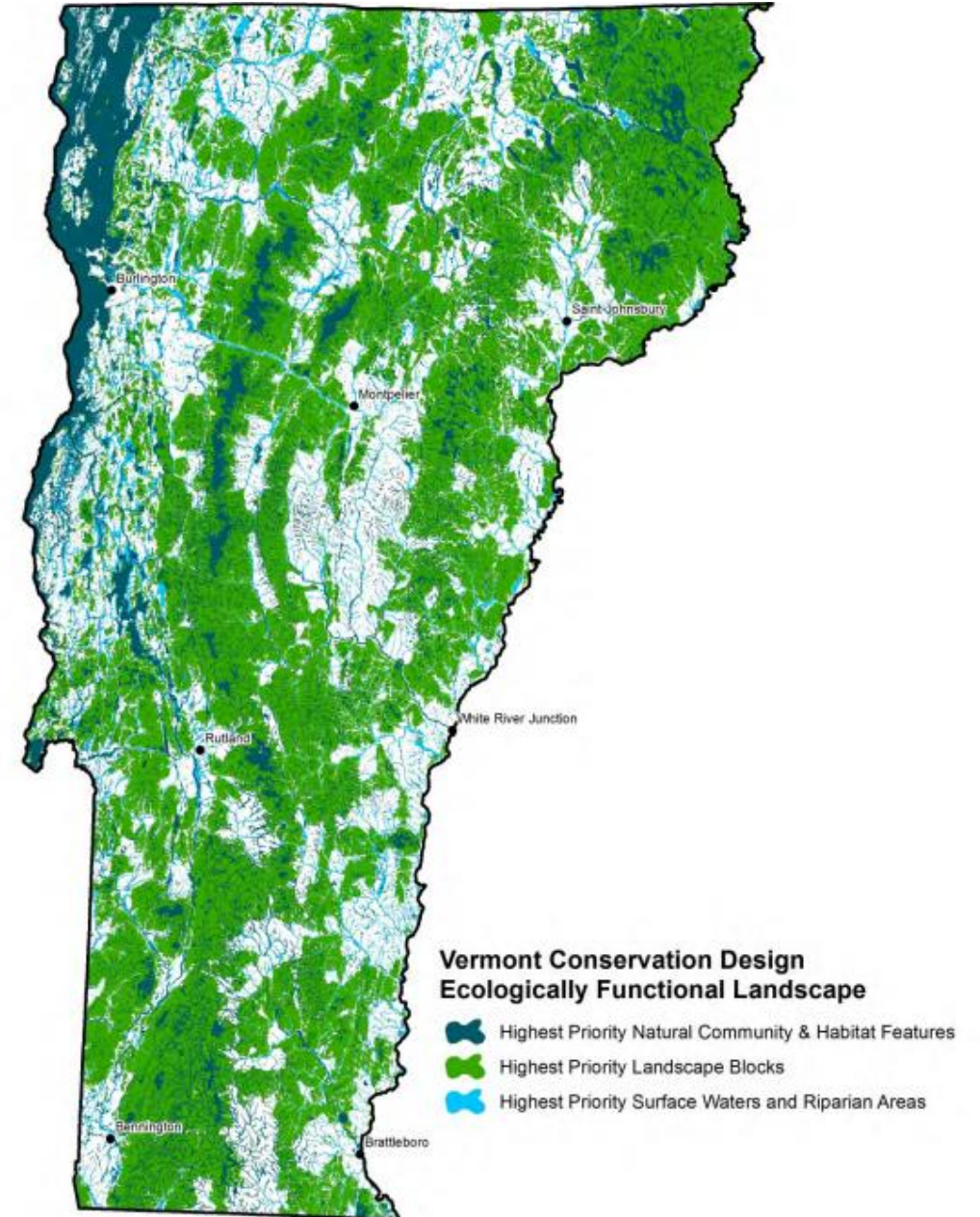
**Healthy Forest Program**

Mission is to *protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow*

## Healthy Forest Program

- ✓ Keep forests as forests
- ✓ Focus on large, contiguous blocks of forest
- ✓ Work with land managers and stewards to conserve and improve forest health, quality and resilience
- ✓ Focus on supporting a working landscape

## Vermont Conservation Design



# The Power of Birds

- Indicators of ecosystem health:
  - Managing for bird habitat benefits biodiversity overall
- Charismatic and compelling taxa:
  - Increased receptivity to stewardship concepts and need for action
- Co-benefits of ecological forestry:
  - Climate change resiliency
  - Carbon sequestration and storage
  - Working lands and forest products

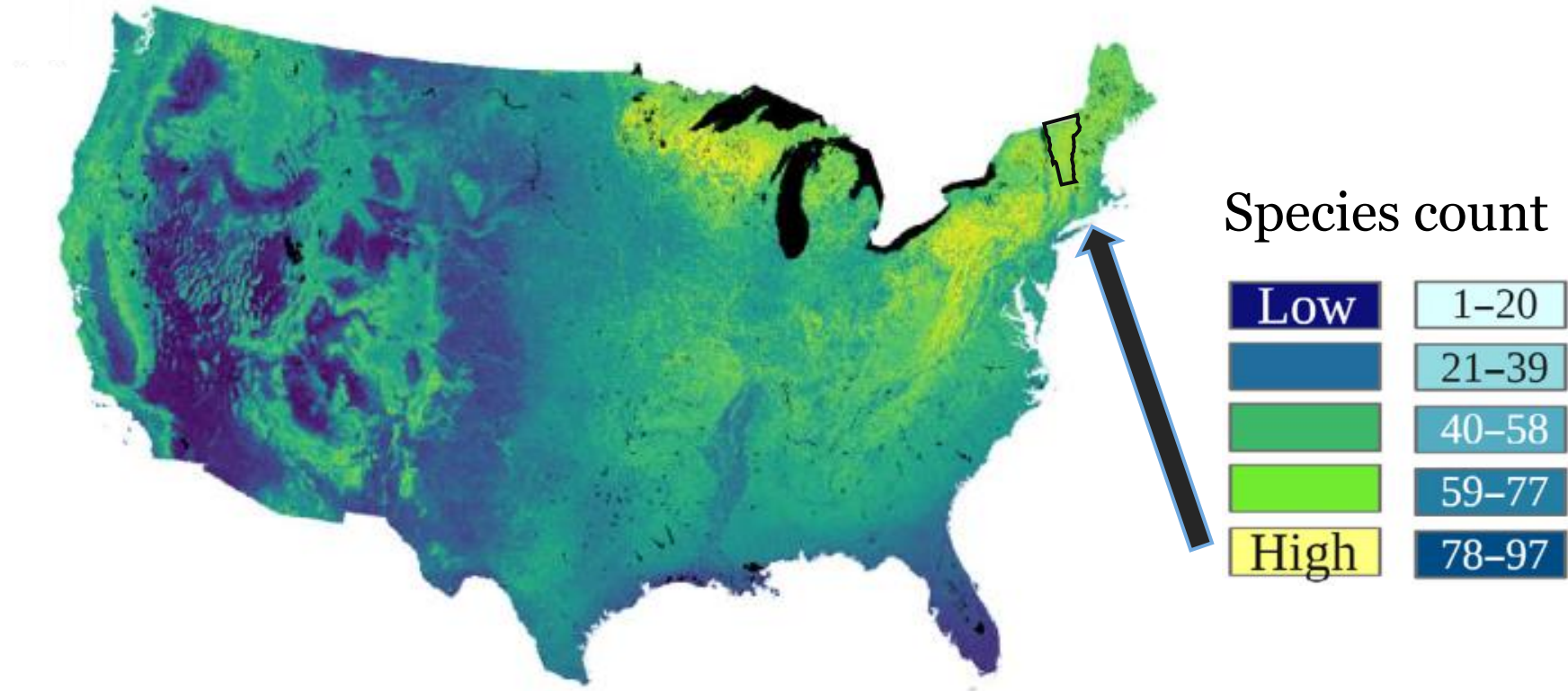


Since 2016, we have provided 1-on-1 guidance to  
**166 landowners,**  
stewarding  
**40,000 acres of forest**  
in Vermont



# VT is a breeding factory for birds

Bird species richness across ALL habitats modeled at 5km Scale from BBS Data



The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) program began in 1966 and currently includes over 4100 survey routes across North America. Trained volunteers conduct the surveys each June along 24.5-mile sections of secondary roads.

Adapted from: Carroll et al. 2022

# Canary in a coal mine: what birds tell us about forest health

The *diversity* of bird species reflects the *richness* of forest habitat



## What birds need:

- Forest complexity
  - Restoration of old forest conditions within interior forests
  - Variety of different forest types
- Patches of 3-5% regenerating young forest on the landscape
- Large contiguous blocks of forest

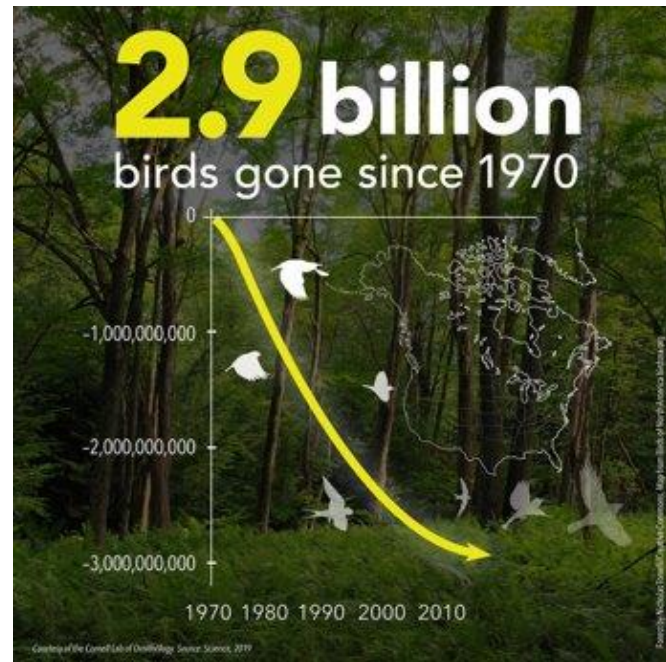
## What we don't want:

- Uniformity/homogeneity of forests
- Forest loss and fragmentation

Monitoring efforts tell us...

Article in Science · September 2019

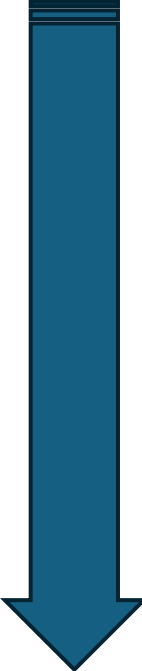
DOI: 10.1126/science.aaw1313



...that these species are **in decline**.



# The Premise: The Problem and the Idea

- 
1. Eastern forest birds are declining
  2. The condition of forests affects these birds
    - As such, Audubon has a stake in how forests are managed, according to what birds need
  3. Private lands comprise the majority of forests in Vermont
    - Therefore, Audubon has a stake in how private landowners manage their lands
  4. Thus, for Audubon to meet its Mission, we must seek ways to effectively influence how private landowners manage their lands.

So, how can Audubon effectively impact the management of private lands?

Founded in 2008

# Foresters for the Birds 1.0

Partnership between Audubon Vermont and Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks, and Recreation

**Goal:** Keep forests as forests and common birds common by helping landowners integrate the practices of timber and songbird habitat management.

**Vision:** Healthy forests that provide healthy bird habitats while continuing to support other compatible objectives, including forest products.

## **Desired outcomes:**

- Greater engagement among private landowner in forest planning and active stewardship
- Forest plans that consider timber objectives AND bird habitat objectives, together
- Reversal of trends in forest bird population loss

## **Strategies:**

- ✓ Educate and support *foresters* in applying these concepts
- ✓ Educate and support *landowners* in applying these concepts



Founded in 2008

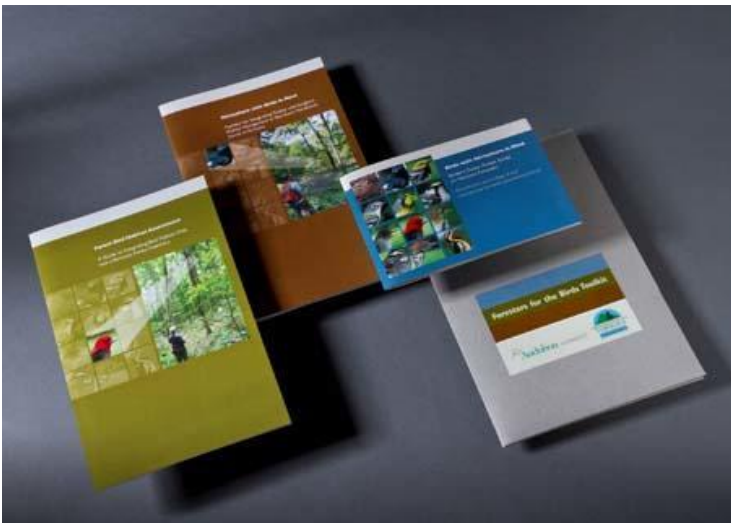
## Foresters for the Birds 1.0

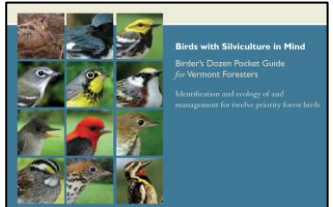
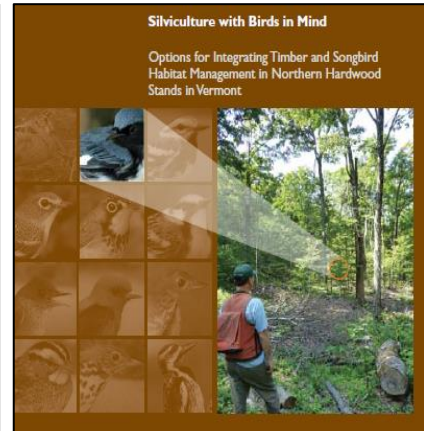
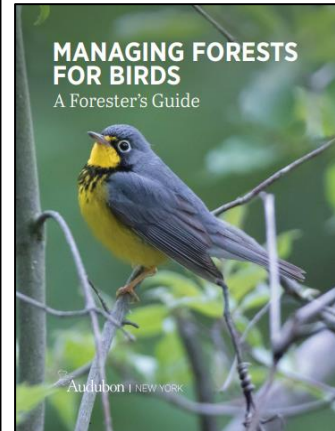
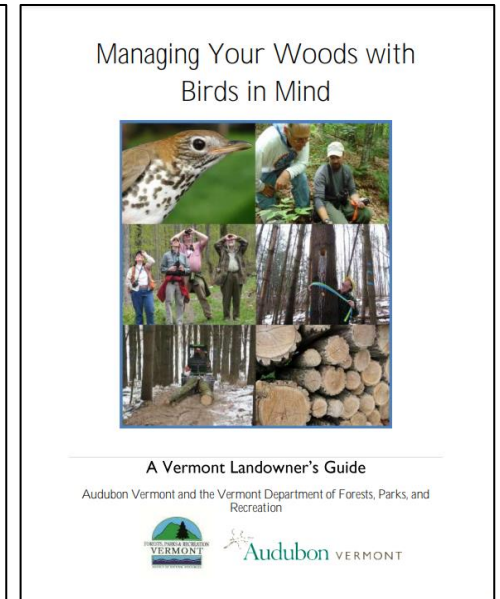
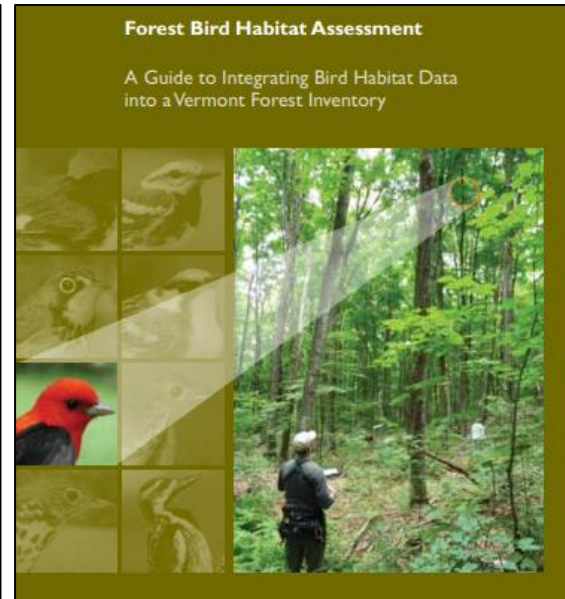
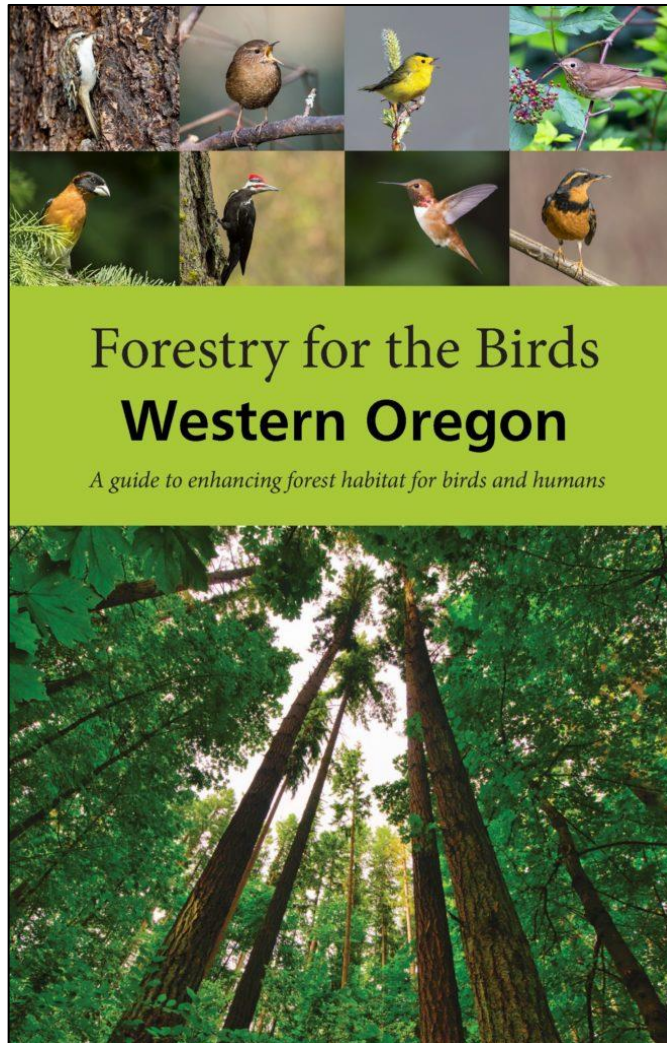
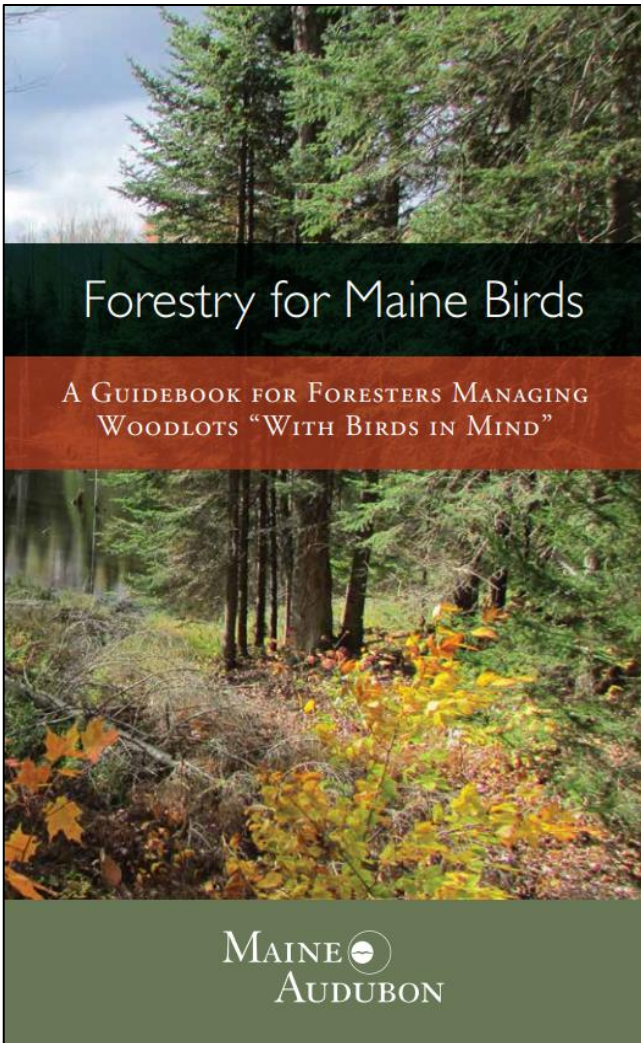
### Strategies:

- ✓ Educate and support *foresters* in applying these concepts

### Successful Outcomes to Celebrate!

- >120 foresters attended trainings
- >10 demonstration harvests established
- ✓ Bird-friendly forestry becomes mainstream
- ✓ Referenced as a service offered by consulting foresters
- ✓ NRCS Practice 666 amended to include 3 FFtB component practices.
- >100 foresters developed the FFtB toolkit:
  - Silviculture with Birds in Mind
  - Birds with Silviculture in Mind
  - Forest Bird Habitat Assessment
  - Managing your woods with Birds in Mind: Landowner Guide





Similar Foresters for the Birds programs since established in:

- MA (Mass Audubon/Mass DCR/Mass Woodlands Institute)
- ME (Maine Audubon)
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Audubon CT
- Audubon NY
- Audubon Mid-Atlantic
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Oregon
- Minnesota
- Iowa

**Strategies:**

- ✓ Educate and support *landowners* in applying these concepts

**Successful Outcomes to Celebrate!**

- Hundreds of landowners attend field walks and workshops
- Key partnerships established with landowner groups
- Developed technical assistance program, Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers
- Established Bird-Friendly Maple Program

Since 2016, we have provided 1-on-1 guidance to

**166 landowners,**

stewarding


**40,000 acres of forest**

in Vermont



## Foresters for the Birds 1.0

Remaining challenge: tracking the outcome on the ground



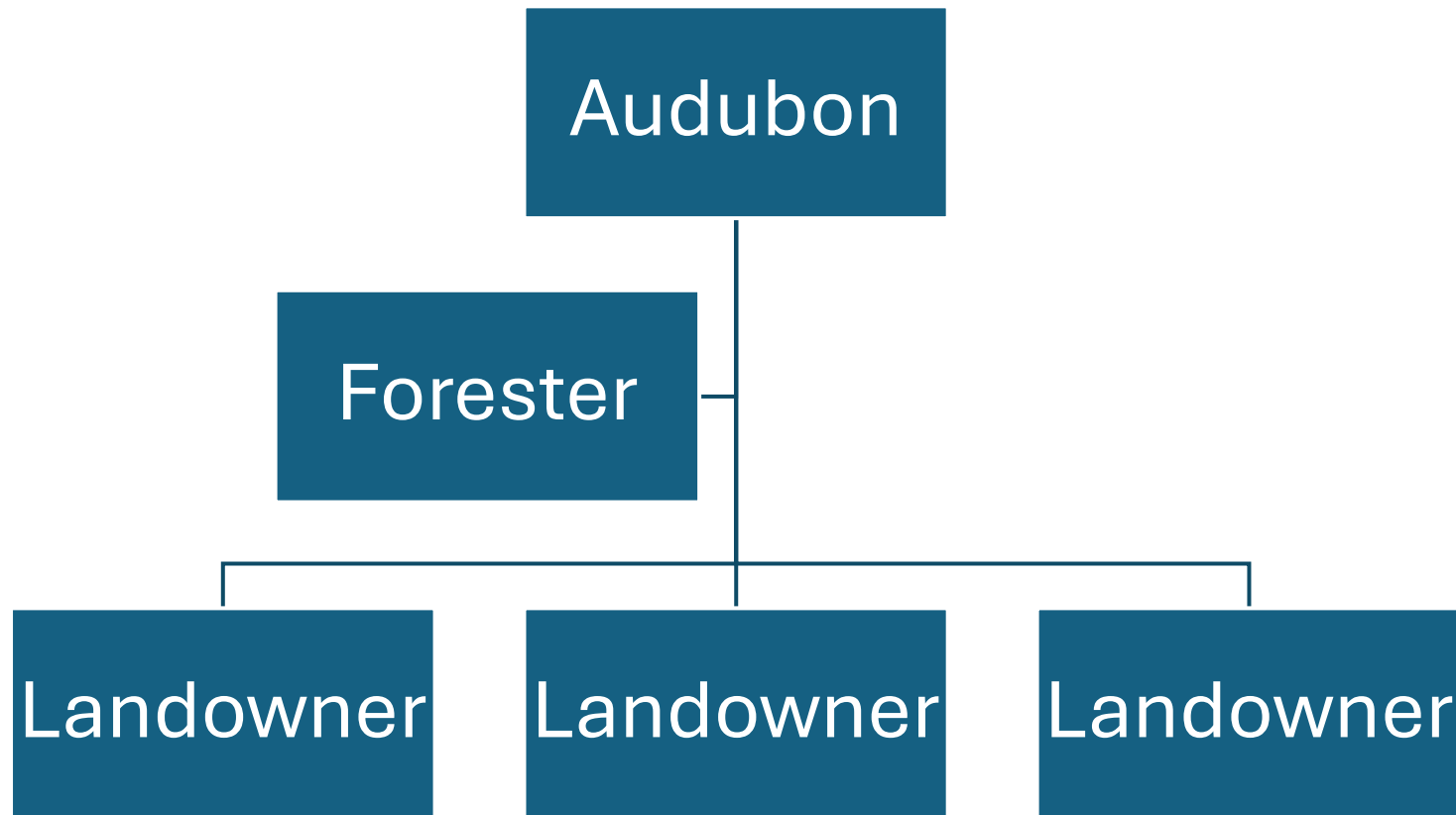
How do we  
measure impact?

- How many forest management plans written?
- How much habitat has been improved?
- How many landowners have changed their behavior?
- How can we continue to be most effective and efficient?

# Foresters for the Birds 2.0:

## Forester Training and Endorsement

Mission is to create a network of professional foresters working in continued partnership with Audubon to promote healthy forest ecosystems that provide high-quality habitat for priority bird species, at scale.



### Vision

1. Foresters are trained and proven knowledgeable about program principles
2. These foresters work with landowners, per usual, applying these principles
3. Foresters then report back intermittently to Audubon on the impact
4. Audubon continues to educate landowners and stimulate demand

# Foresters for the Birds 2.0:

## Forester Training and Endorsement

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### Value to Foresters

- SAF Credits
- Continuing education- access to conservation science
- Networking opportunities
- Marketing opportunities
- Increased support for active management/following plans
- Potential access to funds to support your work
- Influence the efforts of Audubon and its partners
- Support the forester : landowner relationship

### Value to Landowners

- Access to foresters that meet their management interests
- Simplicity of service
- Potential access to implementation funds



# Audubon Forester Training and Endorsement Program Process



*For Audubon VT, Audubon NY, Audubon CT*

## Self-guided Process (~8-10 hrs)

1. Watch 4-part webinar series on YouTube; mini-quiz after each. (4 hrs)
2. Complete scenario exercise (30 min)
3. Offer 2 bird-friendly forest management plans/stand prescriptions; work with us to evaluate and revise as necessary to meet program standards (4+ hrs).



Visit Audubon  
Vermont's  
endorsement  
webpage:

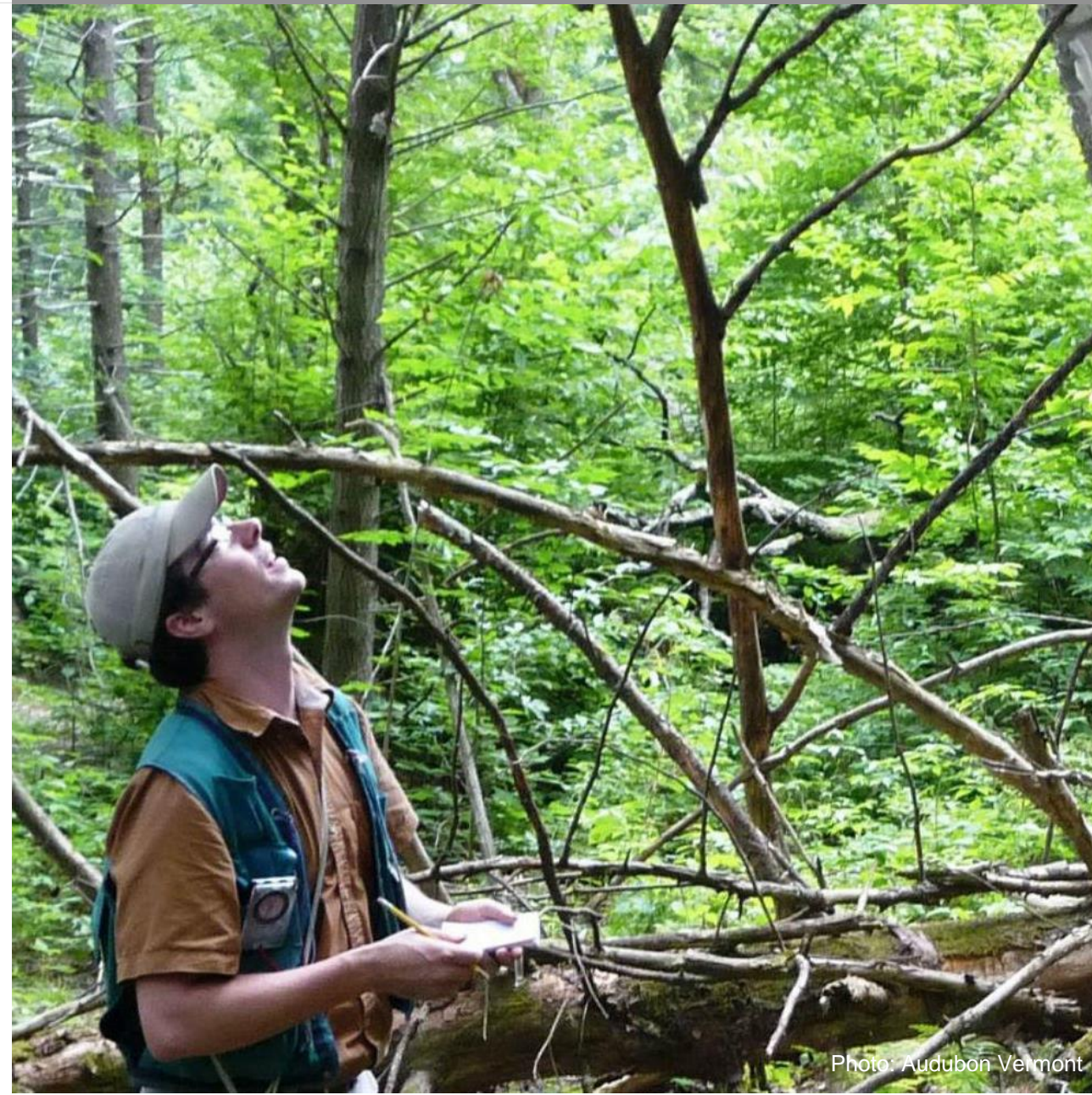


Photo: Audubon Vermont

# Audubon Forester Training and Endorsement Program Process



In-person day-long workshop:

Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Merck Forest & Farmland Center  
Rupert, **Vermont**

If interested, please email me:

[Tim.Duclos@audubon.org](mailto:Tim.Duclos@audubon.org)

Foresters from VT/CT/NY can attend any of these trainings to qualify for Audubon's Endorsement Program.



Forester workshop. Photo: Audubon Vermont

# Audubon Forester Training and Endorsement Program Process



In-person day-long workshop:

Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Yale-Myers Forest  
**Connecticut**

If interested, please email:

[Rosa.Goldman@audubon.org](mailto:Rosa.Goldman@audubon.org)

Foresters from VT/CT/NY can attend any of these trainings to qualify for Audubon's Endorsement Program.



Forester workshop. Photo: Audubon Vermont

# Audubon Endorsement Expectations

## Annual Reporting:

- # of plans (acres) written that incorporate bird-friendly forestry
- # of bird-friendly harvests (acres)
  - Reporting to align with annual UVA harvest and FMP reporting (in Vermont)

## Annual Continuing Education:

- Annual opportunities provided by Audubon and approved for SAF credit and Vermont licensing
  - Continuing education to align with SAF requirements



Mission is to create a network of professional foresters working in continued partnership with Audubon to promote healthy forest ecosystems that provide high-quality habitat for priority bird species, at scale.

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAM SUPPORT & PARTNERS:**

- NEW YORK AND GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION - SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS
- NYS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
- WOODS, WILDLIFE, AND WARBLERS
- FOREST STEWARDS GUILD

Audubon's Forester Training and Endorsement Program is funded by a Landscape Scale Restoration grant by the U.S Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, an equal opportunity provider, Davis Conservation Foundation, LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, Overhills Foundation and Daybreak Foundation.

# Thank you! Questions?



**Visit Audubon  
Vermont's  
endorsement  
webpage:**



<https://ny.audubon.org/conservation/audubon-forester-training-and-endorsement-program>

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