



Inspiring Americans to Protect Wildlife for our Children's Future



2009 Climate Change Safeguarding Workshops

NWF Northeast Regional Center

Montpelier, Vermont

Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it -Mark Twain

Climate Change: the National Wildlife Federation and regional partners are going to do something about it. NWF, affiliates, and other stakeholders recognize that climate change and wildlife habitat do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. We are eagerly conducting workshops in order to develop and implement strategies and solutions in order to safeguard our natural treasures against the impacts of climate change. Climate change and related stressors pose significant challenges for fish, wildlife and natural systems in the Northeast and nationwide. The National Wildlife Federation, in association with our partners and planning committees, believe that workshops play an essential role in our collective efforts to address climate change on behalf of present and future generations in the Northeast and beyond. Thus far, most attention in response to climate change has understandably focused on actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions (often referred to as climate change "mitigation"). Yet, evidence is growing that climatic changes are already occurring and are likely to intensify in the come years, with resulting impacts on the natural systems, which human communities and the diversity of life on earth depend. It is therefore critical that greater attention be given to climate change *adaptation*; that is, strategies and actions to help natural systems and human communities adapt to the changes that are already underway and are likely to occur.

Safeguarding Vermont's Wildlife and Natural Systems in a Warming World

Vermont College of Fine Arts

Montpelier, Vermont –March 23, 2009

Hosted By: National Wildlife Federation; Vermont Natural Resources Council; The Nature Conservancy-Vermont Chapter; State of Vermont, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Trust for Public Land; and Audubon Vermont

The Vermont workshop, the first of it's kind, has proven to be a tremendous success. Conservation and resource management practitioners, natural systems industry representatvies, land use planners and private landowners were members of a diverse group of stakeholders that attended this workshop. A series of lectures supplemented the conversation by providing models for future planning, funding and collaboration. The issue of largest concern within Vermont is the potential loss and redistribution of natural resources. This includes sugar maples, local timber, wildlife habitat and species distribution.



Workshop speakers: George Gay, National Wildlife Federation; Hector Galbraith, Manomet Center for Conservation Science; Jonathan Wood, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; Rick Bennet, Regional Scientist at the USFWS Regional Office; John Austin, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and Patricia Coates, State Director for congressman Peter Welch.

The participants of the Vermont workshop recognized the necessity for climate change adaptation and stressed their invested interest in working together to safeguard Vermont natural systems and wildlife without compromising Vermont values. Keynote speaker, Hector Galbraith of the Manomet Center for Conservation Science, spoke of a commitment to acknowledge warming trends and associated adaptation. Even if we turned off emissions through a “magic” switch right now, we are still committed to as much as 1000 years more of a warming trend. Therefore, mitigation is essential, but adaptation is also a necessity. A common thread amongst the speakers was a sense of collaboration between all groups and sectors at a regional level; climate will be an issue every stakeholder can coalesce around.



The goals of this conference were aimed at heightening awareness, sharing understanding and creating a sense of urgency regarding current and projected climatic changes within Vermont ecosystems (i.e. the Lake Champlain Basin). Attendees urged the necessity of fostering individual, organizational and collaborative action and leadership among the conservation community in responding to climate change. There was a urgency to provide tangible examples of potential actions and strategies that attendees can take on individually in order to combat the effects of climate change. Climate change adaptation is an immense undertaking, however, we can immediately

begin combating its effects by building partnerships, creating vulnerability assessments, commence planning for the future, educate, communicate and ultimately integrate climate change impacts with existing stressors and management.