

NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Raised by Working Group December 8, 2005

Habitat Concerns

- Habitat is being developed very quickly.
- Need to keep current core habitats.
- Fragmentation of NEC habitat.
- Utility corridors – could they be potential NEC habitat? Can we purchase lands adjacent to utility corridors?
- Taxes are too high on open space areas – incentives are needed.
- Existing forestry regulations and ordinances (canopy closures) preventing establishment of good NEC habitat.
- Why is the NEC population retracting from seemingly suitable rural areas?
- Can we create incentives or regulations that would promote early-successional upland habitat?
- Cost of acquiring land is high.
- Deer over-browsing may prevent regeneration of hardwood understory for NEC.
- Can brushy areas around saltwater or fresh water habitats be maintained for NEC?
- Is the reduction in habitat concentrating predators?
- Role of invasive plant species in creating NEC habitat.
- Public perception of shrubby habitat (danger to kids)? Lyme disease?
- Can forest harvesting be designed to provide NEC habitat and an economic incentive for landowners?
- Can we work with conservation landowners to plan out “ideal” area for land trust focus?
- Speed of development – are we running out of time? Local organizations want to act now?

Listing Concerns

- How will E/T listing affect landowners who have NEC on their lands?
- Can we work to avoid listing NEC by addressing habitat concerns?

Nuisance and Rehabilitation Concerns

- What should we do with nuisance NECs that are trapped?
- Transporting rabbits – do we understand demographics well enough?
- What are rehabbers doing with rabbits from New Hampshire?

Policy and Outreach Concerns

- What role will environmental regulations have on NEC in the future?
- Concern that we may be creating a population sink if rabbits are moved out of their current range.
- Can we make road underpasses for NEC (brushy draws with fences)?
- Signs for identifying lands that may have NEC on them.
- Are hunting clubs training on NEC?

Other Concerns

- What role will climate change have on our strategies?
- Potential competition with eastern cottontails.
- Are diseases, or factors other than habitat, preventing the expansion of NEC?