



TELE CASE STUDY

QUABBIN TO CARDIGAN

Key Takeaways

- Projects were made much easier by the long-standing and deep relationships between Monadnock Conservancy, Ausbon Sargent, and UNH Cooperative Extension;
- Landowner identification is time-consuming AND valuable;
- Targeted messaging to your desired audience works;
- Personal invitations turn out landowners;
- Community partners are essential;
- Food helps break the ice!

TELE (tools for engaging landowners effectively) is an approach and planning methodology that emphasizes understanding landowners' perspectives and interests and tailoring outreach messages to be more persuasive. TELE case studies showcase projects that have used the TELE methodology to engage more landowners in land stewardship and conservation. TELE is a project of the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative.

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Introduction

Launched in 2003, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) is one of four Regional Conservation Partnerships working across state boundaries to achieve landscape conservation, stewardship, and economic development. The Q2C collaborative group, which includes the Monadnock Conservancy, Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust, and the University of New Hampshire's Cooperative Extension, tries to achieve these goals in the Monadnock Highlands of north-central Massachusetts and western New Hampshire. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the Q2C region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in New England, and is a key headwater of the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers. However, the area's private forests are undergoing widespread subdivision and could be irreversibly fragmented if nothing is done to stop this trend.

The Partnership launched two projects in 2012, the Monadnock Conservancy Project and the Ausbon Sargent Project, to engage private landowners and encourage active forest management in the Q2C region. Since it was executed later, the Ausbon Sargent Project was able to draw upon many lessons learned from the Monadnock project. Both projects used TELE's six-step process to strategically target landowners. This case study documents both projects' uses of TELE and the learning involved along the way.

STEP 1: SET OBJECTIVES

Monadnock

The objective of the first project was to reach out to landowners who own land with conservation easements and encourage them to develop a written forest management plan or undertake management activities on their land.

Ausbon Sargent

The objective of the second project was to reach out to landowners of high conservation value land who have not permanently conserved their properties. By forming new relationships with landowners, the Q2C partner organizations hoped to increase the acreage of permanently conserved forestland in the focus area.



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STEP 2: DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

Monadnock
All Monadnock Conservancy landowners with easements (~140 landowners) were targeted for outreach.

Lessons Learned
Q2C Partners realized later that this definition of an audience was too narrow. To expand their audience, they opened up messaging to people who had conservation easements with partners like the Forest Society and the Harris Center.

Ausbon Sargent
Q2C partners conducted a landscape analysis to identify landowners for targeted contact in the Q2C focus areas with potentially high quality conservation projects through tax maps and aerial photography (~400 landowners).



STEP 3: PROFILE YOUR AUDIENCE

Both projects targeted Woodland Retreat landowners, and the Monadnock Conservancy project also targeted Working the Land owners via printed material, workshops, and a demonstration forest.



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STEP 4: CLARIFY YOUR MESSAGE

People pay attention to a message when it is relevant to a problem they wish to solve, links to their identity, or if it taps into their core values. The Q2C group attempted to align their messages to appeal to the interests and values of their target audience, and their desire to become part of a peer group.



PROJECT	MESSAGE	RELATION TO AUDIENCE	EFFECTIVENESS
MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY	<p>Got woods? Got questions?</p> <p>...hear land ownership stories from other owners of conserved forest</p>	<p>Non-technical reference to woods</p> <p>Learn from peers</p>	<p>Fails to appeal to woodland retreat owners' emotional connection to their land.</p> <p>Does not tell landowners the purpose of the Woods Forums.</p>
AUSBON SARGENT	<p>Do you love your land and value your woods?</p> <p>Discuss how to care for your woods today and plan for the future of your land.</p> <p>Talk with other local landowners, hear about their experiences.</p> <p>Share your questions, concerns, advice</p> <p>Meet local conservation and forestry professionals</p> <p>Light refreshments served</p>	<p>Appeal to landowner interests</p> <p>Appeal to landowner interests</p> <p>Learn from peers</p> <p>Become part of a peer group</p> <p>Informal, non-threatening atmosphere</p>	<p>Successfully appeals to woodland retreat owners' emotional connection to their land.</p> <p>Appeals to interests of landowner rather than the Q2C staff.</p> <p>Detailed materials let landowners know what to expect, where to go, etc.</p>

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STEP 5: CHANNELS AND MATERIALS

Monadnock

Q2C engaged at least one landowner to host a total of four Woods Forums. The forums were meant to attract woodland retreaters who are less likely to be interested in technical and traditional topics about woodlot management and who were more likely to be interested in hearing from other woodland owners. Landowners took away a nontechnical information kit from each Woods Forum. Advertising for the forums used electronic invitations, post cards, phone calls, press releases, a featured news article, and face-to-face contact. Forums were also advertised on the www.nhwoods.org web calendar and on UNH Cooperative Extension's Facebook and Twitter. Q2C also established a demonstration forest at The Gilsum Forest for Working the Land owners who wanted more technical information. A Red Oak Management workshop and a Foresters for the Birds workshop were hosted there.



Lessons Learned from Monadnock

Electronic invitations were not successful because they were less personalized and did not account for some landowners' lack of technical expertise. Instead, Q2C partners found phone calls and face-to-face contact to be the most convincing channels for messaging. Having local partners, like members of a local conservation commission or specific landowners, host the forums attracted more landowners.



Ausbon Sargent

Q2C engaged at least one landowner to host a total of 5 Woods Forums, where landowners again took away a nontechnical information kit. Advertising for the forums focused less on electronic media this time, and was done via strategically placed flyers, personalized invitations in the mail, follow-up phone calls, press releases, and personal contacts. Phone calls from model landowners and well-connected staff members were the best ways to contact the targeted audience.



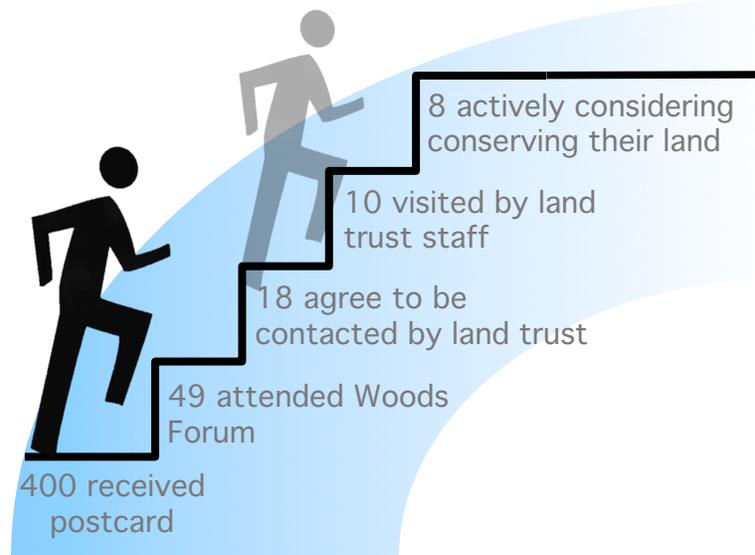
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STEP 6: EVALUATION

Q2C's Recommendations for Future Woods Forums

1. Identify a focus area and target audience;
2. Design simple messages to attract your audience;
3. Use peer to peer networking;
4. Identify community members who will call, visit, and write invitations to fellow landowners;
5. Limit attendance to 15-20 for best interaction;
6. Provide food and time for networking before and after the sit down portion of the forum;
7. Have a map of the focus area available so folks can show where their land is located;
8. Follow-up after the meeting with information about topics of interest to individual landowners;
9. Touch base periodically to monitor progress.



The Ausbon Sargent Project 's Results



TOOLS FOR ENGAGING LANDOWNERS EFFECTIVELY