

RIPARIAN LANDS NATIVE SEED PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Wild Raisin (*Viburnum nudum*) flowers
6/10/2026 © Intervale Center

Northern Appalachian-Atlantic Maritime (NAAM) Hub Forum & Training Day

In early-May, members of the Northeast Seed Network's northernmost Hub converged at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens for our first in-person event since formalizing in 2024. During our time together, we discussed scope, goals, methods, and how best to steward the efforts of the Hub. We also demonstrated how to scout populations in the field, collect herbarium voucher specimens, and shared seed cleaning techniques.

The 26 attendees represented an array of organizations, including the Intervale Center, Wild Seed Project, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, National Park Service, Vermont Ecotype Project, Land and Garden Preserve, and Van Berkum Nursery.

The Riparian Lands Native Seed Partnership is incorporating some of the NAAM Hub's goals into our work during this collection season to aid in the effort to provide more source-identified native seeds for research and restoration projects in the region.

Want to learn more? Reach out to Brooke at brooke@intervale.org.

Melissa Cullina of CMBG shows how to collect an herbarium voucher specimen © Intervale Center



Brooke demonstrates a seed cleaning method © Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens



Melissa Cullina of CMBG presents on herbarium voucher collection and shipping best practices © Intervale Center



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SPRING SEED COLLECTION

Larz collecting
Quaking Aspen
(*Populus tremuloides*)
© NorthWoods
Stewardship Center



Big-tooth Aspen
(*Populus grandidentata*)
© Intervale Center



Maddie cleaning Shrub Willow
(*Salix* spp.) © NorthWoods
Stewardship Center



American Elm (*Ulmus americana*) seeds
© NorthWoods Stewardship Center



Jo, Larz, & Lia inspecting
Shrub Willow flowers
© NorthWoods Stewardship
Center



Lia collecting Big-tooth Aspen
© Intervale Center



Larz & Lia collecting American Elm
© Intervale Center



Pranav collecting Silver
Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)
© NorthWoods
Stewardship Center



Jake checking on Silver Maple seed
development © NorthWoods
Stewardship Center



Shrub Willow catkin
© Intervale Center



A Season of Only New Sites

The Riparian Lands Native Seed Partnership is currently in its fourth seed collection season! Though we have always worked to identify additional and more geographically dispersed seed collection sites across Vermont, in some years we have relied on our most productive sites to reach our collection goals for direct seeding projects. For our fourth year, we wanted to prioritize a seed collection season of only new sites so that we do not unintentionally stress any known collection sites and continue to diversify the genetic representation of our collections. So far in 2026, we have only collected from newly identified sites.

Collaborative Crew Model Update

Thanks to the thoughtful administrative work of NorthWoods Stewardship Center and the Intervale Center, the cooperative crew model that we have been trialing this year has gone incredibly well! Riparian Lands Program Assistants, Maddie and Jake, have done a great job stepping into field-based leadership roles, allowing Jess and Brooke to spend more time focusing on different aspects of their roles within the RLNSP. With an updated priority taxon list and a focus on only new sites, having staff that can primarily focus on the field-based aspects of the work has been critical in advancing the RLNSP's goals. Thanks to the Lake Champlain Basin Program and One Hive Foundation, we are excited to continue this crew model into the 2027 season.

DIRECT SEEDING UPDATES

Fitzgerald Farm / Intervale WMA

Colchester, VT

This spring, Fritz Gerhardt of the Connecticut River Conservancy and Brooke Fleischman of the Intervale Center conducted the first round of monitoring at the Intervale Wildlife Management Area in Colchester, VT since it was seeded in July 2025. At this particular site, we tested different densities of seeding rates in our treatment plots. Within a 5.5-acre area, 24 100x100 ft plots were established. Six of those plots were controls that we did not seed anything in. Six plots had a rate of 10 seeds per ft², 6 plots had a rate of 50 seeds per ft², and 6 plots had a rate of 100 seeds per ft². At the whole site, approximately 4,300,000 seeds were dispersed from 8 different species. Some of the most densely seeded species included Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) and Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*). Fritz is analyzing the data and will release results soon. Anecdotally, seedling success looks promising at the site, as you may note in the photos to the right.

Want to visit this site and learn more about our processes?

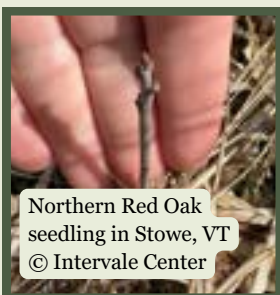
Join us on Wednesday, August 19th at 10 am in Colchester as Intervale Center's Conservation Nursery and Riparian Lands Native Seed Partnership as well as Franklin County NRCD, US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, Vermont Agency of Agriculture (CREP program), and others to come together to explore this project. [Click here](#) to learn more!



CREP Farm Easement

Stowe, VT

In April, folks from the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, and the Intervale Center visited another site that we seeded in July 2025. Of the millions of seeds from 14 species we seeded at this site, we noticed only a dozen or so Northern Red Oak seedlings. A silver lining is that Willow seedlings seem to be naturally regenerating along the streambanks. We will continue to monitor developments at this site in the coming years.



Maidstone Bends Preserve

Northumberland, New Hampshire

NorthWoods Stewardship Center and Connecticut River Conservancy, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire, worked together to conduct a direct seeding experiment on part of the Maidstone Bends Preserve in Northumberland, NH. Over 92,000 seeds were cast out on site, primarily Silver Maple, though some Slippery Elm and Shrub Willow were also used.



Black Ash Stewardship Collaboration

Written by: Walker Cammack, Smokey House Center

Organizations in Vermont are working together to conserve and restore Black Ash trees for future generations! [Read this recent article](#) from Vermont Land Trust to learn more.



WHY BLACK ASH?

Although all three of Vermont's native Ash species are highly susceptible to emerald ash borer (EAB), Black Ash (also known as Brown Ash) dies off even more quickly than White and Green Ash. Moreover, Black Ash is less common than the other two species, is harder to find, produces seed less frequently, and has both great cultural significance to Indigenous Tribal Nations and particular ecosystem importance. Therefore, although urgent conservation measures need to be taken for all three species, Black Ash requires especially focused efforts to help enable its persistence.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Step 1: Find Black Ash

- Look for Black Ash in wet areas: forested wetlands, bogs, and stream edges with saturated soils
- Report only sites with a minimum of 5 Black Ash individuals

Step 2: Report Your Trees

- Submit your sighting through the MaMA Vermont Landowner Ash Stand Survey on Anecdota:
 - Your report goes directly to a number of regional partners leading seed collection efforts, including Intervale Center, Vermont Land Trust, NorthWoods Stewardship Center, and Smokey House Center, who will follow up to schedule a site assessment.

Step 3: Support Fall Collection

- Seed collection teams will visit confirmed sites in the fall
- Landowners are welcome to join the collection visit!
- All seeds will be processed and shipped with a focus of sending seeds to Tribal Nation nurseries and a federal long-term storage facility.

NorthWoods Staff Update

Jess Colby is stepping up into the Conservation Science Director role at NorthWoods Stewardship Center, effective July 13th! While she'll be working more broadly within the conservation science arena, she'll still be assisting with the RLNSP as time allows. NorthWoods is committed to retaining their Riparian Lands Program, full of amazing seed collectors, so stay tuned as we continue to work through this transitional period over the next month. We'll have more information to share soon!



Species Spotlight!

Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)

Written by: Lia Ivanick, Riparian Lands
Champlain Valley Crew Member

Quaking Aspen is a species of interest of ours that flowers, fruits, and disperses seeds the earliest in our season.



Male and female flowers grow on separate trees and appear from their buds as small grayish-green tufts around early to mid-April.

By the end of April fruit will start to form from the female flowers and make a green (sometimes yellow-ish) pod.



These swollen yellow pods are caused by a fungal pathogen known as "Aspen Tongue" that can affect seed production.

If you open a pod and the seed is an opaque tan-brown and not translucent and green, the pods are ready to collect!



In the first or second week of May, the pods will open and fluff out to release the seeds - our job is to collect the pods right as they start to open before they become completely fluff!





CONNECT WITH US

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RESOURCES



RLNSP:
Survey123
Form



VCE:
iNaturalist Phenology
Tracking in New England



RLNSP:
2025-2028
Project Work Plan



RLNSP:
2026 Updated
Priority Species List

The Riparian Lands Native Seed Partnership would not be possible without the financial support and advisory guidance of our core partnering organizations!



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