

My Turn
Environmental groups have found strength in numbers

By [Michael J. Bartlett](#) / For the Monitor

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New Hampshire's environmental community has long been known for its willingness to work together to achieve the best possible results for the state.

From the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership, which strives to protect feeding, breeding and nursery grounds for finfish, shellfish and water birds, to Project Osprey, a five-year effort to restore osprey to New Hampshire, partnerships have proven to be highly effective ways to protect our state's natural environment.

In this context of collaboration, it is with great pleasure that I write today about the affiliation of New Hampshire Audubon with the National Wildlife Federation.

We are affiliating for the same fundamental reason that New Hampshire's environmental community has always worked together: to produce the best possible environmental results for people and wildlife. In the case of New Hampshire Audubon and the National Wildlife Federation, it is to enhance a shared mission that focuses on environmental education and wildlife protection.

We are honored to be selected for affiliation by the National Wildlife Federation. It is a vote of confidence in our organization that has struggled through a tough financial reorganization in recent years. The National Wildlife Federation specifically states it is looking for affiliates that show strong leadership and sound management. Today, New Hampshire Audubon can offer exactly that.

Affiliation will not affect New Hampshire Audubon's independence. We will still be a totally separate organization, dedicated to wildlife and conservation in New Hampshire.

We will continue to have our own board of trustees, remarkable staff, organizational priorities, policies and budgets, and our committed members, donors and volunteers.

We will continue our focus on the health of New Hampshire's wildlife, from management of the state's recovering bald eagle population to research into the decline in our breeding birds.

We will continue to create programs that encourage children to spend time outdoors and inform residents on the health of New Hampshire's environment.

We will continue to collaborate with nonprofits throughout the region, state and federal agencies, and corporate partners to help keep New Hampshire's environment healthy for people and wildlife.

Affiliation will strengthen our environmental influence in New Hampshire. The missions of our two organizations align perfectly - we will work with the National Wildlife Federation to expand our educational programs and improve our ability to advocate for New Hampshire's wildlife. We will share expertise and take advantage of opportunities for seeking joint grants with this four-million-member-strong national organization.

The National Wildlife Federation is known for its educational programs - Ranger Rick magazine, for instance, is a staple in thousands of New Hampshire households. The National Wildlife Federation is also known for its national policy initiatives, particularly as they relate to habitat protection and climate change, issues of key importance to New Hampshire Audubon as well. At the state level, the National Wildlife Federation has worked recently with New Hampshire Audubon and other New Hampshire conservation organizations to promote sustainable forestry, to reduce mercury emissions and to incorporate climate change impacts in the state's wildlife action plan.

As a large national organization, the National Wildlife Federation offers opportunities for New Hampshire Audubon to work with its affiliates in other states on programs and conservation issues of mutual interest, such as climate change and energy development. As a statewide organization, New Hampshire Audubon can provide a grassroots "face" for the National Wildlife Federation as well as technical expertise related specifically to New Hampshire's wildlife.

In selecting New Hampshire Audubon as its New Hampshire affiliate, the National Wildlife Federation was persuaded by the compatibility of our missions, the likelihood of an enduring partnership, the potential for collaboration on conservation issues of state and national interest, our committed, resilient leadership and skilled staff, and New Hampshire Audubon's nearly 100 years as a statewide conservation leader.

As president of New Hampshire Audubon, I am thrilled to be part of this historic partnership. I am confident that New Hampshire Audubon's research and monitoring programs that inform our policy positions will also help inform those espoused by the National Wildlife Federation. I am equally confident that the expertise the National Wildlife Federation brings to issues relevant to New Hampshire will benefit our environmental policy work.

We believe there is strength in numbers and shared purpose, and in this affiliation, New Hampshire's environment has gained.

(Michael J. Bartlett is president of New Hampshire Audubon.)

<http://www.concordmonitor.com/article/297057/environmental-groups-have-found-strength-in-numbers?SESSca4947badf6b9c9749d5a3ca9677d9da=google&page=full>