Quotes representing the New England Cottontail Executive Committee

“Today, unfortunately, many people view a species listing as a victory,” said Jack Buckley, Director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. “In fact the real victories are like today when we take collaborative action to avoid a listing.”

“Over the past several years we have been actively engaged in several projects to restore the New England cottontail and its habitat to Rhode Island,” said Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit. “Through partnership, we have made great strides to save this native rabbit from possible extinction. Through careful planning, good science and the dedicated conservation work of many partners, the New England may once again thrive in the woodlands in the region.”

“Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is proud to work with private landowners to provide the necessary habitat to support New England Cottontail species recovery now and into the future,” said James Connolly, Director, IFW Bureau of Resource Management. “We feel this collaboration of state fish and wildlife agencies, private landowners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the most effective method to accomplish species recovery on a regional basis.”

“Over the past few years, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has implemented important monitoring and research into the habitat needs of New England cottontails. This work has demonstrated the value of New York's lower Hudson Valley in meeting the long-term habitat needs for this species,” said New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Acting Commissioner Marc Gerstman. “New Yorkers should be proud of the role they are playing in conserving our native cottontail.”

“Connecticut is pleased to have been involved with the New England Cottontail Regional Initiative since its inception in 2009,” said Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Robert Klee. “The collaboration between wildlife agencies, NGOs, land trusts and private landowners has set a new standard for wildlife conservation. The effort in Connecticut has led to newly documented New England cottontail occurrences and benefits to 47 other high-priority species in Connecticut’s Wildlife Action Plan. We will continue to focus on habitat restoration to support our cottontail population and that of other species.”

“Faced with the loss of 75 percent of its cottontail population, New Hampshire was fortunate to have helped develop the New England Cottontail Initiative and build a powerful collaboration capable of this conservation challenge,” said N.H. Fish and Game Department Executive Director Glenn Normandeau. “As part of this effort, we obtained the first of four competitive State Wildlife Grants to help fund the work, implemented over 1,000 acres of habitat management in New Hampshire, and successfully released young from the captive-rearing program to augment the population.”
“The Wildlife Management Institute is pleased to have partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, state fish and wildlife agencies, and non-governmental groups in the New England Cottontail Regional Initiative,” said Wildlife Management Institute President Steve Williams. “This is one of the best examples of the benefits to conservation that can come from a coalition working together towards a common goal. We were pleased to take on the administrative and coordination duties that helped keep the partnership strong.”

See quotes from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service executive committee representatives in the press release.