A tale of two strategies: sustainable intensification AND extensification of agriculture in northern New England

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In order to meet growing consumer demand for agricultural goods, farmers in the New England region, like elsewhere, are pursuing strategies to sustainably intensify their agricultural production systems. Interestingly, because much of the farm land in the region is heavily forested (approximately 48% of the land in farms is under forest cover), some farms are also actively extensifying their arable land base through thinning and/or clearing of forest. This form of agriculturally-driven land use change may have important implications for the regulating and supporting ecosystem services that forested lands provide, both locally and regionally, as well as the quality and quantity of the subsequent provisioning services provided by reclaimed agricultural land. This presentation will cover highlights from some of our new and ongoing research aimed at developing ecologically-based management practices to support the sustainable intensification and extensification of agriculture in the region.