



State of Vermont

AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife  
5 Perry Street Suite 40  
Barre, Vermont 05641  
TEL: (802) 479-4405  
FAX: (802) 476-0129

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 27, 2009

Contact: Jane Lazorchak  
802-479-4405

Contact: Scott Darling  
802-786-0040

**The Department of Fish and Wildlife Encourages Landowners to Conserve Indiana Bat Habitat**  
*Funding Available to Draft Forest Management Plans that Address Indiana bat Habitat*

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is helping private landowners manage and enhance Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) habitat on their lands by providing the funding to do so through the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP).

LIP provides financial incentives to private landowners in return for habitat protection and stewardship of rare, threatened and endangered species and state significant natural communities.

- LIP focuses in the Champlain Valley, as land in this area is 94% privately owned (compared with an average of 80.8% privately owned for the entire state).
- Many of the state's rare, threatened, or endangered species occur in very restricted habitats throughout the state. However, most of Vermont's rare plant and animal species are associated with the Champlain Valley - the region of the state with the greatest concentration of human population and agricultural land use.
- Furthermore, some of these species are globally rare, like the federally endangered Indiana bat.



During late spring through early fall, the federally endangered Indiana bat inhabits forests within the Champlain Valley from Brandon to Hinesburg. Because the majority of the Indiana bat's range in Vermont is privately owned, we are trying to reach out to landowners in order to educate them about the bat's ecology and their habitat needs. As part of this effort, the DFW created *A Landowner's Guide to Indiana Bat Habitat Stewardship* which was sent to over 200 landowners this past summer in the Champlain Valley. This pamphlet discusses Indiana bat biology and their two main habitat types in Vermont, summer maternity colony habitat and their winter hibernaculum (caves and mines). In addition, the pamphlet takes the first step in educating landowners about how they can protect and enhance their habitat in a way that will also benefit other uncommon species, forests and wetlands in Vermont.

Working with DFW biologists, landowners can identify Indiana bat habitat on their property and determine specific habitat management and conservation strategies that may

be applied to maintain, enhance, or conserve the habitat both for the near and long term. In order to aid in this process, the DFW drafted forest management guidelines which can help landowners determine what they should do. The main goals of these guidelines are to avoid harming or killing any Indiana bats while conducting forest management activities, while also trying to protect and enhance habitat characteristics favored by the bats.

In order to advance the implementation of these guidelines on private lands, the DFW has committed LIP funds to reimburse landowners up to 75% of the cost of hiring a consulting forester to draft a forest management plan that applies these guidelines. A list of foresters who have been trained by the DFW to apply these guidelines will be provided to the landowner to choose from.

During the process of developing the plan, the DFW will work directly with the landowners and consulting foresters to tailor the forest management plan to landowner's property. In addition to helping to achieve better long-term planning for the forest, the DFW believes that by spending our LIP funds in this manner, we can highlight the important role of private lands in protecting Indiana bat habitat.

Interested landowners should contact Jane Lazorchak at the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife at 802-479-4405.