



Membership Newsletter

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March 2011

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2011 Annual Meeting

Please join us for the Vermont Woodlands Association Annual Meeting on **Saturday, April 2, 2011** from 8:30AM - 3:00PM at Judd Hall, Vermont Technical Center, Randolph Center, VT.

There will be various presenters on the day's agenda, including Michael Snyder, Commissioner of Forests, Parks & Recreation; Steve Sinclair, State Forester; Deb Markowitz, Secretary of Agency of Natural Resources; Patrick Berry, Commissioner of Fish & Wildlife; State Conservationist Vicky Drew of NRCS, and Gov. Peter Shumlin. This will be an excellent opportunity to hear from our newly elected and appointed administration.

Vermont Woodlands will be electing their 2011 board of directors. After lunch the 2011 Tree Farmer of the Year award will be presented, as well as recognition for 25 and 50 Year Tree Farmers.

The Keynote speaker for the afternoon program is Dr. Alan Betts who will be speaking on Climate Change and Vermont. Dr. Betts has a BA and MA in Natural Sciences from the University of Cambridge and a PhD in Meteorology from Imperial College, University of London. As a graduate student he was invited to participate in a weather research project in Venezuela. He came to the US as a post-doc in the Atmospheric Science Department at Colorado State University where he served on the academic faculty until 1979. Dr. Betts moved to Vermont in the late 1970s and has continued his research on regional and global weather and climate. He has worked with scientists and institutions in the US and around the world; and on many national and international research projects. His work has received wide recognition and several awards.

Cost for the meeting and lunch is \$30. The public is welcome to attend, but pre-registration is required. Registration form is enclosed.

VWA Reaches Its Goal!

The date was March 20, 2007 when the VWA board set a very ambitious goal - reach 1,000 members by 2012. At the time, we had 369 members and were growing at a steady rate of 8-10% per year so this was indeed an ambitious goal. But, as the headline claims, we did it! The date was December 24, 2010 when we reached our goal and then went on to surpass it, with 1009 paying members at the close of 2010.

The success is no small testament to the work of your Board of Directors who meet monthly to manage the business of the Association: developing programs such as Walk in the Woods and Forestry School; forging partnerships and liaisons in the name of good forestry; representing your interests at the national, state, and regional level; delivering timely and important information on critical issues such as Current Use, invasive species, parcelization and fragmentation; and so much more. As your executive director, it is my pleasure to serve such a forward-thinking and hard-working board. As members, you can all be very proud of the work that our seventeen directors are accomplishing on your behalf. I'm not looking to embarrass anyone, but if you happen to see a board member, please offer thanks for their dedication and service.



News from the Tree Farm Program

2011 Tree Farm Convention and other news...

Kathleen Wanner

If you missed the opportunity to attend the 2010 Tree Farm Convention when it was here in Vermont, perhaps you'd like to consider the 2011 Convention to be held August 9-11 in New Mexico. While it can be quite hot in summer, desert dwellers like to point out that it's a dry heat. And, after our "dripping hot" weather of July 2010 when even those from the south were melting, it could be pleasant. The Convention facility is the Hyatt Tamaya Resort & Spa, situated between Santa Fe and Albuquerque at the base of the Sandia Mountains.

Convention programming will be for Tree Farmers of all ages so bring the youngsters in your family as well. Registration information will be included in the March/April Tree Farmer Magazine and you can also visit the website for details: http://www.treefarmssystem.org/cms/pages/19_144.html

In other Tree Farm news, I'm pleased to report that the Vermont Tree Farm Committee received two capacity building grants for 2011. These grants will support two programs that we have planned for this year. Using our Forestry School concept, we will

develop an educational program designed for the next generation of Tree Farmers. These future Tree Farmers and forest landowners represent a significantly underserved population. Young people often find themselves needing to make decisions with little or no information. We anticipate that this program will help to retain Tree Farm properties in the program by providing the knowledge and tools to ensure future success.

Our second program will focus on increasing the number of Tree Farm inspectors in Vermont. At present, we have 67 certified inspectors but many more candidates. With hundreds of reinspections due during the next two years and with county foresters tasked with so much more work, we need to increase the ranks of certified inspectors who can serve our Tree Farmers. We intend to expand our traditional training through an advisory committee of existing inspectors. We will implement a new inspector awards program to recognize the work of Tree Farm inspectors, establish a mentorship opportunity for new inspectors, and provide adequate information for inspectors to encourage new Tree Farm enrollment.

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President's Column

Mentors I Have Known

I think anyone's mentors have to start with one's parents, but since this is forestry oriented, I will continue only with my father.

Father loved the woods, and either by genes or osmosis, I also became addicted. I played in the woods, I explored in the woods, and later my father 'encouraged' me to work in the woods. My first full day of work was picking up stickers discarded when the lumber salvaged from the 1938 Hurricane was hauled off to crate war material in 1942. Another time, the hired man and I were sent to prune hemlocks in a thick stand of hemlocks, not very profitable, but Father kept me out of mischief. I remember during school vacations and Saturdays, kneeling in the snow on the end of a cross-cut saw cutting the next winter's firewood. We would haul the tree-length hardwood to the house, sometimes with oxen and a bob sled, sometimes with the tractor. We cut it to firewood length with a whirling circular saw. By the end of the day, the snow was packed hard and slippery and I was always fearful of slipping and falling on that saw. Father purchased a heavy two-man chain saw in 1949. I bucked up firewood by straddling the log, holding the handle on the end of the bar in my left hand and managing the throttle on the engine with my right hand.

Before the chain saw era, Father sent the hired man and I to cut down a big pasture oak that was shading grass he wanted for grazing. I don't know if the cross-cut had ever been sharpened, but it certainly hadn't for a long time. We pulled that misery whip back and forth for hours with only a little fine dust resulting from each pull. After the 1938 Hurricane and faced with a huge salvage job, Father called on an old friend and Maine hunting guide to come board with us and direct the salvage operation. Sunday afternoons I would listen, enthralled, to his stories of deer hunting, bear trapping, log driving, cutting and peeling pulp

with axe, buck saw and spud, and life in the Maine Woods in general. My first two years of high school, Father took me to George's hunting camp eight miles from the nearest road. I was turned loose with a hand-drawn map and a compass and nothing but woods between me and the Canadian border. I sometimes wonder if it was meant to get rid of me?

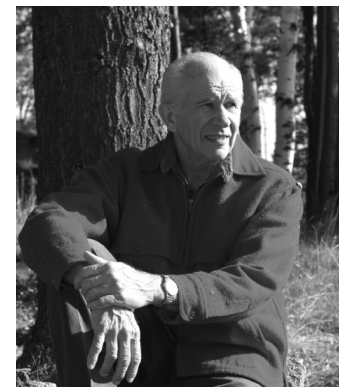
Father's brother and boyhood companion, my Uncle Pete, was a fanatical hunter and fisherman and a live-life-to-the-fullest extrovert. Hunting trips with Pete were never to be forgotten. He and his mother, my paternal grandmother, helped form my skeptical view of the world.

When I was a lad, I was fascinated with anything to do with the out-of-doors. And that included reading about it. Among my readings was Deep River Jim's Camp Fire Stories and amongst those stories were some by Ross McKenney, woodsman, president of the Maine Guides Association and master story teller. When I arrived at college, Ross was the Woodcraft Advisor to the Outing Club, which became my major interest. Ross was a teacher and a friend. My most precious volume is "Tall Trees, Tough Men" by Robert Pike that Ross inscribed and gave to me.

I gave a lot of thought to becoming a forester, but it appeared to me that if one worked his way up professionally, he would wind up in an office and that was the opposite of where I wanted to be. So I decided to return to the farm where I knew I would fulfill my wish of being challenged both physically and mentally.

After several years of dairy farming it became obvious that more income was necessary, but rather than pay off an expansion mortgage one squirt at a time, we decided to add a children's summer camp program

continued on page 11



Put Blodgett

JON GILBERT FOX

Visit our website at www.vermontwoodlands.org for information on the Tree Farm program, workshop opportunities, forestry related programs for students and teachers, and much more.

News from Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Annosus Root Rot of Pines

Barbara Burns, Forest Health Program Manager



In a year of one exotic insect encroachment after another, Annosus root rot is a change of pace. It's caused by a fungus and it's native. It's also unusual among forest diseases. An effective method of prevention is widely known, and occasionally practiced. Although records are spotty, we believe the fungus that causes it, *Fomes* (pronounced "foh-meez") *annosus*, occurs throughout Vermont.

There's a lot known about Annosus root rot. It has been the subject of extensive research because it occurs in much of North America and Europe, particularly in managed stands. Still, questions remain in the northeast, where snow-cover limits the spread of spores, and where the impact on white pine is largely unknown



In the northeast, Annosus root rot is primarily recognized for being a problem following thinnings. Spores spread from a shelf-like fruiting body, or "conk", growing from the ground line of infected trees, often after they have died. Healthy trees can be infected when these spores land on wounds, but the most common means of infection is through recently cut stumps. Spores that germinate on these stumps can spread through roots to nearby trees. Once infected, the result may be tree mortality,

windthrow, growth loss, or butt rot. The fungus slowly spreads from this "infection center" killing an expanding circle of trees.

New infections can be prevented by applying a borax-like chemical to stump surfaces after pines are felled. Pesticides containing disodium octaborate tetrahydrate are registered in Vermont. The solution leaches into the stump, including the vulnerable sapwood. Spores which land on the stump surface will be killed when they germinate. Although stump treatment can't cure existing infections, treating new stumps will slow mortality in infected stands.

Winter cut stumps are less frequently infected than stumps cut at other times of year. Spores can be released whenever temperatures are above freezing, and have been trapped year-round, even in places like the Adirondacks and central New Hampshire. However, there are fewer spores in the air in the winter. Spore production peaks in the fall, and can also be heavy in early summer. With most conks growing at ground level, snow sharply reduces spore availability. But snow doesn't cover everything; spores can still spread from conks growing on uprooted trees or inside cavities.

In the northeast, we often think of Annosus root rot as a disease of red pine, and red pine gets the lion's share of attention when it comes to stump treatments. However, the fungus infects white pine as well. The potential impact on this species is important if white pine receives frequent intermediate cuts, allowing many opportunities for infection. We're less likely to see direct mortality of infected white pine. They can survive with few outward symptoms, but, as their root systems decay or butt rot progresses up the stem, they become increasingly vulnerable to windthrow and loss of timber volume. In Vermont, we examined an 80-year old white pine stand where *Fomes annosus* conks were present. After five thinnings, over half of the trees had decay in the butt log.

continued on page 6

Whither Vermont's Current Use Taxation Program?

John Meyer, Consulting Forester & Co-Chair, Current Use Tax Coalition

In 2010 Vermont's current use taxation program has allowed over 2.2 million acres of the state's enrolled private agricultural and forest lands to be taxed on their productive capacity rather than their highest and best use, potential and prospective. This program has been so successful over the last thirty years that it is widely regarded as the single most effective land conservation program ever implemented in the state. Today it is the keystone supporting Vermont's vital working agricultural and forest landscapes, resources that contribute \$5.275 billion of Vermont's \$25.4 billion gross state product. And with a quick calculation it is easy to see how forest products, tourism, snowmobiling, fishing, hunting, wildlife and agriculture generate over \$225 million of Vermont's \$1.1 billion general fund budget. Clearly current use is the goose that lays the golden egg for Vermont year after year after year.

Yet, presently in Montpelier there are legislators who, facing a huge budget deficit, question whether Vermont can continue to afford its current use program and seek to make it less costly. In my opinion, Vermont cannot afford not to have current use because undeveloped land requires far less in costly municipal services than developed land. Nevertheless, a bill (H.237) was introduced this week intending to make the current use program more effective and financially sustainable in the future. Key elements include (1) raising the property transfer tax on enrolled land from .5% to 1.25% consistent with other property, (2) increasing the use change tax on withdrawn land to 10% of the stand-alone appraised value of the parcel withdrawn instead of the pro-rated value based on the entire parcel, (3) providing an "easy-out" at no or reduced penalty, and (4) creating a study committee to look at the way municipal hold-harmless payments are distributed to towns.

The Current Use Tax Coalition (CUTC) is an informal association of forestry, agricultural, conservation and recreational organizations

that has supported the current use program since its inception in the early 1980s. Knowing that the legislature would again look at the program this year CUTC began exploring solutions and improvements last summer. By late December CUTC presented the legislature with a compromise package of proposals primarily addressing the two most urgent issues: perceived short-term "parking" of land in current use prior to ultimate development and the need to lower cost and raise revenue (taxes).

CUTC recognized that the withdrawal penalty under current law might be too low to discourage short-term parking and supports an increase similar to that in H.237 but with a lowering of the penalty rate to 8% after ten years of ownership and 6% after 20 years to encourage longer-term management. CUTC also found that undeveloped excluded land was being penalized through assessment as stand-alone parcels as though they had been subdivided. This procedure has two negative impacts: transferring an excessive amount of a parcel's value to the excluded portion thus reducing the incentive for use value appraisal on the enrolled portion, and creating a disincentive for excluding land an owner does not want in the program. Therefore, CUTC recommended that undeveloped or ineligible excluded land continue to be listed at the pro-rated per acre value of the entire parcel. (Excluded land adjacent to a house site or other development would not be pro-rated.)

Increasing the use change tax penalty as described above will ultimately yield an estimated \$4-6 million of new revenue annually. Eliminating the penalty on excluded undeveloped land will cost \$900,000 annually, but "easy-out" penalties and increased fair market taxes on removed lands offset that cost with an additional estimated \$1-2 million. Obviously CUTC's package of recommendations is cash positive for Vermont; let's hope the legislature sees it that way and does not simply cherry pick those sections that maximize revenue. Please call your representatives and let them know what you think. (See sidebar page 11 for details.)



Forest Update, *continued from page 4*

Once *Fomes annosus* is established in the root system of a conifer stand, the disease can be passed down to the next generation. Planted seedlings are more vulnerable than natural regeneration. Otherwise, the data on the importance of the disease to regeneration are mixed, but suggest that the problem may get worse as intensive management continues. Although losses in the eastern United States have been minimal, in Europe, where intensive management may have occurred over several generations, regeneration losses of up to 50% have been reported.

When is stump treatment justified? Treatment is not expensive or time-consuming, and provides excellent protection, preventing pockets of dead trees that are alarming in well-managed stands. But it is an added aggravation for the sale operator, and even without treatment, initial mortality rates from *Annosus* root rot are generally low. But in a study in New Hampshire, for every dead tree in an infection center, two additional trees were infected and had not yet developed symptoms. Once the fungus is established in a stand, more spores will be available to infect stumps in subsequent thinnings. Additionally, spores can be assumed to be present whenever weather conditions allow, as the fungus occurs over a wide area. In a survey done in the 1960's, the US Forest Service found pines killed by *Fomes annosus* in over two-thirds of pine plantations in our region.

Those who prefer to err on the conservative side should treat stumps routinely when pines are cut. Others may opt for stump treatment when the following high risk factors occur:

- Cutting is done in the fall, during peak spore production.
- Early in the rotation, when the disease will have time to build up.
- Frequent entries will be made, providing many opportunities for re-infection.
- There are infection centers nearby, or the disease already occurs in the stand.

- Trees are under stress. Stumps will produce less resin and are more vulnerable to infection.
- The final product is of high value, and volume loss from butt rot, poor growth, and low levels of mortality will be less tolerable.
- Pine is desired in the next generation.

A final reminder is that, although *Annosus* root rot is one of the better-known pine diseases, it would be incorrect to jump to that diagnosis wherever mortality occurs. We've recently been observing a variety of other pests on red pine, including shoot blights, needlecasts, and beetles. Where you encounter pockets of mortality, scrape away the litter from the base of dead trees. Tan-brown conks of *Fomes annosus* growing from the root collar indicate an active disease center.

A Forestry Leader Remembered

Jim Billings served for thirty-one years as the Windsor County Forester and after retirement, as a consulting forester. He was a very active member of his community, serving in many capacities.

Jim passed on in October of 2010 and at the end of his obituary it was stated "Memorial contributions may be made to Vermont Woodlands Association, P.O. Box 6004, Rutland, VT 05702."

As testimony to the esteem in which Jim was regarded, VWA received several hundred dollars in contributions in his memory. These funds were added to the VWA Endowment Fund, managed by the Vermont Community Foundation of Middlebury. Placing these funds in VWA's endowment will be a lasting tribute to Jim Billings and his dedication to good forestry.

Those of us advocating for good forestry should give this some thought.

**** NEW ****
Vermont Woodlands Association offers Technical Bulletins Written by landowners for landowners!!
 visit www.vermont-woodlands.org

Meet Your VWA Officers & Directors...

Meet Putnam Blodgett – this is the first in a series of articles introducing VWA officers and directors.

VWA president Put Blodgett is a past dairy farmer, woodland owner, and Tree Farmer who has been a member of VWA and its predecessor organizations for decades. He has a rather long and distinguished resume of experience and service in support of the working landscape.

Put grew up on a working dairy farm in Bradford and later owned and operated the 1200-acre Blodgett Farm from 1953-68. As a farmer he received numerous awards, served on advisory boards and committees, and attended state and national conventions. When the farm was sold, Put retained forestland that he still manages today as the 670-acre Tree Farm #73, first certified June 1, 1961. In 2000, Put was selected as the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. In April 2011, he will receive a 50-year Tree Farm sign along with three other 50-year honorees.

From 1965 to 1985, the Blodgett property was home to the Challenge Wilderness Camp founded and directed by Put. He built the twelve camp shelters with lumber harvested from the land and managed the creation of a 15-acre pond, from land clearing to finished construction. The camp still operates today on the Blodgett property under the direction of its past waterfront director. More than 3,000 boys have gone through the program since its inception. This rugged outdoor summer camp for boys taught them to appreciate the outdoors and helped them to develop many lifetime skills. Several pursued careers in natural resources and credit Put with providing the inspiration. He served as president of both the Vermont and New England Camping Associations.

At 79 years young, Put continues to pursue his lifelong interests. He has been an avid outdoor recreation enthusiast, who enjoys

camping, hiking, canoeing and kayaking, and cross-country skiing. He is a certified instructor of the American Canoe Association and has led numerous canoe trips, including a 30-day, 600-mile trip in the Northwest Territories. He spent more than 25 years as a ski racer, track setter, and Chief of Course for NCAA Championships, 1980 Winter Olympics & 1988 Olympic Tryouts, 1987 World Biathlon Championship & 1992 Biathlon Olympic Tryouts, and Nordic Combined World Cup and Senior and Junior National Championships.

As recently as summer 2010, Put led a group of Dartmouth students on a trail building and maintenance effort at Moosilauke, the eastern horizon that he views from his farm and where his “spirit lives.” He has served as the chairman of the Moosilauke Advisory Committee for twenty years and contributed more than 130 days of volunteer labor building trails on the mountain.

Put attended Bradford schools, and later graduated from Dartmouth College with a major in Economics. In 2009, Put was honored with a Dartmouth Alumni award and as 1953 Classmate of the Year. He still serves on numerous boards and committees including the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association, VT Forest Products Association, and New England Forestry Foundation Board of Advisors. During his tenure as VWA board president, he has been steering the association on a fiscally responsible path, considering the needs of the organization for both the short and long term.

Put lives in Lyme, NH with Marion, his wife of thirty years. Their blended family is comprised of nine children and twenty-one grandchildren. If you wonder why the Blodgetts live in NH, just mention I-91 and you'll hear the story of how building of the Interstate bisected his Tree Farm and took with it his ideal home site in Vermont.

Email: An Important Tool

Why do we ask members for their e-mail addresses? E-mail is the only practical way to quickly reach you with late-breaking news or updated information about VWA opportunities and events. But we don't have current e-mail addresses for many of our members.

As an added benefit of membership, we have been sending the Vermont Current Use Report via email (a \$29 value). In addition to providing the Vermont Current Use Report, we will still be publishing our own VWA E-News and offering information about current use legislation.

If you have an email address and would like to keep current on Current Use, please sign up now. You can add your email address to your membership renewal, send an email to info@vermont-woodlands.org, or call the office at 802.747.7900.

Please be assured that we do not sell e-mail (or mailing) addresses to anyone. We only use your email for VWA related activities. You also have the option of removing your e-mail address at anytime.



Consulting Foresters Corner: Forest Planning in a Nutshell

George Weir, VWA Certified Consulting Forester

Most landowners first develop management plans to achieve the goal of lower taxes under the Use Value program. Although an absolutely worthy goal, eventually we all have to carry out the plan's recommendations. I think it is essential that landowners and those advising them tailor plans to the individual needs, vision and goals of the landowner. With that in mind, let me offer a few ideas on how the planning effort could unfold.

As a first step landowners should identify and prioritize their goals of ownership. In my view this first step often gets short shrift, yet it should inform all later management decisions. Often plans simply contain a list of generic goals limited to a desire to recreate in the woodland, grow timber, sustain aesthetics, produce wildlife and protect habitat. When it comes to carrying out operations, conflicts often arise between these goals. Prioritization will help avoid and resolve those.

The second step involves an inventory of the woodland, based on landowner priorities. I recommend only creating information that will inform management decisions. In all cases a good inventory should include information on the species composition and age structure of woodland including the un-

derstory, pathological problems, stocking levels, wildlife use and acceptability of trees to meet landowner goals. Information on these features is always useful. From this step a stand map is developed.

Sometimes it makes sense to provide more detail. When the primary goal is timber management that will provide an even flow of financial benefits well into the future, an estimate of timber volumes and appraisal of values are necessary undertakings as are estimates of growth and projected future returns. The intensity of fieldwork needed to accurately create that detail substantially exceeds the amount needed to develop good silvicultural prescriptions. I only recommend creating that level of detail when it will directly influence management decisions.

If a landowner has keen interest in recreation or wildlife, it's important to collect information that will help manage those resources and avoid conflicts with other goals, particularly those related to timber management. Obvious conflicts exist between harvesting red oak and beech or saving them for wildlife. Cutting heavily along well-used walking trails will almost certainly reduce their value for recreation. By identifying important resources in light of goals of ownership, landowners can avoid conflicts.

continued on page 10

ACORN A CoOperative Resource Network
for the WEST and DEERFIELD WATERSHEDS of southern Vermont

Vermont ACORN is a website for woodland owners that contains a monthly feature as well as a wealth of information on forest ecology, tree identification, forest types, wildlife, insects and diseases, invasive plants, recreation and forest management. For more information on ACORN visit www.vtacorn.net.

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A Right to Practice Forestry?

Do you know of an instance where a town, planning board or zoning board has passed a local regulation that restricts a landowner's right to practice forestry?

VWA is compiling such instances to determine if a Right to Practice Forestry law is needed in Vermont. Presently thirty states do have such an ordinance.

The basic theme would be "No county or local government may enact an ordinance that is more restrictive of forestry practices than those of the state."

Vermont agriculture has a Right to Practice Agriculture. Does forestry need one?

If you know of local ordinances that restrict forestry, please send the details to:

Vermont Woodlands Association, P.O. Box 6004, Rutland, VT 05702-6004 or email: kmwanner@comcast.net or trish@gwriters.com or call (802) 747-7900.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Saturday April 9: Unique Sugarhouse Tours

Woodland Owners' Association (WOA) along with Vermont Woodlands Association will be co-sponsoring a tour of two sugarhouses in Whitingham that have very unique operations in the same town. The outing is part of the VWA's "Walk in the Woods" series.

Saturday May 7: Forest Insects & Diseases in Your Woodlands

Come walk with Dale Bergdahl, retired UVM Forest Pathologist and butternut expert, for a tour at the UVM Jericho Research Forest, Jericho, VT. Topics will include symptoms and signs of the most common insects and diseases affecting trees in Vermont and what landowners can and should do about them in order to keep their trees healthy and productive.

Additional information at www.vermontwoodlands.org/walk.asp

March 30 to April 1: 91st New England Society of American Foresters Meeting Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT

Landowners are welcome to attend all relevant sessions. Visit at <http://www.nesaf.org/society-american-foresters-annual-meetings.asp>

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Consulting Foresters Corner, *continued from page 8*

CALL NOW! BEFORE YOU CUT, NOT AFTER

*A Guide to Public
Resources for
Woodland Owners in
Vermont*

Take advantage of free services available through the Vermont County Foresters before selling timber from your



woodlands. Call Now! Before you cut...not after.

To download the *Call Before You Cut* brochure or to find your County Forester, or a VWA consulting forester, visit www.vermontwoodlands.org.

The third step involves developing a set of recommendations that will accomplish goals. This not only takes into account landowner priorities, but also the condition of the forest as identified by the inventory and consideration of all factors that may influence outcomes. Silvicultural treatments that work in one location may fail in others. For example, I often come across recommendations to establish seedlings in small openings while maintaining canopy closure throughout the majority of the stand. This regeneration method is often associated with group selection management. Although the recommendation may serve to sustain aesthetics, it creates ideal deer habitat. The approach may work in places where there are few deer, but where deer are plentiful it will almost invariably reproduce a limited species composition dominated by beech and other browse tolerant trees, shrubs and herbs. So it's important to consider the full range of factors that may influence forest development in a specific location.

This brings me to the next step, goal clarification. Careful consideration of potential outcomes from following recommendations may motivate landowners and their advisors to reconsider proposed actions. In the example above, the landowner concerned with perpetuating a forest of diverse species might decide to forego sustaining continuous forest cover and instead, harvest throughout the stand using the shelterwood approach. This would introduce substantially more regeneration over a broader area. Although it could have a negative impact on aesthetics, it would have a greater chance of introducing more saplings than deer can browse. In that case the landowner might re-prioritize goals and allow regenerating diverse species as higher ranking than sustaining aesthetics. If aesthetics remained the top priority, the landowner might accept browse tolerant species or decide against harvesting. The potential conflicts are plentiful; suffice it to say, we need to think comprehensively about all the factors that influence forest development and take time to refine our priorities.

I employ several approaches to help clarify goals. There is nothing more effective than a walk in the woods and on-the-ground discussion of the stand's capability and probable results of alternative management actions. Landowners may benefit from visiting other properties to see results of specific types of treatments. If I'm not sure of landowner priorities, I often include in the first draft of a management plan alternative sets of management recommendations for each stand and descriptions of how each will affect the stand's future. I ask the landowner to review those and make choices based on their priorities. These several approaches help landowners better understand management recommendations and more closely involve them in decision-making.

Once these steps are taken, the next step is developing an operations schedule. I was taught that the operations schedule should extend to the date the stand is fully regenerated. In most cases that's excessive, but the operations schedule should at least include management recommendations for the next 15 years.

Planners like to say planning is an ongoing process, not so much to create work for themselves, but because it's actually true. Landowners and their advisors invariably learn more about individual woodlands as time goes on. The forest often develops in ways we don't fully anticipate, based on natural factors as well as our actions. Who would have predicted 15 years ago that buckthorn and other exotic invasive plants would overwhelm many Connecticut River Valley managed woodlands? Often years pass between the times we develop and carry out a recommendation. New knowledge and unforeseen change may require we reconsider. Nothing is cast in stone. The last planning step is review of management recommendations immediately prior to action.

Careful planning requires a lot from landowners, but good planning results in good decisions. Greater landowner involvement in the process should assure greater landowner satisfaction.

Keep Vermont's Working Landscape Vital

Vermont's working landscape—its open meadows and mixed forests—offers economic, cultural, scenic, environmental and recreational benefits that are essential to our future prosperity. Yet if alarming trends are not reversed, it could vanish within a generation along with Vermont's unique character and many of the key values that unify the state.

Fifty years ago half of the state's land was in agriculture; today barely one-fifth is being actively farmed. Forest products mills are closing and production is down. Parcels are smaller, and development is spreading across the countryside.

The new nonpartisan and broad-based Vermont Working Landscape Partnership is leading a bold year-long campaign to keep our farm and forest economy vital. It will bring a focused Action Plan to the Governor and legislature—one that will help everyone trying to make a living from the land. VT Woodlands Association is already endorsing this effort and welcomes this new voice in the State House.

It's important to show our elected leaders how much Vermonters care about this issue. Sign up as an individual member of the Partnership to stay updated and help shape the campaign for the future of Vermont's Working Landscape.

In December, leaders from the state, federal, nonprofit and private sectors packed the Vermont State House for the Summit on the Future of the Working Landscape. Many of them have already joined this Partnership in support of its Plan. Learn more and add your name to the growing list. (See <http://vtrural.org/>)

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is leading this effort. If Vermonters focus and work together, we can build an agricultural and natural resource Renaissance and keep our land working for future generations!

continued from page 3

to the farm. My wife was going to have a girls riding camp and mine was going to be Challenge Wilderness Camp, based on the Outward Bound philosophy of helping boys grow to manhood. Bill Robes, former Kimball Union Academy Outing Club Director became my woodcraft director for fifteen years. His knowledge and friendship have been invaluable. I knew that whatever I might have asked of him, he stood ready to help, and that is a true friend indeed.

In 1947 a new Orange County Forester appeared and I was impressed with his Air Force khakis and aviator sunglasses. Jim Wilkinson guided the forest transition from father to son. In the mid-1980s, after having retired as Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, I managed to convince him to return to one of his earliest clients and he made my first comprehensive management plan for the Use Value Appraisal Program (current use). Jim patiently explained forestry principles to me, such as every straight tree need not be pruned because spacing was important for those left for final harvest. I had constructed a 15-acre pond to serve the boys camp's needs and a few choice lots on that pond would have provided maximum return on investment, but Jim's quiet disapproval helped convince me that I, too, would feel much better by placing a Conservation Easement on everything but the boys camp area.

After Jim's retirement, Paul Harwood, former Orange County Forester, became my consulting forester and close friend, and guides my forest management to this day.

Put Blodgett, VWA President

Vermont Legislature

The website for the Vermont Legislature has been revamped with a very user friendly format. From the homepage you can find virtually anything you want.

In the left hand navigation bar under Getting Started, there is a "How do I..." link that takes you to list of questions and answers. For example, How Do I...

- Find my representative or senator,
- See the legislative directory, or
- Email the Governor?

If you have not recently visited www.leg.state.vt.us it is definitely a tour.

If you do not have a computer or do not use email, you can always leave a message with Francis Brooks, the Sergeant-at-Arms (802) 828-2228.

We occasionally do recommend that you contact your representative or senator to voice your concerns about issues affecting forest landowners. The new website is sure to help you do just that.



As a benefit of membership, the Vermont Woodlands Association offers a free subscription to *Northern Woodlands*, a quarterly magazine that offers readers a "new way of looking at the forest." *Northern Woodlands* mission is to encourage a culture of forest stewardship in the Northeast by increasing understanding of and appreciation for the natural wonders, economic productivity, and ecological integrity of the region's forests. Members also receive the VWA newsletter published quarterly and E-News, offering articles of interest and educational opportunities for woodland owners.

New Member Application and/or Donation Form

Vermont Woodlands Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to advocate for the management, sustainability, perpetuation, and enjoyment of forests through the practice of excellent forestry that employs highly integrated management practices that protect and enhance both the tangible and intangible values of forests—including clean air and water, forest products, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, recreation, scenic beauty, and other resources—for this and future generations.

Annual dues investment (check one)

Landowners

- 0 -100 acres..... \$40
- 101-200 acres..... \$50
- 201-500 acres..... \$60
- 501-1,000 acres..... \$70
- 1,001-5000 acres..... \$100
- Over 5,000 acres..... \$250
- Friend/Supporter..... \$40

Natural resource professionals

- Individuals..... \$50
- Firms and crews..... \$100

Wood products companies & equipment suppliers

- Individuals..... \$50
- Firms and crews..... \$250

- VWA Certified Consulting Foresters \$160
(Subject to VWA acceptance. Call for details)

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____ Email _____

Woodland town(s) _____ County(ies) _____

Woodland acres _____ Tree Farm member? _____ Enrolled in the Value Appraisal Program? _____

Forester _____

Please make checks payable to Vermont Woodlands Association and mail with the completed form to:
VWA Treasurer, PO Box 6004, Rutland, VT 05702-6004.

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