



# Membership Newsletter

Vol. 3, No. 4

March 2005

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**VWA Membership  
Newsletter is  
published four times a  
year.**

### 2006 Advertising Rates

(per year):

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## Annual Meeting is April 7

The Vermont Woodlands Association Annual Meeting will take place on Friday, April 7 beginning at 8:30 am. The meeting will be held at Suzanna's Restaurant at Hilltop Inn (formerly LaGue Inn), Berlin, VT. Agenda includes presentations by the

Dept. of Forests and Recreation, Green Mountain National Forest, Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, and Vermont Land Trust; awards and recognitions; election of officers; and buffet lunch. (See newsletter insert for registration form.)

## The Vermont Land Trust and Conservation of Working Forests

As Vermont steadily changes, people are seeing to it that the physical resources that give our state its irreplaceable rural character are not lost. The Vermont Land Trust is a private, non-profit land conservation organization working on behalf of all Vermonters to protect vital pieces of our landscape for farming, forestry, and community vitality. Since 1977, VLT has helped conserve more than 1,300 parcels of land covering 442,839 acres or about 7% of the private, undeveloped land in the state.

Most often land is conserved through the use of a legal document called a conservation easement. Conservation easements place perpetual restrictions on what can be done with a property in the future, most typically limiting development and allowing for continued agricultural and forestry uses. All transactions are voluntary and the land remains in private ownership. Conservation easements are tailored to individual properties and landowner goals. Landowners may either sell or donate a conservation easement to VLT, although funds for purchased easements on forestland are limited.

In addition to prohibiting development, conservation easements assure forest landowners that their investments in developing a high quality timber resource will not become subject to liquidation practices, wiping out the years of stewardship and stand improvement that so many VWA members have committed themselves to. All harvesting is performed in accordance with forest management plans that have been reviewed and approved by VLT's Stewardship Forester. VLT is not involved in day-to-day decisions and operations but ensures that the intent of the conservation easement is fulfilled by monitoring the conserved properties on a regular basis.



**Richard Rose donated a conservation easement to VLT on 885 acres of land this past December: "My children are happy to know the land is conserved now" said Dick Rose. "They grew up in a house where they learned about wise forest management, and when I decided to conserve the land they were in complete agreement."**

The decision to permanently conserve the working lands of Vermont helps to sustain our rural economy. For those who own or manage tracts of land or those that enjoy recreating in the woods and have ecological sensibilities, the conservation of critical acres of productive forestland promotes its sustainable management and fosters biodiversity.

While Vermont has had much conservation success, VLT President Darby Bradley remarks, "More can be done. Today, Vermont is experiencing extraordinary development pressure. Increasingly large tracts of forestland are becoming fragmented. Continued conservation in Vermont will ensure that we retain our unique relationship with the land and our strong sense of community."

*This is the first in a series of articles from VLT; if you have questions about land conservation options or VLT, please contact them at (802) 223-5234 or visit [www.vlt.org](http://www.vlt.org).*



## News from the Vermont Tree Farm Program

# THE TREE FARM PROGRAM: Where do we go from here?

Editorial by Alan Robertson

For those of you who have been members of VWA for some time, you have undoubtedly noticed the positive momentum of our organization over the past 5 years. We now have a stable membership of almost 400, an informative newsletter, and have just successfully initiated a significant endowment program.

As you also know, VWA sponsors the Tree Farm program in Vermont. The national sponsor- The American Forestry Foundation- has tightened up the standards and brought much needed silvicultural and environmental credibility to the program, but the overall membership has dropped, and many states are having difficulty finding the resources to bring in new members, administer the program, and perform the required 5 year reinspections of existing Tree Farms. Vermont is no exception. We had over 800 Tree Farms in the past, but today have only about 500, and we are having difficulty in completing the required 5-year reinspections.

We believe the key to solving the reinspections problem may also show the way to increased membership, both for VWA and for Tree Farm, but we need your comments on the approach we would like to take to solve these problems.

Since its inception the Tree Farm program has been almost free to landowners, with the exception of the cost of writing the forest management plans. Since those are required by the state for the Current Use program, that has also helped minimize the direct cost of the Tree Farm program to owners. But the cost of reinspections to owners was free, as was the cost of administering the program. We have relied on the efforts of member volunteers for administration, and forester volunteers- both private and county- for reinspections.

Times have changed. The new Tree Farm standards, records requirements, and gen-

eral administration require much more time and training to execute the program. At the same time many people have more outside interests, less time for volunteer efforts, and professional foresters are faced with less available pro- bono time to donate to various causes. In Vermont we have worked on that problem by asking the county foresters to take on even more of our reinspections effort. Their jobs have changed also, though, and they no longer have time for all the current use inspections they must do, let alone the Tree Farm reinspections.

We are proposing to put the Tree Farm program on a pay-for-services basis. We believe the Tree Farm program is **very valuable** and we believe you think so, too. We are contemplating a fee levied annually that, after five years, would cover the cost of the administration and reinspection of your Tree Farm. Administration would be contracted to the firm administering the VWA. Private foresters (probably yours) would be reimbursed for mileage and professional services at a standard rate in the state for the period of time we believe they need for a visit to your Tree Farm and interaction with you.

We believe this needed infusion of resources will rejuvenate our foresters' interest in the program, and encourage them to seek out new members. There are more than **10,000** landowners in current use in Vermont; attracting even a small percentage of them to Tree Farm- and VWA- would boost our membership, and ability to make a difference in Vermont, substantially.

We **really** need your comments! Foresters and forest landowners both! E-mail [pfalz@sover.net](mailto:pfalz@sover.net) or call (802) 626-3590 and let us know your feelings on this issue!

*Note: Al Robertson is the Vice Chairman of the Vermont Tree Farm program and has been a tree farmer since 1985.*



President's Column

# Back to Basics

Recently, various media reported that half of the world's population now lives in cities. Vermont may not be citified to that extent, but it is unquestionably becoming more urbanized. The further people are removed from the land, the less they understand the intricate nature of our forests. There is little understanding of the benefits derived from the forests: clean air and water, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, recreation and forest products as an economic driver of the Vermont economy. Through ignorance, some feel that timber harvesting destroys the other benefits, when actually, good timber management can enhance all aspects.

A recent poll by the survey center at UNH found that, in that state, those the most ignorant of the importance of forests and forestry were "residents 29 years or younger (mostly school aged children), in the city and area surrounding Manchester, and residents of New Hampshire who have lived in this state for less than five years."

This adds impetus to VWA's already-underway planning to reach out to school children concerning the benefits of forests. The environmental movement reached out to school children thirty years ago and look at environmental awareness today!

This past fall a list of teachers interested in incorporating forestry into their curriculums was compiled at the Teachers Convention. At the same convention, a tour for teachers

was enabled by Bill Sayre, chair of Forestry Policy for AIV, organized and led by Richard Carbonetti, LandVest forester, assisted by Ginger Anderson of FP&R, and hosted by Vivien and Mike Fritz on their outstanding Marshfield Tree Farm.

In 2005 two "Walks in the Forest" were held for school children. In 2006 VWA plans to match up interested teachers with local VWA members and Tree farmers to act as hosts for several more "Walks in the Forest". The Vermont Land Trust will also offer hosts who are active in forest management.

A recent meeting was held by representatives of VWA, VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Shelburne Farms, National Wildlife Federation, the Resource Conservation and Development Council, and Vermont Audubon to coordinate the presentation of forestry and forest-related training opportunities to Vermont teachers.

VWA hopes you will be willing to host a class in your forest if called upon. Assistance in hosting might be obtained from consulting foresters, county foresters, Vermont Audubon, National Wildlife Federation and Ginger Anderson, Chief of Conservation Education at Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Back to Basics: Reading, Writing, 'Rithmetic — and the importance of Vermont's forests!

*Put Blodgett, VWA President, Put@valley.net*



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## News from Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department: Wildlife Action Plan Accepted

Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan, the product of a two-year planning effort to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat has been accepted by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, according to Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Wayne Laroche. The Wildlife Action Plan, a blueprint for the conservation of all of Vermont's wildlife, is the largest planning effort of its kind in Vermont's history. Representatives of more than 60 local, state and national agencies, sportsmen and conservation groups, academics, land managers and other wildlife experts pooled their knowledge to create the plan. "These are the people who know Vermont's wildlife best. It could not have been done without them," said Commissioner Laroche. "The Vermont Trappers Association has a long history of working with Vermont Fish & Wildlife," according to president Rick Schoonover. "Vermont trappers endorsed the Action Plan process, because healthy wildlife populations and ecosystems are important to trappers, hunters and other sportsmen and women," said Schoonover.

Governor Douglas welcomed the news of plan approval, noting that, "Healthier wildlife populations contribute to Vermont's reputation for a high quality of life and conservation of natural resources. Two-thirds of Vermonters take part in wildlife-associated recreation. These Vermonters and the tourists coming to Vermont to enjoy our wildlife add more than \$380 million to our economy annually."

All U.S. States and Territories agreed to develop Wildlife Action Plans and submit them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by October 1, 2005, as a condition of accepting State Wildlife Grant Program funding. Commissioner Laroche sees the State Wildlife Grants program as a vital new addition to the traditional and overstretched programs that fund state wildlife management. "Vermonters love their wildlife," said Roy Marble, president of the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, "but for decades it's only been sportsmen that have paid for wildlife management through license sales and an excise tax on hunting and fishing gear. We welcome this opportunity to broaden the funding base to better conserve wildlife."

"The Wildlife Action Plans offer the first

comprehensive national vision for wildlife conservation," said Marvin Moriarty, northeast regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "We are tremendously impressed with the overall quality of Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan and the extensive partnerships employed to develop it. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to assist them in implementing this Plan to protect, restore and manage fish and wildlife habitat in Vermont."

Vermont's Plan emphasizes acting before wildlife become threatened or endangered. "Proactive conservation like the Wildlife Action Plan makes real sense for the bottom line. If we invest in conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat now, drastic and expensive measures won't be required later," said Jim Shallow, Director of Conservation for Audubon Vermont. "As a science-based organization, Audubon supports the research driven process that created the plan. Personally, as a taxpayer, I like that it has cost-effective recommendations for getting the work done. And as a parent I like knowing that my children and future generations will enjoy wildlife too."

Sherb Lang, president of Hunters, Anglers & Trappers of Vermont recommended, "The Fish & Wildlife Department should begin by focusing down the middle -- on the projects and opportunities that have the broadest public support, the greatest chances for success and that benefit the most wildlife species." The Wildlife Action Plan contains conservation strategies that all Vermonters can help implement -- from state and federal agencies to local communities and nonprofit groups to individual landowners.

VTrans volunteered several staff to Wildlife Action Plan development and will be a partner in implementation." VTrans is committed to practicing good stewardship," said VTrans environmental policy manager Gina Campoli. "When wildlife conservation is integrated with transportation planning wildlife, motorists, and taxpayers all win. Roads are safer, maintenance costs may be reduced, and projects speed through the permitting and regulatory process."

The Wildlife Action Plan can be viewed at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com/SWG\\_home.cfm](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/SWG_home.cfm). [Note: According to Jon Kart, there may be grant opportunities for VWA.]



Vermont Fisheries Biologists assessing fish population in central region of the state.



## News from Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

# History of Department's Role in Municipal Forestry

By Steve Sinclair, VDFPR

**T**he Northern Forest Alliance and the Town Forest Project has been getting quite a bit of attention lately. I want to provide some history on the Department's role in municipal forestry.

In 1909 the Vermont Forest Service was created- the predecessor to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. The following year, then State Forester, Austin Hawes, created a municipal forest program. In 1915 the Legislature authorized the establishment of endowment forests. Any town or city having 40 acres or more could have the property examined by the state forester and if he found it suitable, it would be designated as a school endowment forest. In 1917 the term was changed to municipal forest. This statute still remains, and under a separate section, requires the commissioner to provide management assistance to any town requesting services.

In 1945 the Legislature authorized the state to advance up to \$600 per biennium to any municipality for purchase and reforestation of municipal forests. The money was to be repaid to the state without interest when any commercial cutting was done. This was subsequently repealed in 1962.

At the end of the first fifty years of the municipal forest program, ninety towns and communities with a total of 33,000 acres were municipal forests. Not all communities went through the trouble of having the commissioner designate their properties as a municipal forest, but in terms of support from Forests Parks and Recreation, it makes no difference. Our records currently identify 121 municipal forests with approximately 90,000 acres.

The rapid expansion of the program placed significant demands on our staff, and in 1957 two municipal forester positions were created, one in the north and one in the south. These foresters were available to pro-

vide assistance in developing management plans, marking timber for cutting, and supervising sale operations. A report from the municipal foresters in 1970 shows management involvement on 25 municipal forests, generating over 2 million board feet of timber, 4,000 cords, and an income of \$44,000. 142 acres of timber stand improvement was conducted and 10 acres of planting took place. Budget reductions led to the elimination of the municipal forester positions in mid-1970s. The 13 county foresters picked up their work, where it remains today.

A 1931 report from the Vermont Commission on Country Life puts the value of municipal forests this way- "Municipal forests are a valuable source of public education. Schools as well as the general public can here secure first-hand information that often is obtainable in no other way. Such a forest area may well be the recreational center for the community, and when properly managed and administered, should become a source of revenue...."

A 1970 department report to the State Legislature identifies the multiple use forest resource management objectives of the municipal forest program as: Opportunities for environmental conservation education; Timber production; Watershed protection; Forest based recreational opportunities; Fish and game habitat and public access; and Local employment.

The Department continues to commit resources to assist towns. As the values and benefits of forest land expand and change, the type of services change as well. Wildlife habitat assistance, recreational trail development, and conservation education have taken on greater role, but development and implementation of management plans continues to be a critical role- last year, county foresters reported assisting 22 municipalities.





## An Update from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)

By Bill Sayre, SFI

The Vermont Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is heading into 2006 with a solid start in renewed efforts to build awareness within the forest products industry, the legislature, and the general public as to the importance of sustainable forestry practices. Formed in 1994 by the American Forest & Paper Association, SFI is a comprehensive, private sector system of principles, objectives, and performance measures that integrates growing and harvesting of trees with the protection of wildlife, plants, soil, and water quality. Additionally, supporters of the program subscribe to the belief that sound environmental and business practices can be integrated to the benefit of landowners, shareholders, and the people they serve.

SFI had a successful autumn in education outreach aimed at increasing awareness and appreciation of modern, sustainable forestry among teachers and their students. Interest was again high in the Vermont SFI booth at the annual Teachers' Convention at the Champlain Expo, laying the groundwork for follow-up efforts this coming year with new materials and classroom and field visits. Also in October, SFI, in partnership with the Society of American Foresters and Vermont Woodlands Association, hosted a Workshop for Vermont Teachers in Marshfield that served as an excellent model for future events.

Vermont SFI particularly wishes to express appreciation for the support and coopera-

tion it has been receiving from the Society of American Foresters, Vermont Woodlands Association, and the Vermont Tree Farm Program. Woodlots in the Tree Farm Program qualify as SFI-approved for purposes of SFI certification. SFI companies provide markets for forest products grown by VWA and Tree Farm members. Associated Industries of Vermont, which helps administer SFI in Vermont, appreciates the important perspectives contributed by members of each of these organizations and SFI as part of the AIV Forest Policy Task Force.

On the professional front, the Logger Education to Advance Professionalism (LEAP) program remains the only in-state logger-training program that is SFI-certified. Loggers, truckers, foresters, and mill owners are encouraged to enroll in training programs to further their professional education. Contact David Birdsall of LEAP at (802) 235-2908 about upcoming training courses or William Driscoll at AIV about other SFI-certified logger-training programs in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York or for a list of loggers we have completed SFI-approved training.

Sustainable forestry is becoming an increasingly important issue that can affect the success and survival of everyone in the industry, from landowners to loggers to manufacturers to retailers. It is critical that everyone in the process understands the value of the private-sector driven, environmentally and economically viable approach to sustainability embodied in SFI. To learn more, contact Associated Industries of Vermont at (802) 223-3441.

This newsletter is printed on Accent Opaque brand paper produced at International Paper's Ticonderoga mill from working Vermont and Adirondack forests, managed responsibly in accordance with the principles of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, [http://www.ippaper.com/accent\\_home.html](http://www.ippaper.com/accent_home.html)



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# Green Forestry Update

By David Brynn, Director

The Green Forestry Education Initiative of the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources is just over six months old. We are very thankful to all of the people who have pitched in their support to help make Green Forestry a community-based conservation success. This is our story.

The mission of Green Forestry is "to integrate sustainable design, land ethics, and real-world learning in community-based forest conservation." The notion of 'sustainable design' is rooted in the criteria of the Montreal Process. 'Land ethics' recognizes that forest conservation only works when both the steward and the forest grow 'richer' as a result of their relationship. And 'real-world' learning suggests, "without application, principles and ideals have no bearing and no test."

We have started our efforts at the 500-acre University of Vermont's Jericho Research Forest. Since 1941, the forest has been the site of ecological recovery, research, and stewardship. Green Forestry is now attempting to build upon this rich heritage. In the fall, the Introduction to Forest Conservation Planning Class added to the comprehensive existing database by inventorying the status of soil and water resources on the forest. They conducted public involvement meetings with the Jericho community and the Rubenstein School and summarized their findings.

One thing that came through loud and clear was that the community supported diversified educational opportunities at Jericho. A 'First Saturday Forest Walk and Fire' Series was instituted and several workshops have been held for the public. Thanks to a grant from the Henry David Thoreau Foundation, many students are also becoming actively involved in internship projects at the Jericho Research Forest this semester.

Another important function of the Jericho Research Forest will be to serve as a site for the public to learn about community-based forest conservation. This approach to forestry recognizes the need for blending the knowledge and skills of the University with those held by the community. Both parties benefit from this and we hope that the 'Community-based Conservation Center'

at Jericho will become a cultural ecotone of sorts.

We are actively seeking involvement of the people in addressing conservation challenges. We are cultivating powerful and hopeful visions for the future. We have even purchased a beautiful wood lathe so that students can use their own hands to turn 'humble bowls' and more. Inspired by the Buddhist saying "Chop wood. Carry water," we are giving students more opportunities to feel and experience the benefits of real conservation work.

Green Forestry is working closely with the Vermont Town Forest Project in assessing the needs of local communities in stewarding their town forests. We are starting to identify educational citizen monitoring strategies that help get people even more interested and actively involved in town forest conservation. Three students are working on this project this semester. We will host a workshop at Jericho on Saturday, April 22. Earth Day to feature their work and others. Plan to visit.

Perhaps most importantly, we are setting up the vehicles to improve collaboration in dealing with conservation challenges and opportunities. We hope that a 30-foot diameter yurt - built out of our own Japanese larch - will be underway shortly. We are excited at the bit of progress we have achieved, but we know we have a very long way to go. Please stay tuned. For more information, check out our website at [www.greenforestry.org](http://www.greenforestry.org).



David Brynn, Addison County's forester for 28 years, is now the director of the Rubenstein School's Green Forestry Initiative that integrates sustainable design, land ethics, and real-world learning as the basis for forestry in the 21st century.



The Vermont Woodlands Association presents another opportunity to purchase a VWA-branded wood product. For 2006, we are offering a wooden writing pen made from reclaimed wood by Jim Cunningham of Vermont Hardwood Pens in Bristol, VT.

### New Member Application and/or Donation Form (Renewal notices are sent by mail to current members)

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)

##### Land owners and managers

- 0-100 acres.....\$35
- 101-200 acres.....\$45
- 201-500 acres.....\$55
- 501-1,000 acres.....\$65
- 1,001-5000 acres.....\$100
- Over 5,000 acres.....\$250

##### Foresters and loggers:

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- All suppliers.....\$100

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