



Membership Newsletter

Vol. 5, No. 6

September 2008

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2008 Farm Bill and EQIP Funds for Forestry Practices

With the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill, cost-share programs are now available to forest landowners. The Farm Bill includes a Forestry Title; however, funding that had previously been allocated in the Forestry Title through the Forest Land Enhancement Program, better known as FLEP, was removed in favor of funneling all monies through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and EQIP, Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

At a recent meeting with NRCS, hosted by the VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation, we got a lot of new information about EQIP and cost-share funding for stewardship planning and on-the-ground practices. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, or WHIP, that has been available for forest landowners still offers opportunities.

NRCS expects to have \$300,000 in the forestry pool for 2008. Although funds have not yet been allocated, it is important for forest landowners to begin the application process now. NRCS is accepting applications until October 1st. To get your application on file by the Oct. 1st deadline you will need to complete NRCS-CPA-1200. NRCS recommends that you contact your local field office to start the application process. You don't need to know what practices you'd like to undertake in order to file your eligibility paperwork. In fact, NRCS is still working with Forest & Parks and others to develop the final draft of eligible conservation practices. It is important to note that your consulting forester cannot file the application for you; the landowner must personally complete the required paperwork. However, district office personnel can and will help forest landowners navigate these new waters.

WHIP will fund 75% of the cost of the project; EQIP funds up to 75% of the cost of the project. Each program is administered separately and landowners can have both a WHIP and EQIP cost share project, as well as multiple EQIP contracts for conservation practices. Stewardship planning and on-the-ground practices such as pest management, forest trials and landing, critical area planting, early successional habitat management, upland wildlife habitat, and fish passages are among the practices eligible for cost share. The selection process for project cost-share is competitive and based on an objective ranking scale. Payments in both programs are made when projects are complete and the work is certified as complete by NRCS.

October 1st is just around the corner so now is the time to begin the application process. NRCS is the new vehicle for cost-share programs for forest landowners and we strongly encourage you to start now in building a relationship with your local field office. For an application form or more information visit www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP/

VWA Membership
Newsletter is
published four
times a year.

**2008 Advertising
Rates**

(per year):

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News from the Tree Farm Program

PEFC Endorsement

Bob Simpson, Senior Vice President, Center for Family Forests

At 9:49 AM EST, Thursday, August 7, 2008, the threshold vote for PEFC endorsement was received at PEFC Council, Geneva, Switzerland. With this vote, the American Tree Farm System is now formally recognized and endorsed as an internationally credible sustainable forest management certification system.

This shining achievement belongs to each and every one of you who shouldered us through this nine-year endeavor. You all have dedicated countless hours to the American Tree Farm System, many of you sacrificing your own personal time and expense because you believed in the American Tree Farm System and the values and principles it stands for.

This path has not been easy and it has involved much change, but the change has brought its hard-earned benefits. This recognition now opens the door to new markets abroad and on shore. Already many nations are setting procurement policies that would have barred our forest owners' products from their markets. As future markets of other non-timber products emerge such as carbon and bio-fuels, international certification endorsement is materializing as a prerequisite for entrance.

Although I am personally proud of this achievement, I am most proud of having the honor to be associated with so many of you whose dedication and devotion to the health of our family forest lands has brought our Tree Farmers to this pinnacle.

I give my heartfelt thanks to you all and my congratulations on a job well done.

2009 Tree Farmer of the Year Nominations Now Being Accepted.

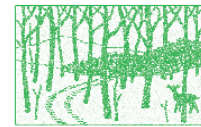
Now is the time to submit nominations for the 2009 Tree Farmer of the Year. Any tree farmer who is currently certified and has been in the system for at least 5 years (through one complete inspection cycle) is eligible for nomination. Nominations can be made by the tree farmer, another tree farmer, a professional forester, or the Tree Farm inspector.

Our Tree Farm Committee must do site visits once nominations are received and the window of opportunity for these visits is short. Please consider making a nomination now for 2009 to shine the light on a tree farmer who is doing an outstanding job of forest land management.

What is PEFC?

PEFC is a framework for the assessment and endorsement of national forest certification systems that have been developed based on internationally recognized requirements for sustainable forest management. Since its launch in 1999, PEFC has become the largest forest certification umbrella organization covering national systems from all over the world, delivering hundreds of millions of tons of wood to the processing industry and then onto the market place from currently more than 200 million hectares of certified forests. This is an area which is larger than the combined forest area of all European Union member states. PEFC has strong grass roots support from many stakeholders including the forestry sector, governments, trade associations, trade unions, and non-governmental organizations.

What does PEFC endorsement mean for Tree Farmers? If you are a currently inspected Tree Farmer in the American Tree Farm System, you are 3rd party certified now as part of the northeast region group certification. We encourage you to maintain your active status in the Tree Farm program in order to take advantage of certification. If you are not a Tree Farmer or have let your active status lapse, please consider contacting the VWA office or your consulting forester to find out how to join the Tree Farm program.



President's Column

A Beehive of Forest Activity

In April of 2007 I had the pleasure of going on a forestry tour that visited central Siberia. In February 2008, a group from that same Tomsk Region reciprocated, visiting forestry activities in Maine, NH, VT and Massachusetts. I hosted the group in the Upper Valley for a day and a half. The Upper Valley is self-proclaimed by a group of towns on both sides of the Connecticut River half way up the states of VT and NH. At best, the designation is regarded with amusement by those living further north along the river, at worst, it is regarded as arrogant.

Regardless of the correctness of the designation, when I organized the tour, I was astonished by the variety of forestry-related activities in this small area. There are so many that we couldn't begin to visit them all.

The Ryegate 20 megawatts electrical generating plant creates a chip market for area low-grade wood. Concentration yards such as HHP's in Lisbon, Allard's in Haverhill, Bob Burke's in Orfordville, Stacy Thomson's in Orford, serve as depots for area loggers. Logs are sorted and go to the mills of the yards' owners and to buyers from other mills. Global Timber Products in Hartland collects veneer logs from all over the Northeast. When we visited, a Japanese buyer was there making selections. Next door, Vermont Log Buildings has three designers in its log office building. Adjoining is its large production facility. A trailer truck was just leaving for Oklahoma with the logs for a complete house. Further north in Wells River, John Nininger's Wooden House Company hand crafts inspiring large-log structures. Next door to it is Walter Young's Newman Lumber Company. Formerly a sawmill in Woodsville, it now buys raw lumber, some local, a lot from Finland and Russia, and mills it for custom orders.

We visited the Messers' Sunday Mountain Maple Farm's sugar house, and while too early for an actual operation, received an

inclusive presentation of the syrup-making process. Fields of Christmas trees are also prevalent in the Valley.

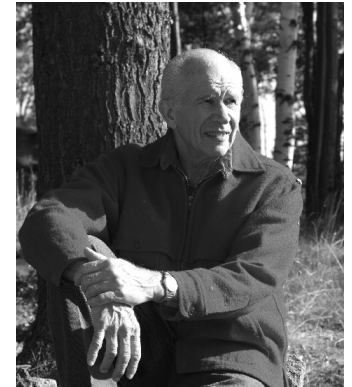
Local low-grade wood being converted into heat is evident on passing trucks, in door-yards and in smoke rising from chimneys. And the private landowners who grow the wood, the loggers, the truckers, the sawmills and the contractors who build the logging roads and landings and move the heavy equipment-all keep a beehive of activity around the area. Consulting foresters and land trusts pursue their interests.

At the other extreme are Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMOs) such as Wagner Woodlands, Lyme Timber Company and Global Forest Partnerships, operating widely, but with local headquarters.

We visited the Lyme Town Garage, heated by an automated wood pellet system, and the Hanover High School complex heated by an impressive Messersmith system (30 Vermont schools have this system) with an automated chip feeding arrangement.

A very interesting lab tour and presentation was given us by Mascoma Corporation. Mascoma is one of the pioneer researchers into breaking down low-grade wood, agricultural residue and switchgrass into cellulosic ethanol and is building small plants in New York and Tennessee to test production. Corinth is home to the outstanding Northern Woodlands Magazine, "a new way of looking at the forest". Tom Thomson's Orford Tree Farm was NH and Northeast Region Outstanding Tree Farm in 1997. A Bradford Tree Farm was the Vermont Outstanding Tree Farm in 2000.

We were given tours by both Copeland Furniture of Bradford and Pompanoosuc Mills of East Thetford, both high-end, niche firms that avoid Chinese competition with their quality furniture production. Copeland has

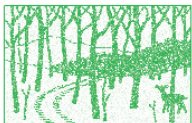


JON GILBERT FOX

Put Blodgett

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.

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News from Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Two Beetles from Asia Now Close to Vermont

Barbara Burns, Acting Chief of Forest Resource Protection

Inevitably, exotic insects spreading through the northeast will show up at Vermont's doorstep. In 2008, there are two new threats nearby. In late June, we received a report of trees in Quebec infested with emerald ash borer. They're in the town of Carignan, about 30 miles north of the border at Alburg. In early August, trees infested with Asian longhorned beetle were detected in Worcester, Massachusetts, within 50 miles of our southeastern corner. In both cases, the beetles have been feeding on trees at the site for several years.

This is only one of several new locations for emerald ash borer. The insect has been spreading quickly since it was first detected in Michigan in 2002. It was also picked up in Virginia, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Ottawa for the first time in 2008. The emerald ash borer tunnels under the bark of all species of ash, and is a proven killer of healthy woodland trees. After it arrives in Vermont, it is expected to eliminate millions of trees unless new control strategies are developed.

Asian longhorned beetle was first detected in New York in 1996, and has been spreading slowly within the New York metro-

politan area. An infestation has since been found in Chicago, which was eradicated, and in Toronto. Asian longhorned beetle attacks a number of tree species, including sugar maple, but we don't know how it will affect trees in heavily forested areas.

Federal quarantines prohibit the movement of live trees and wood products from areas known to be infested with these insects. However, they can be moved, inadvertently, if it takes a while before an infestation is found and regulations go into effect. It usually takes years, and it's another reason to buy local. Both of these potentially catastrophic insects already have a track record of moving from place to place in firewood. Buying locally grown wood products and locally propagated nursery stock reduces the chance of importing them...and other pests we don't know about.

At this point, we don't recommend changing management plans in anticipation of these insects. Early detection remains our best hope for eradication once they arrive in Vermont. Along with other agencies, we continue to look for them here.

continued page 6

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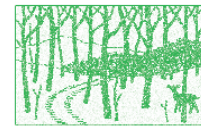
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News from Department of Fish & Wildlife

What is Good Quality Habitat?

by Jens Hilke, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

Dear VWA member, in the next few articles, we hope to address the question of what is good quality habitat by looking at the question from different scales or perspectives. This first in the series begins by looking at wildlife habitat from the birdseye view.

Several years ago, I was involved in a project to reshoot a series of aerial photos of washed out bridges and flooded buildings taken just after the 1927 flood. Our team logged many hours in a small Cessna flying the river valleys of Vermont trying to capture the same angles that a photographer had used some eighty years prior so that we could document the changes seen in the landscape, creating a matched pair of “then and now” photos.

Flying affords an incomparable macro perspective. Terrain details blur and you’re left with a mosaic of towns and forests and farmland. The more we looked at the photos and then at the distant terrain out the plane window, the more history blurred as we imagined how clearing for farming in the 1800s led to the flooding and erosion seen in 1927, and how those fields have grown up into today’s varied habitats.

So, when we ask the question “what is good quality fish and wildlife habitat on our land,” we should begin by “looking out the plane window”—adopting the birdseye view of the mosaic and patterns of forests and fields, as well as the history of an ever changing landscape.

A few landscape patterns jump out immediately. We are likely to see broad expanses of forests that haven’t been developed. They are bordered by roads and buildings, but include continuous mixes of natural communities, from evergreen and deciduous forests to meadows, streams and wetlands. I call these areas continuous habitat blocks and use them to represent biological diversity. The mix of varied topography, climate and physical

features (such as bedrock), produces niches in which more wildlife species can find homes.

So, bigger blocks of continuous habitat generally have more species diversity than smaller blocks. It isn’t an absolutely comprehensive measure since there are many rare species and significant natural communities that fit in small parcels. But this landscape perspective gives us a quick and easy sense of where diversity might be greatest.

Now these blocks often include working forests, and lands important for recreation and other values compatible with wildlife habitat. So we’re not defining lands that are free from human use, but simply lands that aren’t developed.

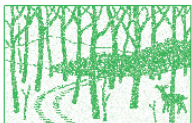
In many places in Vermont we see isolated forest “islands” surrounded by development and agriculture. This forest fragmentation is a problem, both reducing the size of the forest patches as well as degrading the quality. We’re still losing wildlife habitat as development continues to isolate forest blocks and as development creeps into forest blocks, hiding under the canopy but still reducing habitat quality.

Landscape context is, therefore, quite important. Habitat configuration is too. For example, an area of forest habitat that is highly irregular in shape, with a high degree of forest edge may be less functional for some species than forest habitat of the same acreage with a regular shape. So, as these continuous blocks become more isolated and have more edge, they become less diverse and functional.

From our birdseye view, we see many forests or continuous habitat blocks connected by narrow bands of greenspace. Sometimes these “connecting lands” follow river corridors, sometimes they are upland. Connecting

continued page 6





Quality Habitat - continued from page 5

lands (corridors) may include roads, lightly developed lands or even less suitable lands that still allow wildlife species to cross between big blocks of forests and wetlands. On this landscape scale, this connectivity function is incredibly important, effectively increasing the size of habitat blocks. Even though it might be clear that these connections aren't as good quality habitat as the bigger blocks, they are incredibly important functionally.

At a landscape scale, we often look at the needs of far-ranging species such as black bear or moose as representatives for a variety of the smaller-ranging species that live within the bear's home range. If we manage enough land in a way that allows for these far-ranging species to survive, we've also allowed for the host of smaller-ranging, often lesser-known, species within that block.

As we take our birdseye view, we must keep in mind that the history of land use has helped form this mosaic. For example, some of today's white pine stands were badly eroded sheep pasture in the 1800s and prior to that they were likely mixed hardwoods. This is a reminder that the landscape is constantly changing, reacting to people's decisions for hundreds of years now. The land use decisions we make today, that improve or degrade wildlife habitat quality, will be clearly visible in the patterns of our landscape tomorrow.

The next article of this series will explore habitat quality at a smaller scale, with a focus on the community level and what landowners can do to create or maintain good quality wildlife habitat.

Jens Hilke leads the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's Community Wildlife Program. He can be reached at jens.hilke@state.vt.us.

President's Column - continued from page 3

a relationship with Allard Lumber for FSC certified wood for its Frank Lloyd Wright furniture line. And there are a number of individuals turning out one-of-a-kind furniture of astonishingly high quality.

We didn't even touch on the forest-related recreation businesses in the area or the benefits of clean air, clean water and carbon sequestration.

Focusing on the area to organize a tour was an education as to how important forestry, in all its aspects, is to a region!

Put Blodgett, VWA President

Two Beetles - continued from page 4

We welcome reports of suspect insects or tree damage, which can be submitted to the Forest Biology Lab at 802-241-3606. Information on identification can be found at www.emeraldashborer.info and www.uvm.edu/albeetle/.

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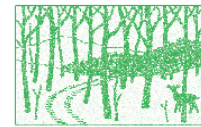
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TFOY Tour and Field Day Event!

Mark your calendars now so you won't miss the upcoming Tree Farm celebration on October 4 from 9am to 3pm at Dave, Sue, and Nate Potter's Tree Farm - our 2008 Tree Farm of the Year. Dave and a team of foresters has helped to create a program that promises to be educational and enjoyable.

The Potter Tree Farm spans almost 600 acres and three towns. The day's activities have been designed to give attendees a chance to see various aspects of land management in practice on the property.

There will be four stations "manned" by Nate Fice, Eric Hansen, Jim Philbrook, and Dave. The stations will focus on the following:

1. Wildlife and birds - wetland areas, beaver mitigation, habitat cost-share projects.
2. Sugar maple management - compare management of a sugar bush to management of sugar maple for timber.
3. White pine treated stand.
4. Historical perspective of long-term land ownership and management. There may also be a mechanized harvest of "old field pine" in progress, dependent on the loggers schedule.

Our very cordial hosts will provide lunch for attendees. There is no cost but pre-registration is required. You can download the registration at www.vermontwoodlands.org.

With Much Thanks...

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Senator Patrick Leahy for his continued support of Vermont's forest landowners and his commitment to sustainable forestry in Vermont. The Senator and his staff worked on behalf of our members and other forest landowners to pass the Farm Bill, with a Forestry Title and funding for forestry practices in EQIP. We have also received federal support in the way of grant funding through the Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation to help us grow both VWA and the Tree Farm programs in Vermont. Robert Paquin, who works for the Senator in his Montpelier office, has been our long-time liaison. He, along with Jenny Nelson from Senator Sanders office and Tricia Coates from Congressman Welch's office were in attendance at our 2008 Annual meeting. We are very fortunate in Vermont to have a congressional delegation and staff members who are accessible and responsive to our needs. Please take a moment to drop a note or an email and thank them yourself for their support.



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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 (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..... \$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

Foresters and loggers:

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Equipment suppliers:

- All suppliers..... \$100

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

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