

Working Forests Essay Contest

People love Vermont for its distinctive landscape. The patchwork of mountains and river valleys, camps and villages, farms and forests, speaks to a love of nature, community, and self-reliance. That we value these things is clearly visible in our support of farming, but the value of working forests remains a mystery to many. We want to change that.

Today, the loss of family dairy farms is being paralleled by the closing of sawmills and a decline in forest-based enterprises. Forestland that has, for years, been managed for sawlogs and fuel, is today going unmanaged, or worse, being parcelized and developed in a way that undermines the look and feel of Vermont.

It will be up to the next generation of forestland owners, and citizens, and voters, to continue, or reverse, this trend. We can, through good forestry, protect the ecological integrity of our forests while harvesting wood in a sustainable way, at the same time maintaining the working landscape and rural culture of the state. Or we can watch it slip away.

In light of this reality, the Vermont Woodlands Association is partnering with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the French Foundation and *Northern Woodlands* magazine to sponsor an essay contest for high school students.

As the next generation of forest stewards, we would like you to tell us, in 600 words or less, why working forests in Vermont are important and how they contribute to the quality of life of all Vermonters.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three essays selected by our panel of judges.

- First prize \$1,000
- Second prize \$750
- Third prize \$500

The winning essay will also appear in the spring 2013 issue of *Northern Woodlands Magazine*.

E-Mail entries of no more than 600 words to info@vermontwoodlands.org, or send them to Vermont Woodlands Association, PO Box 6004, Rutland, VT 05702 and include a daytime phone number. All entries must be received by January 1, 2013.

