

# Vermont Woodlands Association and Vermont Tree Farm Program

## A VOICE FOR HEALTHY FORESTS

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MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER



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**Photos:** VWA (front left), Kathy Beland (front right top),  
 Farooq Siddique (front right bottom), Kathy Beland (back/inset)

## AN INVITATION TO OUR MEMBERS

We welcome your submissions for the VWA and Tree Farm newsletter. If you have a story to tell or news of interest to share with other landowners, please send along so we may consider for future editions. We can accept articles, photos, or news tidbits via email to [info@vermontwoodlands.org](mailto:info@vermontwoodlands.org).

### Mission Statements:

**Vermont Woodlands** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to educate and advocate for the practices of productive stewardship, use, and enjoyment of Vermont's woodlands. We achieve our mission by delivering programs for landowners, the public, and policy makers that support forest health, forest economy, wildlife habitat, recreation, and enjoyment of forests for today and for generations to come.

*Vermont Woodlands Association does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious belief, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or political belief in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all persons.*

The **American Tree Farm System**, first organized in 1941, is the Nation's oldest certifier of privately owned forestland. Tree Farm members share a unique commitment to protecting watersheds and wildlife habitat, conserving soil, and providing recreation; and at the same time producing wood products on a sustainable basis. The Vermont Woodlands Association strives to educate, train, and support private forest landowners in sound management practices concerning wildlife, water, wood, and recreation. We do this by managing and enhancing the American Tree Farm System® Program in Vermont.



## NEWS FROM VWA

# Hearing Spring

by Kate Ziehm, president of Farmhouse Communications and advisor to VWA

This morning on my walk, I heard spring. Birds ...

When I walked by the farmer's woods, I noticed the blue tubing was up — the sap lines were ready to receive and transport the sap run. In the air, a hint: The very faint smell of earth, gently nudged at my nose on its way by.

It gave me an extra spring in my step and beat to my heart. It fed me hope; *spring is on its way*. The heavy cloak of winter will lift, and a new season will begin, as sure as every breath that we take.

For VWA, it is a signal for rebirth. Your board of directors is busy navigating your association through times of change. New board members. New leadership. New “hybrid” ways of learning. New issues on the landscape. New management objectives. *There is hope, there is spring.*

Over the past few months, I have seen firsthand how necessary it can be to tear everything down, lay all of the pieces out in front of you, and start putting things back together, one piece at a time. Some of the pieces fall in exactly the same space as before, while many don't. They are finding different space to occupy; their shape is changing to fill very important gaps. And some pieces are not going to make it back into the structure. Their purpose no longer is needed for the structure.

And for a while, it can look very messy: a disorganized population of items that don't seem to make sense, don't fit and have lost their spring to the original shape and form. What was the original shape and form? That too is feeling a little lost.

Like a woodland owner after the logger has made a visit, one can't help but wonder, did I do the right thing? It looks all torn apart and broken. Is this really going to be better for my forest?

The answer is yes. Yes to the cutdown, and yes to the mess.

With those yeses comes the birth of something new and fresh and more



equipped for the time. The time is now my friends. It's time to strategically plan, cut down and grow again — like a forest.

Spring is in the wings, almost ready to come out into the light. Embrace it, for all will look better in spring's light.

Sincerely,

*Kate*

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# If Not Wood, Then What?

by Allan Thompson

I'm awfully distracted these days by the idea of reserve forests. Reserve forests, as I describe them here, are synonymous with wilderness, old growth forests or wild forests; you pick. These are spaces where trees are allowed to grow old and forest ecosystems to develop without intervention. Without the churn of earth under the laden skidder or the slinging of sawdust. This concept is truly a wonderful place for our minds to linger.

The mind of forest professionals does more than just linger in this space. We recognize the value of large trees as producing, literally, the seeds of forest life, as carbon banks, and subterranean orators. We know, understand and can recite the natural trajectory of the forest system as poetic epics.

We know the value of old forest systems and their value in protecting soils from erosion and preventing the eutrophication of our waters. We know and understand the threat of climate change and the role trees — big, older trees in a forest setting — play in sequestering and storing carbon. We know the local and global threats our world faces and the value forests play in reducing those threats.

And we also know that the world needs wood. That you need wood, and

we can get it using sustainable forest management. We know if we return to a harvest 10 years later that even under the most aggressive harvest strategies, there will be a forest when we return. We know there are three basic forestry principles that can help: more forest, better forest and more use of wood products, especially where wood products are locally sourced and used in place of more intensive materials (steel, plastic, concrete).

We know the most trusted and reliable forest inventory program in the United States, the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA), shows that Vermont has more and better forest now than we've had since the FIA program started in 1948. From the FIA data, we also know that forests are growing faster than they are being cut and have been for at least the last 40 years. This means Vermont forests are comprised of older, larger trees than they have been since FIA started. We also know that because of how much private land there is in Vermont that you, the landowner in part, are the reason. (Find FIA data here: <https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/fia/data-tools/state-reports/VT/default.asp>)

We therefore know our working forests are working. That our advanced and continually evolving forest management

practices are working. Not just to fulfill our wood needs but for our wildlife, our water and for the next generation of Vermonters. Under your management and existing public policy, our forests are growing older and trees are getting larger.

The same FIA data set will also tell us that our forest area is shrinking. In 2019, the most recent available data, Vermont lost 12,000 acres of forest. Do you know how many of these acres were lost to sustainable forest management? 0.00 acres. Anyone familiar with forests knows that forest management doesn't cause a forest loss. When you hear people say forest management is synonymous with forest loss or destruction, please correct them. The forest loss is due to development and urbanization. You don't preserve forest renewal with a house or pavement. You preserve it with forestry. We have data to prove it.

The Reserve Forest narrative is taking up a lot of my attention because Vermonters are increasingly asked to consider that your forests — old, whole and unmanaged — are the perceived solutions to the global environmental threats. This simplification has a hidden danger and operates in contradiction to all available data, forest trajectories, current economic realities and our

continued demand for wood. But more importantly, these ideas remove us from the land and the land from us. These concepts support the idea that we should be living next to forests but does not support a culture of living with the forest and sourcing local, sustainably harvested and renewable wood products.

The danger is exemplified by this paraphrased quote from a landowner: “I’d like to postpone my planned forest management activity because I want to manage my forest for old growth conditions and climate change. Plus, we might build a couple houses.” Culture withered, forest gone, hoped for solution to global environmental threats, gone.

How does this make any sense? How does a landowner both value forest, perceive environmental threats but ignore the impacts of residential development on forests, and how can we counter the double whammy of culture and forest loss at the same decision point?

First, a very clear recognition that forests, in any state, provide value. Big, old, young, and developing and managed and that public policy that supports all forest conditions is desired. Second is the recognition that our forests are growing older and with larger trees with existing public policy; our forests, working forests, are indeed working. Incentives should be used to target areas that are not working and need support like working forest

infrastructure and forest culture. Third, that you, Vermont and the world needs wood. Not cutting trees won’t change that. It just forces other forests to be cut harder and potentially with less sustainable methods or worse use more intensive materials. Last is that we need to be careful how we pursue reserve forests. We have to be careful to not disassociate ourselves from the actual forests or we’ll lose both: the forest and the forest culture.

So please, go associate a friend with some woods. Get them experienced with the forest culture, sustainable forest management, working lands aesthetic and people. A woods life is not simple or convenient, but damn is it good. And remember; “If not wood, then what?” (Kathleen Wanner, 2022)



## Vermont Woodlands Consulting Foresters

Committed to promoting and strengthening the long-term conservation and management of Vermont’s natural resources.

*VWA Consulting Foresters are licensed by the State of Vermont and meet all continuing education requirements.*

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## NEWS FROM VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION

# Building Forest Resilience to Invasive Species

by Elizabeth Spinney, *Invasive Plant Coordinator, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation*

As the impacts of climate change continue to become clearer, the importance of forest resilience — how well forests maintain their *function* in the face of a change in *structure* (like with disturbance) — remains paramount. Protecting our forest resources, and the species and habitat they support, from being transformed by disturbance is a *long-term stewardship goal*. In the Northeast, we now recognize that invasive plant management is intertwined with forest management and must be incorporated to meet this stewardship goal.

The 2017 Vermont Forest Action Plan ([link at end](#)) outlines strategies to meet this long-term goal, among others, to ensure that Vermont's forests are healthy and provide ecological services

while meeting the economic needs of Vermonters. The plan identifies that the disturbance caused by invasive plants is a threat to the regeneration of many forest plants, including important tree species, and the overall resilience of forested land. In this context, the presence of invasive plants constitutes a change in forest *structure*. A healthy forest isn't marked by the absence of invasive plants, rather by its *resilience*, or ability to maintain its *function* (its ecological and economic services) as its *structure* changes due to the presence of invasive plants. For already invaded forests, ongoing management of invasive plants is part of the long-term work needed to support forest resilience.

Climate change effects are complicating our current invasive plant management strategies. Best practices for managing invasive plants rely on implementing management efforts around the timing of seasonal changes — *phenology* — of invasive plants. Through scientific research, we know that the timing of these seasonal changes is shifting as temperatures warm and growing season lengths change. Currently, we lack any Vermont-specific baseline phenology data for invasive plants, so VT Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) is embarking on a new project that seeks to create a dataset of invasive plant phenology.

In the next few years, FPR will be collecting accurate and relevant phenology data to track invasive plant phenology across the state. The goal is to provide seasonal updates designed to inform Vermonters about the phenology trends of invasive plants to best time management activities. As the FPR phenology project progresses, data will be included in the monthly FPR Insect & Disease Reports ([link at end](#)), as well as distributed to landowners, managers and other resource professionals.

Since invasive plants are a landscape-scale issue (plants don't care about fences or boundaries) and Vermont's landscape is mostly privately owned, statewide forest resilience can only be realized through the actions of the many. This can include integrating invasive plant management into your forest management plans, enrolling in the Use Value Appraisal Program ([link at end](#)) or seeking funding from EQIP ([link at end](#)) to support the work to manage invasive plants.

You can also pay it forward by taking part in FPR's community science efforts, including observing invasive plant phenology with our statewide project or participating in UVM's tracking projects like identifying Tree-of-Heaven locations in Vermont ([link at end](#)).



Invasive honeysuckle greening up in early spring, before most locally evolved understory plants. (FPR Staff)

These combined efforts will serve the greater purpose of informing how to care for our forests in a changing

climate. If we understand what is happening now, we are better positioned to pick up on changing trends and be

proactive in how we manage invasive plants as part of our work to build up forest resilience in the future.

## Useful links:

Vermont Forest Action Plan:

[https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest\\_and\\_Forestry/Vermont\\_Forests/Library/2017\\_VT\\_ForestActionPlan.pdf](https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Vermont_Forests/Library/2017_VT_ForestActionPlan.pdf)

Use Value Appraisal Program:

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/UseValueAppraisal>

## EQIP

Check out the September '21 VWA Newsletter:

[https://www.vermontwoodlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/VWA\\_VFA\\_Newsletter\\_Fall2021\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://www.vermontwoodlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/VWA_VFA_Newsletter_Fall2021_DIGITAL.pdf)

And also, this website:

<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/get-involved/partner-in-conservation/equip-for-wildlife-habitat>

FPR Insect & Disease Reports: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/forest-health/current-forest-health-issues-and-updates>

Invasive Plant Phenology & Tracking Projects:

<https://vtinvasives.org/adult-volunteer-opportunities>

## Deep Dive

Learn more about what management challenges we'll face in the Northeast: <https://www.riscnetwork.org/management-challenges>

Learn more about where to start with invasive plant management:

[https://mywoodlot.com/index.php?option=com\\_zoo&task=item&item\\_id=489](https://mywoodlot.com/index.php?option=com_zoo&task=item&item_id=489)

Learn more about why eradication is often not the goal for already invaded forests: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/UW392>

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## NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE

# New VTFC Members and Grant Activity Updates

by Kathy Beland, *Tree Farm Program Administrator*

As my woodpile gets smaller, the days and those afternoon snow shadows get longer, and even though the prediction is for six more weeks of winter, spring is coming!

With the inevitable change in the weather comes some changes for Vermont Tree Farm. As I take over the reins as Tree Farm program administrator from Kathleen Wanner, I am in awe of her ability to balance a ton of spinning plates all at once. Please be patient with me as I try to absorb information from her to help keep Vermont Tree Farm running smoothly. The best news in that information is that Kathleen is going to stay on as a member of the committee. We also have some additional new faces to add to that list!

### Welcome to our new members:

- John Manchester, Tree Farmer from Hanover, N.H., with land in Sharon, Vt.
- Andrea Shortsleeve, Private Lands Habitat Biologist with Vermont Fish and Wildlife in Barre, Vt.
- Katharine Servideo, Forest Economy Specialist with Vermont Forests, Parks & Recreation, based in Montpelier, Vt.
- Tessa McGann, Forester with Long View Forest, Brattleboro, Vt. Tessa

was on our committee previously, but stepped away as she was working on her master's degree.

- Ron Millard, Tree Farmer in Hancock, Vt., hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio. Ron is taking on treasurer duties for Tree Farm as he has for VWA.

All of our new committee members offer unique experiences and a diverse knowledge base, adding to our already active committee! We are looking forward to getting to know all of them better.

### Exciting American Forest Foundation Grant news

Vermont Tree Farm has received numerous grants over the years, allowing us to work on a variety of educational opportunities as well as help to make our program work better for our Tree Farmers and their foresters. We received a grant from American Forest Foundation in 2021 with the overwhelming title of "Digital Conservation Tracking Grant," with the purpose of creating an interactive map and geospatial database to help track activities on Tree Farms across Vermont. With this information, we can provide ways to measure, report and verify conservation impact Tree Farmers have within the State of

Vermont, and in turn share this with the American Forest Foundation, and American Tree Farm System.

On a more local level, and more personal for Vermont Tree Farmers, the map allows a landowner who maybe sees a Tree Farm sign on a back road, to go the map and find out whose Tree Farm that might be, and potentially connect with another Tree Farmer. I believe one of the best benefits of being a Tree Farmer is connecting with others who have similar interests. We are hoping this broadens your connections. It will also assist the committee in planning activities and connecting resources for educational opportunities.

The development of a database of Tree Farm management activities, supplied by Tree Farmers across the state, is also part of this grant. As Tree Farmers add information to this database highlighting their Tree Farm projects, they are including descriptions of the activities and photographs as well. Anyone accessing this information could locate the Tree Farm property on the map, and possibly connect with another Tree Farmer to take a peek at their work.

The Vermont Tree Farm Committee also hopes to use these tools to measure impact and implementation of



management on certified Tree Farms. By the time you read this article in the newsletter, we should have scheduled a brief tutorial webinar on how to use these additions to our website. Please contact us if you have issues accessing these additions.

We are hopeful both of these tools also will help to expand our outreach to woodland owners across our wonderfully wooded Vermont. Happy Spring!



### Sign up for the new Forest Carbon eNewsletter

[www.northeastforestcarbon.org](http://www.northeastforestcarbon.org) is the brand new website of the *Securing Northeast Forest Carbon Program* that INRS' Charlie Levesque is heading up in his role working for the North East State Foresters Association. The effort, funded through a USDA Forest Service grant, seeks to train thousands in everything forest carbon in an effort to secure forest carbon on working forestlands in the northeast.

For more information, contact Charlie Levesque at [levesque@inrslc.com](mailto:levesque@inrslc.com) or 603-588-3272.



## Welcome New VWA Members

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## NEWS FROM AUDUBON VERMONT

# Forest Regeneration - With Birds in Mind

by Steve Hagenbuch, *Senior Conservation Biologist and Forester, Audubon Vermont*

Over the years, I have had the distinct pleasure of visiting with hundreds of people who are making management decisions affecting Vermont's forested landscape. Frequently, the conversations around managing the forest with birds and other wildlife in mind hit on a common question: is it better to do nothing and let the forest to its own devices, or is active management, including the harvesting of trees, an appropriate choice? While there is no right or wrong answer to that question, invariably the conclusion to meeting a variety of forest stewardship goals is that in many situations, active forest

management is not only desirable for enhancing habitat, it can be a necessity.

Over the next couple of months, thousands of migratory birds will arrive back in the forests of Vermont after spending the winter in places as far away as South America. Once here, they will seek out suitable habitat providing food and cover for raising the next generation of their species. What does suitable habitat look like? Some of the most commonly known habitat features are standing dead trees (snags), cavity trees and woody material on the forest floor. These forest attributes help support

birds such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Dark-eyed Junco, and Winter Wren.

Less emphasis is given to forest regeneration as a critical habitat component. Well-established regeneration, in the form of seedlings and saplings, contribute to forest structure. In the language of habitat, this is often referred to as understory and midstory, respectively. These two layers of the forest provide necessary nesting and foraging sites for birds ranging from Black-throated Blue Warbler and Wood Thrush to Chestnut-sided Warbler and Veery. Which of these species benefit through regenerating the forest depends to a large degree on the overall forest stand conditions. Forest management, and more specifically the silvicultural treatments being implemented, helps determine that outcome.

There are a variety of silvicultural treatments intended to regenerate a forest stand. Selection of the most appropriate method is guided by multiple factors including forest type, site conditions, desired tree species to regenerate and in our case, the bird species targeted for habitat enhancement. For the purposes of this exploration, we will lead with the birds.



*Chestnut-sided Warbler (Shirley Donald, Audubon Photography Awards)*



### Black-throated Blue Warbler, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager

These species belong to a cohort of mature forest nesting birds. They typically nest in northern hardwood and mixedwood forests with a high, closed canopy. Black-throated Blue Warblers seek out dense pockets of understory vegetation (seedlings and saplings less than 5- to 6-feet in height) in which to place their nest, whereas Wood Thrush occupy the midstory (saplings 6- to 20-feet in height). Scarlet Tanager nest higher in the forest canopy than most other birds and show a preference for oaks and hemlock.

Understanding this helps in deciding what type(s) of regeneration treatments can help meet our interests. Maintaining a significant amount of the trees that create the high, closed canopy is important, however there is also a need to create some small openings in the canopy in order for sunlight to reach the forest floor and promote regeneration, and ultimately, the understory and midstory so important to high-quality bird habitat. Single tree and small group selection, with group sizes up to 1 acre, are common uneven-aged silvicultural systems that can help achieve the desired regeneration goals.



*Patch cut regeneration providing young forest habitat. (Audubon Vermont)*

Ecologically based silvicultural systems are becoming more common. In this category, expanding-gap irregular shelterwood, with gaps up to 1-acre in size, shows great promise for developing the forest structural conditions supporting birds. Do not expect great habitat the first year after harvest however. It can take three or more years before regeneration to really become established.

### Chestnut-sided Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Mourning Warbler

These species belong to a cohort of young forest nesting birds. They typically nest in northern hardwood and mixedwood forests where an open canopy over an area of at least 1 acre with plenty of sunlight hitting the forest floor. As a result, vegetative growth tends to be very dense and “scrubby.” In the first few years after harvest, raspberry and blackberry may be dominant. This is ok as Mourning

Warbler thrive in these conditions. Over time, as tree seedlings establish and grow in height, the habitat conditions get even better and support a greater variety of bird species, such as Chestnut-sided Warbler. This desirable young forest habitat is fleeting however. Quality conditions peak around 8 to 12 years post-harvest. By 15 to 20 years, the low dense vegetation begins to get shaded out. As it goes away, so does this cohort of birds.

The regeneration treatments to create these conditions can best be described as being more intensive. Whereas smaller openings in the forest canopy were the key to the mature forest bird community, larger openings, greater than 1 acre, are more suitable for young forest nesting birds. Group selection (1 to 2 acres), patch cuts (2 to 5 acres), and clearcuts (5-plus acres) are all appropriate silvicultural methods. In addition to creating nesting habitat, these larger areas of regeneration are also used by mature forest nesting birds as a place to bring their young later in the summer. This is in part due to the high amount of protective cover as well as often-abundant fruit resources, a critical food resource leading up to fall migration.

Regardless of what bird species are being considered through forest regeneration practices, it is always important to engage with a licensed forester. These trained professionals will help ensure that management objectives are being met using the most appropriate methods. A listing of Vermont Woodlands Association licensed foresters can be found at <https://www.vermontwoodlands.org/guide-to-current-use/#licensed-consulting-foresters-list>.

For more information and resources on forest birds, be sure to visit the Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers website <http://www.woodsandwildlife.org/>.



*Regeneration in an expanding-gap irregular shelterwood harvest at the Green Mountain Audubon Center. (Toby Alexander)*



## NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE

# A Tree Farmer's Story of Fisher Nest Boxes: Conservation at Work

by **Kimberly Royar**, *Furbearer Project Leader, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources*,  
and **Brian O'Gorman**, *Tree Farmer*



*Although today fishers (Pekania pennanti) are abundant throughout Vermont, they were extirpated in the 1800s due to extensive land clearing and unregulated harvest. (Farooq Siddique)*

Many wildlife species rely on standing dead or dying trees for food, nesting and cover. Natural den trees, especially those with cavities that may be in the vicinity of water, are valuable for everything from waterfowl, woodpeckers and owls to bats, squirrels, marten, porcupine, raccoon and fisher.

Landowners can improve habitat for many wildlife species by retaining standing dead and dying trees in their woodlot. If possible, woodlot owners should manage for at least six living cavity trees or snags per acre with one greater than 18 inches in diameter and three larger than 16 inches in diameter. The priority is for hardwood trees over softwood to extend the viability of the tree.

On lands where natural standing dead trees are limited, manmade nest boxes can be erected to subsidize the number of live den trees. Artificial 'nest' boxes have been constructed and erected to enhance habitat for many wildlife species, from bluebirds to bats, and have been used in Minnesota for fisher to compensate for the lack of large diameter cavity trees (>20 inches DBH (diameter at breast height)). The University of Minnesota completed a pilot study in 2019 that found that only 2 percent of 10,000 trees surveyed were large enough for fisher to use. The study documented use of the specially designed fisher nest boxes by barred owls, flying squirrels and other rodents, raccoons and fishers.

In Vermont, a landowner and Tree Farmer in Bennington County, Brian

O'Gorman, is experimenting with nest boxes for fishers (*Pekania pennanti*). Although today fishers are abundant throughout Vermont, they were extirpated in the 1800s due to extensive land clearing and unregulated harvest. They were reintroduced in the 1950s and 1960s by the Forest, Parks, and Recreation Department to control porcupine populations and continue to play an important role as a forest predator. They primarily reside in coniferous or mixed hardwood forests and exhibit a particular preference for areas with diverse structure, such as that found in an uneven-aged forest containing snags and multiple fallen trees (Noonan, 2006). These areas not only provide ample denning opportunities but also, more importantly, offer higher concentrations and varieties of prey.



*A maternal fisher den box in Bennington County is pictured. Note the reinforced den opening to prevent predation by red squirrels and cannibalism of fisher kits by male fisher. Leaning pole adapted from trapping methods to aid in access. This is approximately 10 feet in height in a sugar maple.*

Fishers use multiple large trees with cavities as den sites (Powell, 1982). Research in Maine found that females used one to five natal dens between March and June. Ninety-four percent of the trees were hardwoods, 52% of which were aspen (Paragi et al., 1996). In British Columbia, maternal fisher den boxes have proven to enhance the fisher population in areas dedicated to industrial forestry.





*The Jack Pines Pirates OHV Club and Vermont Trappers Association putting up a den box.*

O’Gorman manages a 300-plus-acre Tree Farm that, like many Vermont properties, was once a pasture for Delano sheep. After reforestation, it had been heavily logged by the previous owners. Since purchasing the property in southern Bennington County, O’Gorman enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal program (UVA or “Current Use”) and has been managing it according to a forest management plan. He has worked with his Vermont forester and a logger primarily for sugar maple production but also to improve and diversify the property for wildlife by planting butternut seedlings and red

oak acorns, protecting and enhancing mast and old growth areas, and erecting artificial fisher nest boxes.

O’Gorman built three boxes for fisher with the assistance of Vermont Trappers Association member Al Zander, according to plans from British Columbia, Canada (Brinoni, 2015). O’Gorman and Zander distributed and erected two of the boxes into areas on his property, and the other onto Zander’s, with promising habitat and obvious fisher tracks and sign (Zielinski et al., 1995) with the help of a local Vermont ATV Sportsman’s Association (VASA) club. He has outfitted each with a camera set-up, baits and lures, so he can monitor the comings and goings of the species using the boxes. So far, there is no evidence of use of the boxes by fisher, but O’Gorman will continue his efforts in hopes of improving habitat on his property for fisher and other wildlife species.

*Kim Royar is a wildlife biologist with Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.*

*Brian O’Gorman is a Tree Farmer and a member of the VT Trappers Association, and he encourages sportsmen to spend \$15 and purchase a Vermont Habitat Stamp.*

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Many generous donors have already contributed to our Memorial and Honorary Funds, naming those who touched their lives in special ways. You may see your loved ones in this list.

## Contributions to the Memorial Fund have been received for:

Thomas Beland  
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Stoner Tree Farm  
Kathleen Wanner

*If there is someone special you would like to remember or honor with a donation, please send your gift to VWA, indicating who you wish to remember or honor so we can add your loved ones to this list.*



## NEWS FROM VERMONT LOGGER EDUCATION TO ADVANCE PROFESSIONALISM (LEAP) PROGRAM

# Building a Relationship Between VWA and VT LEAP

by David Birdsall, *Executive Director, VT LEAP Program*

We all enjoy our Vermont woodlands, and it is great to see the pride and stewardship that Vermont Woodland Association (VWA) landowners have for their woodlots. We are lucky to be living in a region of the world where we can subscribe to the well-used term: “Multiple Use.” Whether one owns 5 acres or 500 acres, Vermont’s woodlands have the ability to offer a large range of options for management while providing valuable ecosystem services.

How many of us recreate in our woods, enjoying walking, snowshoeing, skiing, hunting, bird watching, gathering edibles or just the pleasure of knowing there is a special place just outside our doors?

The woods can offer us the ability to stay warm during our (hopefully continuing) historically cold winters. The enjoyment of gathering our own firewood, or just knowing that our heat source can be partially or completely resourced from our backyards, can feel better than money in the bank.

Historically, and even more so now than in the past, we are seeing forest landowners ranking wildlife habitat as a major goal for their woods. Keeping these habitats healthy and present in

our landscapes is an admirable task. The whole world will benefit from this! Helping to keep our tracts of woods intact and free from subdivision and knowing that this can also have the major benefit of making our woods healthier and more productive, is a fantastic goal. By being a good steward of the forest, we can reap a financial benefit from our woodlots.

Drawing your attention to the LEAP logo, you will notice the relationship or link illustrated between loggers, foresters and landowners. Most of you are familiar with the ‘Fire Triangle.’ I learned about the fire triangle when I was in forestry school. The three components of the fire triangle are fuel, oxygen and heat. Without all three components, a fire can neither begin nor be sustained. The LEAP logo is modeled after the fire triangle. LEAP’s vision is to have loggers, landowners and foresters working and communicating with one another to produce the best outcomes possible. Isn’t that the ideal scenario that we should all be striving for? Where foresters, loggers and landowners are actively engaged and working together?

The Vermont Logger Education to Advance Professionalism Program (VT

LEAP) is a not-for-profit educational organization that strives to remain non-political. LEAP recognizes that the logging profession is an essential link between Vermont woodlands and the forest industry. Along with landowners and foresters, loggers are partners in managing our forests for wood, water, wildlife and recreation. Vermont’s forests have a legacy of providing these resources and are capable of sustaining these public benefits if properly managed. We see education as offering a positive approach, bringing everyone together to focus on our common goals. The LEAP program is an instrument to encourage life-long learning among loggers. We strive to promote professionalism through education and instill a stewardship ethic among loggers. The outcome of this endeavor, we envision, will be a well-managed and productive forest landscape and a positive public perception of the logging profession.

To be a certified Vermont LEAP logger, one must complete workshops in the following areas: Professionalism in Forestry, Ethics in Forestry, Introduction to Managing and Using Forest Ecosystems, Advanced Logger Safety, Game of Logging, and Mechanical Logging Safety. To



maintain certification, loggers complete workshops on a number of topics including but not limited to Wildlife Habitat, Surveys and Boundaries, Forest Technologies, Business Management, Understanding and Managing Exotic Invasives, etc.

I am hoping this article can be part of a long running association with VWA. As I mentioned in my first sentence of this article, it is great to see the pride and sense of stewardship of many in VWA. Much of the work that makes us feel good about being a steward is the strengthening of this logo's triangle.

For more about Vermont Logger Education to Advance Professionalism, (VT LEAP), visit [www.vtleap.com](http://www.vtleap.com).

*David Birdsall is the Executive Director of the VT LEAP Program, Co-owner and Lead Trainer for Northeast Woodland Training, a Licensed VT Forester, woodland owner and in his early years a logger.*

## Attention VWA Foresters

Need help staying in touch with your clients?  
Let us help you!

### What is the Forester eNews?

The Forester eNews is a new 2-year pilot product designed for VWA Consulting Foresters to keep in touch with their own clients. It's branded for your business and features your content. VWA can subsidize the cost and retain option to add VWA branded content in the closing blocks (see costs below).

### Who manages the Forester eNews?

Morning Ag Clips is a consulting firm that provides services to VWA. The MAC team will work with you to develop your customized eNews and manage your distribution lists confidentially.

### What is your time Commitment?

It's really up to you but with the template MAC provides, it should take no more than 2 hours per issue to create a personalized message for your clients.

### What is the eNews value?

VWA believes in long-term landowner-forester relationships but "Forest Time" has a way of getting in the way. We think that this product will help you maintain that long-term relationship with landowners, even when you don't see them for many years. The Forester eNews won't let your clients forget your name between visits.

### What is the cost?

- \$250 for initial set up
  - \$150 per issue, with your business content
- OR
- \$200 per issue, with MAC-generated content

You choose frequency: 12, 6, or 4 times per year. VWA will contribute \$75 to the cost of each issue for the right to include VWA-branded content.

### Who sees the Forester eNews?

Average open rate -> 54%  
during 5-month sample period

### Want to learn more?

Contact Stephanie at  
[stephanie@morningagclips.com](mailto:stephanie@morningagclips.com)



### Are you a VWA member who is NOT a tree farmer? Now is a great time to enroll.

#### Do you:

- Have a desire to leave the land better than you found it
- Own 10 or more forested acres
- Have a management plan, or wish to have one
- Have a stewardship ethic that makes you proud

Tree Farm may be for you. Join now as a "Pioneer" while you prepare for full certification. VWA will waive the \$30 annual administrative fee for the coming year.

If your plan already meets the Tree Farm standard, you may be eligible to enroll as a certified Tree Farm – and we'll still waive the fee. Call the office to get information on how to enroll or check with your forester.

**SYNERGY – by definition:**  
the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

**SYNERGY – by example:**  
VT WOODLANDS AND  
VT TREE FARM



### Are you a Tree Farmer who is NOT a VWA member? Now is a great time to join.

#### Do you:

- Have a desire to leave the land better than you found it
- Wish to learn more about sound forest management
- Want to be part of an organization that advocates for private landowners
- Have a stewardship ethic that makes you proud

Vermont Woodlands Association may be for you. Join now and get your first year of membership, with your compliments.

Call the office to arrange for our complimentary one-year membership. Add your voice to our nearly 900 woodland owner members.

Kathy Beland: 802-747-7900 or email [director@vermontwoodlands.org](mailto:director@vermontwoodlands.org)



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

*Good for you. Good for our forests.®*

SFI-00001

## NEWS FROM SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

# SFI 2022 Standards and Rules

by **Ed Larson**, *SFI VT Coordinator*, and **Bill Sayre**, *Chair SFI VT*



Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certification is a powerful tool to provide customers and producers of

forest products with the tools and guidance they need to make responsible supply chain decisions and achieve responsible forest management goals.

The SFI standards help us achieve our mission to advance sustainability through forest-focused collaboration, and these new standards include a variety of updates that help us address

global challenges. With 370 million acres/150 million hectares certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard, and tens of millions of acres positively influenced by the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard, SFI is working to create solutions at the scale needed to help protect the environment, combat climate change, reduce fire risks, and promote dialogue and cooperation.

## SFI 2022 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD OBJECTIVES



**OBJECTIVE 1. BIODIVERSITY IN FIBER SOURCING**



**OBJECTIVE 2. ADHERENCE TO BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**



**OBJECTIVE 3. USE OF QUALIFIED RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS, QUALIFIED LOGGING PROFESSIONALS AND SFI-CERTIFIED LOGGING COMPANIES**



**OBJECTIVE 4. LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**



**OBJECTIVE 5. FORESTRY RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**



**OBJECTIVE 6. TRAINING AND EDUCATION**



**OBJECTIVE 7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LANDOWNER OUTREACH**



**OBJECTIVE 8. PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**



**OBJECTIVE 9. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC REPORTING**



**OBJECTIVE 10. MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT**



**OBJECTIVE 11. AVOID CONTROVERSIAL SOURCES**





Over the last two years, SFI has engaged in extensive consultations as part of our goal of continuous improvement in our standards and guidance. We gathered input from more than 2,300 stakeholders from the conservation community, Indigenous communities, the forest products sector, brand owners, private forest landowners and public forest managers, government agencies, trade associations, landowner associations, academia, and the public, and have released new requirements in a variety of areas.

1. **The SFI Climate Smart Forestry Objective** requires SFI-certified organizations to ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.
2. **The SFI Fire Resilience and Awareness Objective** requires SFI-certified organizations to limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.

The new Objective 8, Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights, ensure respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge, and are aligned with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. When procuring fiber, avoiding controversial sources is critical to achieving sustainability targets. Recognizing this, SFI also developed a new definition of controversial sources and expanded requirements for a due diligence system to assess the risk of controversial sources entering a certified organization's supply chain.







# VERMONT TREE FARM INSPECTOR'S LOG

## Groundhog Day Musings

by Kathy Beland, Co-chair VT Tree Farm Committee and Inspector Trainer

I didn't become a forester to sit at a computer, popping my head up out of my groundhog hole to see if winter is over. I loved being outside in the woods, walking along a stream and breathing in the earthy smell under hemlocks and maple, pine and oak, birch and beech. I enjoy experiencing the change of seasons, early spring ephemerals, spring beauty and wild leek, and the change from golden hued leaves to summertime green perfectly waiting for shorter days and fall colors, and then watching trees rest, while we navigate snowfall. And all of that happened while working!

However, it seems more and more of my time is spent attached to a screen of some sort. I think we have all suffered through this, especially with the unending Zoom meetings added to our world since 2019. Perhaps Spock said it best: "Computers make excellent and efficient servants, but I have no wish to serve under them." It does seem some days, that is exactly what we do!

As we finish up inventories, assessing possible impacts of our management activities, forest health issues, deer browse impact on regeneration, or just being content with the positive results of an expanding gap group selection, we will still document all of that on a computer. And even though it is sometimes the most infuriating

electronic object in the world, it is also a useful tool.

As you write and update your management plans, and prepare maps and make decisions for the future of a forest, don't forget about Tree Farm! Although the 2021 standards did not have many changes from the previous set, you still may need to add certain items to your plan updates to meet the current Tree Farm standards. Please take the time to use your toolkit and recheck those standards on our Tree Farm website! Yes, I am asking you to go to your computer!

- [Inspector Card](#)
- [Landowner Pamphlet \(Legacy for Your Land\)](#)
- [VWA brochure](#)
- [Tree Farm brochure](#)
- [2021 Standards Book](#)
- [Toolkit Letter to Inspectors](#)
- [Pioneer Tree Farm Letter to Inspectors](#)
- [021 Inspection form](#)
- [Directions to complete 021 form](#)
- [Submitting 021 Inspection form](#)
- [2021 Addendum](#)
- [Vermont-specific information for 2021 ATFS Standards](#)
- [FORI Guidance and Language for Tree Farm Management Plans](#)
- [ATFS database](#)

As part of that inventory and plan update, you can also take a few more minutes — yes, on your computer — to complete an 021 Inspection form. And

yes, I am also expecting you to submit that electronically to ATFS, as we are not accepting handwritten inspections any longer. If you run into trouble, email or call me, and I will answer either on my computer or on my smart phone — also a computer. Gahhhhhh!!!! I can't escape it.

And for all of the inspectors still needing to become certified to the new standards, you can do that online as well at <https://atfsdatabase.org/atfs/login.jsp>. Check the Vermont toolkit for resources to login if you can't remember one of your many passwords to access this site to complete your training.

We will be hosting a webinar in March on completing the 021, since there were changes to that form with the new standards as well.

All of this does seem like tedium compared to being able to go to work in the woods, using a pencil and paper with a map in your hand, and not worrying about laptops and iPads, apps and smartphones and battery life. But alas, it is part of our world, and has become a useful part of managing the forests of Vermont, and keeping track of Tree Farm activities.

Even with all of those benefits, I would rather just open the door, go outside, and be in the woods. I think I will go there, now.



## WOMEN OWNING WOODLANDS

# Women Owning Woodlands (WOW)

By Kathleen Wanner

What is Women Owning Woodlands – or WOW? Why should we have programs focused on women woodland owners? There's lots of healthy debate around this question, and I guess I can only share my opinion on why VWA is an active partner in the WOW network steering committee.

Forestry is a man's world. That's not to say we have no women forestry

professionals. We do. But by the numbers, it's a small percentage. We also have a growing segment of women woodland owners, yet, if you look around the room at a forestry workshop, how many women do you see? And, in a workshop have you ever heard the introduction ... "I'm Bob and this here is my wife..." "Or, if you're "Bob" have you ever said that yourself? So as not to lead you astray, WOW

is not for women ONLY but rather women focused. Men are welcome. But you could become "this here's my husband." Just kidding!

Good forestry doesn't change by gender. What may change is delivery

**WOW** continued on pg. 23

## Land Investment Properties - Experience the Value



### WOODLOT/HOMESITE 70 acres in Cabot, VT

#### Molly Road Forest:

Professionally managed, high quality maple timber resource with sugarbush possibility. Access and site offers private location to build a camp or home. Gentle to moderate terrain with interesting rock outcrops at northern end of land.

**\$159,000**



### TIMBER INVESTMENT +/- 287 Acres, Orange VT

#### Orange Oxbow Forest:

Ideally suited as a long-term timber investment whose maple stands have been professionally managed since the early 1960's. The standing timber value of \$399k well exceeds the value of the asking price creating a smart purchase. Developed access and stream with conservation easement in place.

**\$280,000**



### TIMBERLAND 3,568 acres, Worcester, VT

#### Eagle Ledge Timberlands:

This investment offers attractive species composition, highly-stocked stands, positive cash flow, and excellent potential for asset appreciation. The timber inventory sets timber value at \$5,458,000. Conservation easement allows for development of multiple camp sites.

**\$3,270,000**



### OUTSTANDING MAPLE 506 acres, Coventry, VT

#### Burbank Forest:

Exceptional timber resource from decades of gently managed stands. High quality sugar maple growing stock, sawlogs and veneer characterizes this forest. The property's conservation easement creates an asking price well below the value of the standing timber

**\$755,000**



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Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

## NEWS FROM VERMONT SUSTAINABLE JOBS FUND

# Making a Case for Community-Scale Forestry

by Christine McGowan, *Vermont Forest Industry Network*



With a mindset of staying small, a sawmill in Fletcher sees wood products as the next “go local” movement. (Photo by Erica Houskeeper)

Tucker Riggs, owner of Laughing Stock Farm (LSF) Forest Products in Fletcher, is busier than he’s ever been. As the pandemic and resulting supply chain issues more than doubled the price of lumber, Vermonters used to buying their lumber from Lowe’s or Home Depot sought out alternatives — and found much more than competitive pricing at LSF.

“People like to talk with the person that’s sawing the wood,” said Riggs, “and they like knowing that the wood was grown just down the road from their property. They like that it was cut down by someone with

kids in the same school and that they can buy their firewood from the same family



Owner Tucker Riggs says community-scale milling is an intentional part of his business plan and something he’s passionate about preserving. (Photo by Erica Houskeeper)

next fall. That connection is lost when you buy wood products that were shipped out of the state or country for processing, and then shipped back for sale.”

Riggs and his father, Terry, founded LSF Forest Products in 2003 with a nod to the family’s farm — Laughing Stock Farm. For Riggs, working the land is part of his family’s tradition, as is a good sense of humor. As he tells it, his father is a “character and a wonderful guy, always jumping into things headfirst.” His parents got into farming in the 1970s when they bought a piece of land in Jericho. His mother, Mary Lynn, was a teacher, and his father ran a construction company while the family raised livestock on the farm. The land turned out to be mostly swamp and, after a short experiment milking goats, Terry’s in-laws, who owned a pristine dairy farm in Richmond, jokingly named their son-in-law’s farm Laughing Stock Farm. The name stuck.

Despite the fact that business at LSF is up more than 60 percent, Riggs has no intention of growing much larger than he is today. Community-scale milling is an intentional part of his business plan and something he’s passionate about preserving.

“Part of it is tradition,” said Riggs, “but a big part of it is about preserving our rural economy and not being reliant on global supply chains.”





Employee Lucy Rogers is Vermont state representative for Waterville and Cambridge. When Rogers isn't at work, she's at the statehouse advocating for policies that support rural economic development and Vermont's working landscape. (Photo by Erica Houskeeper)

### Local mills as a conservation tool

One of Riggs' employees is Lucy Rogers, Vermont state representative for Waterville and Cambridge. When Rogers isn't at LSF, she's at the statehouse advocating for policies that support rural economic development and Vermont's working landscape.

"Big picture, local sawmills are a conservation tool," says Rogers. "Vermont has an amazing forested landscape and a unique challenge in that most of it is privately owned. It's expensive for landowners to keep forested land as forest. They need a market that allows them to log their land and offset some of those expenses."

Close to 80 percent of Vermont's forested landscape, more than 3.5 million acres, is privately owned. LFS purchases most logs from within a 30-mile radius of the mill, currently buying from local loggers including Ben Lepasquer, Rob Lacasse, Dana Decker and Dave Cushing. Established in 2003, the bulk of LSF's customers are within an hour-and-a-half drive of the mill. About 70 percent of sales are to timber framers in Vermont and New York, including Sills Post and Beam, Goosewing Timberworks, Winterwood Timber Frames, and Mad River Post and Beam, among others.

"We sell a high-quality product with tight specs and really cater to that industry, that's our niche," said Riggs. "Our customers are particular, and we make sure we're giving them the best possible product."

The other 30 percent of sales is to neighbors who need lumber for building a wood shed or garage. Some of it is price driven, according to Riggs, but some of it is a growing appreciation for local wood and supporting Vermont's forest economy.

"Our customers like knowing that buying their wood from LSF helps put dinner on the table for a local logging family," he said.

Rogers adds that local lumber has the added benefit of a reduced carbon footprint. "When most of your business is within a 30-mile drive, it's better for the environment and keeps more money in the logger's pocket because they're paying less for transportation."

Riggs likens forest products to the local food movement in Vermont, noting that the industry needs more than just high-end, fine wood products to remain viable. "We're more like the farmer that grows three acres of carrots and sells to Hannafords than we are like dinner at Hen of the Wood," said Riggs. "We're sawing those 2x4's that someone is going to use to make a wood shed, not the live edge slab that becomes a fancy salad bowl."



Established in 2003, the bulk of LSF's customers are within an hour-and-a-half drive of the mill. About 70 percent of sales are to timber framers in Vermont and New York. (Photo by Erica Houskeeper)

"There are different markets for wood," adds Rogers, "and there should be a local option for each of those different markets."

### The challenges of workforce, regulation

The realities of owning and operating a small sawmill in Vermont are, at times, challenging, Riggs acknowledges. Without economies of scale, it can be difficult to manage staffing. LSF currently has five full-time employees, including Tucker and his father, Terry. In the summer months, that number typically grows to seven, and Riggs relies on part-time workers like Rogers to round out the team. He is contemplating adding another one or two full-time positions to keep up with demand, but is committed to keeping the mill small and manageable, at least for the time being.

The biggest challenge, however, says Riggs, is navigating permitting. "We are dealing with the same permit process that a Walmart would go through," he said. "Since I'm doing most of the sawing myself, and the bookkeeping in the meantime, there's not a lot of extra time, and we can't afford a consultant to get us through the process. In order to pay someone to manage permitting, we'd have to grow a lot."

Rogers, who sits on the legislature's Rural Economic Development Working Group, sometimes called the "Rural Caucus," recently toured a number of forest economy businesses in Vermont and says LSF is not alone in feeling frustration with the permitting process.

"One really important piece of making bureaucracy manageable for businesses of different sizes is to have regulations scaled to the size of the business, which is often missed in lawmaking" she said.

**VSJF** continued on pg. 22

**VSJF**, continued from pg. 21



Employee Lucy Rogers' job responsibilities include running the debarker, driving the forwarder or pulling orders. (Photo by Erica Houskeeper)

"People like Tucker are getting up at four in the morning, doing their bookkeeping and then working at the mill all day, so they can't be present in the statehouse when laws are being made, whereas larger businesses can have representation."

Rogers is specifically focused on how businesses like LSF are considered under the law. "The very first page of Act 250 says that farming and logging are not considered development," she said. "Right on the first page, we've said that maintaining working lands is important, so we won't regulate in the same way we regulate subdivisions, for example. Sawmills are kind of in between — it's a business with a physical location, but it's supporting the working landscape more than it's supporting development. So, to regulate in the same way is a strange value statement when the purpose of Act 250 is to make sure Vermont doesn't get lost to development."

"There is a way to think about forest

industry businesses as conservation tools that recognizes their role in maintaining the working forested landscape," she continued. "In that case they fall more into the category of what Act 250 is protecting versus what it's regulating."

### A pile of sawdust, a day well spent

Despite those frustrations, Riggs maintains that he wouldn't want any other job. "I'm a pile guy," he said. "I need a pile at the end of the day to feel fulfilled. Whether it's a pile of wood, sawdust or logs. Spreadsheets and business plans are not a big enough pile to feel like I've accomplished something."

Rogers agrees. She found her job at LSF through a Front Porch Forum ad in 2019. Recently elected to the legislature, she wanted a part-time job that met two criteria: 1) she wanted to be outside doing physical labor to balance her work in the statehouse and 2) she needed a consistent schedule, which ruled out jobs that are

weather dependent. "It has turned out to be such an amazing opportunity to learn about the forest industry," she said. "It's important to bring those perspectives to the statehouse."

Beyond the satisfaction of a good day's work, Riggs also points to the unique bond that exists within the Vermont forest industry. "The people in this work are unique — social, yet happy in their own realm," he said. "We like being in the woods alone, but the bond within the network is strong and everyone can feel that. It's what I enjoy the most."

### About the Vermont Forest Industry Network

Vermont's forest products industry contributes \$1.3 billion to Vermont's economy and supports more than 9,000 direct and indirect jobs in forestry, logging, processing, specialty woodworking, construction and wood heating (2017). Those numbers more than double when maple production and forest-based recreation are factored in. The Vermont Forest Industry Network creates space for strong relationships and collaboration throughout the industry, including helping to promote new and existing markets for Vermont wood products. Learn more or join at [www.vsjf.org](http://www.vsjf.org).



**LOOKING TO DO MORE  
IN YOUR WOODS?**

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to learn more about becoming bird friendly.

**WOW**, *continued from pg. 19*

of information or group dynamics. Speaking for myself, as a woman woodland owner, I approach things very differently than my spouse. For me, it's all about relationships that are nurtured around food. Covid has definitely put a cramp in my learning style and my desire to feed people. Someday, we will see a return to normal where we can get together, have a cup of coffee and a muffin — gluten-free for me please. This is how I generate a comfort level for future learning and, more importantly, for admitting to “not knowing.” It's very humbling if you are a woman landowner who has typically not been involved in management decisions or who is now the sole manager due to death in the family. This network attempts to take down those barriers and make learning accessible for all.

I first heard about this concept more than a dozen years ago from Nancy Baker in Pennsylvania. I met her at a retreat for the Moosalamoo Association who was exploring the creation of a “Friends Group.” Nancy attended to tell us about PA's Women and Their Woods program, a forerunner to WOW. I was totally intrigued and shepherded VWA to offer its first weekend event in 2012. What a success! Our efforts have ebbed and flowed over the years, mostly due to lack of capacity. The current steering committee solves that problem by sharing ideas, marketing and the work involved in implementing programs.

In the next two years, you'll see lots of WOW events, funded by a grant from the U.S. Forest Service and supported by the member organizations. You'll be invited to join workshops, woodland tours, learning circles, webinars and more. VWA will keep you apprised of what's on the calendar through

our weekly e-newsletter, social media and website. You can sign up for the monthly VT WOW e-newsletter by sending an email request to [wownetvt@gmail.com](mailto:wownetvt@gmail.com) and check out

the national WOW website at [www.womenowningwoodlands.net](http://www.womenowningwoodlands.net). We'll be building Leopold benches in my barn this May. Perhaps I'll see you here!

**If not wood, then what?**

Timber harvest has always taken a bad rap. It's ugly. I don't want to see it. You're depleting the resource, destroying the ecosystem, releasing carbon into the atmosphere....

I have this *burning* question....

**If not wood, then what?**

Do you:

- heat with wood or cook with charcoal?
- use toilet paper?
- live in a wood-frame house?
- walk on floors?
- have wooden furniture?
- play a musical instrument?
- garden in raised beds or use landscape timbers?
- use tools with handles?
- bowl, play pool, spin yarn, raise bees?
- write with pencils?
- use printer paper?
- build with blocks or enjoy puzzles?
- sit in a church pew?
- store food in kitchen cabinets?
- ship or store in cardboard boxes?
- buy eggs in a carton?
- read magazines or newspapers?

And these are just a few of the things we know. There are other products made from trees and their parts.... Like rayon clothing, nylon, insulation, crayons, deodorants, cellophane paper, sandwich bags, shampoos, floor tiles, twine, luggage, helmets & hardhats.... And more.

**If not wood, then what?**

- Concrete?
- Steel?
- Plastic?
- Oil and gas?

We love the wood products that fill our homes and our lives!  
Let's thank our managing woodland owners!

*By Kathleen Wanner*





## NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE

# Climate Change, Forest Carbon and Vermont's Forests

By **Al Robertson**, *landowner and tree farmer*

In June 2019 a scientist named William Moomaw, PhD, coined a new word: Proforestation. The concept of proforestation is, simply, “enabling continuous forest growth uninterrupted by active management or timber harvesting.” His position was that by applying that concept to our forests, very large increases in forest carbon sequestration over present trends would occur. He advocated large areas of American forests be dedicated to this concept creating a large percentage of “old growth” forests, in his eyes, similar to the old growth forests originally present in the United States.

This concept seems to be an easy way to solve the carbon sequestration problem and, while being valid, does oversimplify what future old growth forests might look like, leave open whose forests might be selected for the initiative, fails to address what impacts

this might have on the forest products industry, does little to recognize what other ways there are to increase carbon sequestration in forests, and in Vermont, for private forestry, fails to address what the impact on the Use Value Appraisal (UVA or “current use”) program might be.

The concept has proven to be very controversial throughout the country and especially in the Northeast where the environmental movement has tried to portray present sustainable management concepts as too little or unacceptable, with forest management professionals complaining that the concept cherry picks supporting data and concepts, minimizes potential problems and unintended consequences, and fails to recognize both alternatives and recent positive changes in forest management.

For the sake of brevity, our assumption is that there is a need for more old growth forests in the United States, and the rational and thoughtful implementation (increase) of more old growth forests in the United States will benefit both the ecology of forests and the ability to increase carbon sequestration.

But how much old growth forest in Vermont should there be, what should be included in such implementation (“rules of engagement”) to ensure healthy old growth forests, what other strategies to accomplish more carbon storage in forests are available and, finally, what would be the impact on the UVA program? Today, while there will always be arguments over how much old growth forest Vermont should have, there are positive, excellent answers to the remaining questions:

### HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR FOREST?

Work with a consulting forester to manage as best as possible in these difficult times. With the complexity of the problems facing us, it is imperative to have professional help, just as we do for our medical, dental, legal and accounting needs. Also, your consulting forester's assistance is needed to make sure forest management is allowed if you should ever decide to put your property into a conservation easement.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP VWA?

Introduce a friend, neighbor, or family member to VWA. Membership really matters!

Attend a workshop or walk in the woods to learn from and network with others.

- Forest, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) has analyzed the UVA program, and, recognizing that the need for additional carbon sequestration is real, has come up with a new “Reserve Forest Subcategory” that will allow the creation of a significant acreage of older forests within the UVA program. The legislation supporting this is H-697 (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.697>). Perhaps the most important part of the bill is that FPR will be responsible for developing the “rules of engagement” for new landowners as well as existing landowners, and foresters, wishing to participate in this category. The rules will ensure that the land entering is appropriate, that there are defined limits to the amount of land to be considered, and that

all the existing participation rules will still be required. These rules and requirements are critical if the credibility of the program and the viability of the program politically are to be maintained.

- The UVA program continues to allow more recent, higher carbon sequestration management techniques within the program, such as the Ecological Silvicultural techniques text reviewed in the September '21 VWA Newsletter. And tree planting (afforestation) and re-establishment of forest (reforestation) are always available to landowners within UVA.
- In the past two years, there has been a dramatic proliferation in forest carbon programs available to Vermont landowners. These

programs generally include prescriptions for forest management that increase carbon sequestration, include remuneration to land owners for their participation, and are compatible with the Vermont UVA program. In the past, these programs were limited to large acreage ownerships, but the new programs may allow acreages as small as 20 acres. The American Forest Foundation, sponsor of the Tree Farm Program, is conducting a test program in southern Vermont right now and hopefully will bring that program to the rest of the state soon. FPR and the Private Lands Advisory Committee are also working on a primer and FAQ's on these programs for you right now, and VWA will have an article devoted to carbon programs in the next issue.



## LET US HELP YOU CREATE A LEGACY ON YOUR LAND.

Top landowner goals include:

- Forest Health
- Conservation
- Wildlife Habitat
- Sustainability
- Aesthetics
- Recreation

Our foresters are:

- Licensed professionals
- Tree Farm Inspectors
- NRCS Technical Service Providers



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VERMONT  
**WOOD WORKS**  
COUNCIL



## Information and Guidance to a Successful Timber Harvest

Timber harvests come with a lot of questions—some answers you need to know, some you don't. To help you answer those important questions about your woods, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation has created the **Landowner Guides to a Successful Timber Harvest**. They're simple and concise guides that handle topics including: Overview of a timber harvest, Water, Wildlife, Economics, and Working with Foresters and Loggers. Download the series or just the booklets that pertain to you at [VTCutwithConfidence.com](http://VTCutwithConfidence.com).

**Cut with Confidence**

A SUCCESSFUL TIMBER HARVEST STARTS WITH YOU.

**Cut with Confidence**

*A successful timber harvest starts with you.*

GET YOUR GUIDES TO A SUCCESSFUL TIMBER HARVEST ▶



# NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

(Note: existing members will receive an invoice)

Vermont Woodlands is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to educate and advocate for the practices of productive stewardship, use, and enjoyment of Vermont's woodlands. We achieve our mission by delivering programs for landowners, the public, and policy makers that support forest health, forest economy, wildlife habitat, recreation, and enjoyment of forests for today and for generations to come.

## 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..... \$100

### ☐ VWA Accredited 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.

## MEMBERSHIP BONUS!

# Northern Woodlands



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.

**[northernwoodlands.org](http://northernwoodlands.org)**





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