

Vermont Woodlands Association and Vermont Tree Farm Program

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MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER



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Photos: Judith Falk (front left & front top right), Tom Thomson (front right bottom), VWA (back insert), Kathleen Wanner (back feature)

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.

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

On the Cusp of Change

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

Dear Members,

There has been a strong wind blowing through the forests of Vermont over the past year, and it has change woven through it.

As we near the end of one era and the beginning of a new one, the Board of Directors and I are happy to say that we have found a new Executive Director for the Vermont Woodlands Association: Kate Forrer will be joining us in October!

Please consider attending this year's annual meeting on Oct. 29, where you can meet Kate if you haven't already.

This meeting will be about changes and saying goodbye to our longtime leader, Kathleen Wanner. Help us celebrate all of the major accomplishments that Kathleen has fostered over her 20-year

tenure as the leader of the Vermont Woodlands Association.

Something that never changes is the need for new members and new faces. Consider bringing a friend to the Annual Meeting (the registration form is on page 17 of this newsletter)! This is another way you can support VWA. All those people in your life who appreciate the Vermont landscape as much as you do deserve to be introduced to this great organization. Our strength comes from our numbers and how loud our voice is heard.

And while you're bringing in new friends, think about your involvement. Many hands make light work. By taking on a little, you can help us a whole lot. Have you ever thought about hosting a Walk in the Woods? Or joining the VWA Board of Directors? Throughout the history of this organization and



especially now during this transition, it has been about the volunteers who have shown up to help out.

The ground feels wobbly underneath our feet, but it's firming up with the dawn of every new day and with all of us moving forward together. As we prepare to enter the next chapter, here's to being united as an organization! Here's to the next chapter!

Happy Fall, and I hope to see you all in October at the Hulbert Outdoor Center for the Annual Meeting!

Sincerely,

Kate

"Life begins at the end of your comfort zone." ~Neale Donald Walsch

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.





Forest owners committed to responsible forest stewardship have a lot to consider in their pursuit of doing *the right thing*. Forest stewardship has a foundational goal of growing high value forest products. That's the easy part. Now, throw in the seemingly infinite and sometimes contradictory objectives we humans place on our forests like hunting, clean water, foraging, recreation, privacy ... etc., and you've identified the very definition of stewardship and conservation: balancing utilization of forest resources with virtually all other elements of a forest and its uses. Easy right?

There are well-intentioned resources and professionals that will offer their version of the right way to manage your forest. Vermont Woodlands Association is as guilty of this as any. We advocate for a long list of forest values and hope landowners can wade through it all to find their version of *the right thing*.

Bikes and skidders, chestnut-sided warbler and pileated woodpecker habitat, clean forest aesthetic and natural forest conditions, timber products and old growth conditions all are in direct conflict with each other that can't possibly coexist with the other in every space or every minute. You can't both save a tree and cut it. Balance is achieved to provide for as many forest

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Balance

by Allan Thompson

elements, natural processes, forest uses and forest products as we can at an appropriate spatial and temporal scale.

Forest landowners will often start with almost any goal other than forest stewardship when planning starts. Things like recreational trails, aesthetics, wildlife, privacy will be prioritized over forest stewardship goals. However, successful landowners are those who are committed to becoming well practiced and are eager to learn about forest stewardship realities. Below is a short list of basic things forest owners ask themselves in order to ensure their forest stewardship doesn't take a back seat.

Planning: Balancing multiple objectives increases planning costs and you can plan yourself into debt. Asking *have I completed an appropriate amount of planning* will ensure that these costs are not wasted. Invest in the right amount of planning well-ahead of an activity. Most landowners have a forest management plan. Dust it off and work to understand the logistics of what and how these stewardship activities will actually occur. Landowners engaged in the process and those that become well informed about stewardship realities and operational logistics improve project outcomes again and again. Once you have that plan: commit, implement, repeat.

Money: *Is revenue important for me?* It is or it should be. Consider that initiating any timber harvests might require a few thousand dollars just to

get equipment on site, and landings and infrastructure in a condition to support an operation. All that before any trees are cut. There are an infinite number of objectives that can be met while managing forests. The fact is, it costs money to get both wood and a healthy forest. Ignoring finances will reduce the number of additional objectives your stewardship can achieve. As a forest owner and manager, you should be hyper focused and committed to growing and cutting wood that has the highest possible value once cut. If your timber won't generate revenue because you're not interested in cutting it or you didn't grow it ... well, get ready to spend out of pocket to achieve your ownership objectives.

Access: Understanding your logging infrastructure from an operational perspective will provide valuable insight on future needs and balance today with tomorrow. Ask yourself: *Will my activities impact my stewardship infrastructure?* You'll need a landing that is big, dry and flat enough for a log truck and wood products. You'll need good, stable skid trails sized to your equipment, free of debris with AMP's already installed. Much more frequently, landowners use skid roads for walking, skiing or biking. Recognize the costs of sharing logging infrastructure with these activities. Harvest activities will undoubtedly impact these uses and therefore investment in or loss of revenue will be required to protect or return trail conditions to desired uses.

Forest health: You can't steward a forest if it's not there. An exaggerated outcome of wind events, ice storms, pests or pathogens but very few forest uses are supported after mass tree mortality, canopy dieback or invasion of non-native plants. Your activities, and more frequently a lack of activities, will have an affect on either the spread of these pests or the risk they have on your forest or other forest objectives. Work to improve health, growing conditions and minimize risks and threats. Work to understand your forests and ask *am I adequately addressing forest health threats and risks?*

Remain committed: Stewardship activities often occur infrequently and may be far from the mind, and it may be easy to pass costs to the future,

successive owners, or generations. Don't. Preserve infrastructure through mowing landing zones, maintain skid trails and stream crossings. Monitor your forests for changes and adapt to conditions insuring its health. Remain networked with your loggers, foresters and other natural resource professionals. In your daily activities as you look out your window or from your bike, keep in mind your stewardship responsibilities and ask: *Am I and my forest ready?*

Vermont Woodlands Association is well versed in balance. We remain committed to healthy, diverse forests and uses throughout Vermont. A little secret: rarely is there a right answer or a right thing to do with your forest. Every forest and landowner is different,

and these facts support and promote Vermont's diverse forests. If you have been committed to responsible forest stewardship, it is likely your forest is resilient and capable of providing a multitude of values and resources. Please, keep it up.



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NEWS FROM VWA

Vermont Woodlands Association Names New Executive Director

by John Buck, Vermont Woodlands Association Vice President



The Vermont Woodlands Association Board of Directors is pleased to announce the hiring of Katherine Forrer as its new Executive Director. A familiar name to many of you, Kate comes to VWA with extensive knowledge and experience working on behalf of Vermont's forests and forest community. Of the many leadership roles to her credit, she has recently served as the statewide Urban and Community Forestry program leader within the University of Vermont Extension.

VWA's search for a successor to retiring long-time Executive Director Kathleen Wanner required a person who would continue Kathleen's legacy of commitment to and knowledge of Vermont's forests and the people who support, need and love them. VWA's President, Allan Thompson, said, "We found that person in Kate and are thrilled to have her continue VWA's mission to educate and advocate for productive stewardship, use and enjoyment of Vermont's forests."

Kate will start in mid-October and says, "I am thrilled to be the next Executive Director of Vermont Woodlands Association. Working in forestry in Vermont, I have made strong local, regional and national connections with stakeholder groups, including state and federal agencies, research institutions, non-profits, foresters, loggers, landowners, and wood product producers. I am a people person with strong communication and facilitation skills who has a proven record of engaging diverse stakeholders to address issues. Stepping into the role of VWA Executive Director feels like a natural next step in this work."

When not working, Kate enjoys gardening, fly fishing, and exploring the 130-acre property in Tunbridge that she shares with her husband, Gabe, three children, William, Anna, and Iris, and yellow lab, Huckleberry.

As one of the state's most valuable natural assets, Vermont's forestland is the source of billions of dollars of economic value in the form of outdoor recreation, tourism and renewable wood products, to name just a few. Forestland also provides the immeasurable values of wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air and, perhaps the most understated, the intrinsic value of simply looking out one's window to gaze at the ever-present verdant landscape.

However, all of those values come with a cost. Nearly 75% of Vermont is forested, and about 80% of those lands are held in private ownership. Today, Vermont's forests and forest landowners are under great pressure from climate changes, invasive forest diseases and pests, skyrocketing real estate values, escalating property tax burdens, and the ever-extending suburban transformation of the state.

Strong leadership within the Vermont Woodlands Association is vital to ensuring that the importance of these values not only remains in the public consciousness but also is sustained through generations. Passing the Executive Director leadership torch from Kathleen Wanner to Kate Forrer will continue VWA's century-long commitment to Vermont's forests and forestland owners.

Kate summed up the challenge like this: "As a partner of VWA, I have witnessed firsthand the value and power of this organization in supporting Vermont forest landowners and the broader forestry community. I am excited to continue this work and for this opportunity to lead VWA into the future! Forestry outreach, education and advocacy have never been so important, and I believe great things are ahead for the VWA community!"



NEWS FROM VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION

Keeping a Watchful Eye During Walks in the Woods

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

One of the management challenges we collectively face in the Northeast is the arrival and establishment of invasive plants new to our area — either species not yet known to occur here or occurring in low numbers. These are referred to as “*early detection*” species. Through scientific research, we know that the risk for new invasions is higher in the Northeast due to the more rapid temperature increases and

the multitude of established plants in southern states shifting their growing ranges northward.

To protect the natural resources, communities and ecosystems we value, we must recognize the threat posed by early detection invasive plants, and how our choices can either exacerbate or reduce spread. While the presence of invasive plants, at any concentration, is

reason for action, attending to species before they are established — while they are still considered early detection — is where there is a chance for eradication, and where cost and effort expenditures are the lowest.

WATCHFUL EYE *continued on pg. 8*



Stiltgrass infestation in a forest understory. (Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org)

WATCHFUL EYE, *continued from pg. 7*



Stiltgrass stem, showing characteristic silvery midrib and alternating leaf arrangement. (Bruce Ackley, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org)

Whether recreating, walking boundary lines or managing the land, it is good to be mindful of precautions to take and plants to avoid, to protect both your own health and the health of the forest.

- Know about common invasive plants **and** about potential early detection invasive plants.
- Stay on the trail whenever possible.
- Avoid walking or working where invasive plants are present.
- Check and clean your gear and clothing **on site** for seeds or plant fragments.
- Report any findings of early detection invasive plants.

about: Stiltgrass and Giant Hogweed. Knowing about these plants can help you reduce the risk of spread and your own risk of exposure, and can aid in tracking and understanding where these plants are in Vermont.

In the June 2021 VWA Newsletter, we discussed Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), a shade-tolerant annual grass. This plant, classified as a “very invasive plant” by the New York Invasiveness Ranking, can be spread by seed on recreation or management gear as well as on people, pets and wildlife. It grows quickly throughout the spring and summer, and can form dense matted monocultures when it dies off each year. That rapid and dense growth once the plant gets established means that Stiltgrass can smother other

Any activity on the landscape can lead to disturbance, which, in turn, can support the spread of invasive plants.

There are two early detection invasive plants of note that recreationists, land stewards and landowners should learn

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understory vegetation, including locally evolved woody forest species.

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is a monocarpic perennial herb, found in forest openings, along waterways, fields and disturbed habitats. Its readiness to escape cultivation, prolific seed production, impacts to vegetation diversity and soil stability all mark this plant as invasive, but it poses a bigger risk to humans than it does to our ecosystems: just brushing up against the plant can transfer toxic sap onto skin or gear, which can trigger a severe chemical reaction on exposed skin.

This reaction is more worrisome than exposure to the related plants wild parsnip, wild chervil or American cow-parsnip where you must break the plant tissue to come in contact with the sap.

With only a handful of locations known across the state, Stiltgrass and Giant Hogweed are considered early detection species. If you find locations of these plants anywhere in Vermont, please report them using the Report It! Tool on the VTinvasives.org website: <https://vtinvasives.org/get-involved/report-it>

Useful links:

Learn more about invasive plants and recreation:

<https://www.mipn.org/prevention/preventing-invasive-plant-spread-by-outdoor-recreation/>

Learn more about distinguishing invasive Giant Hogweed from common local plants:

<https://vtinvasives.org/resource/giant-hogweed-identification-resource>

Learn more about invasive Stiltgrass:

<https://www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications-forms/documents/japanese-stiltgrass.pdf>

Become familiar with common invasive plants in Vermont: <https://vtinvasives.org/resource/12-invasive-plants-commonly-found-vermont-field-guide>

Deep Dive:

Learn more about early detection and how it can reduce costs for keeping forests healthy by checking out these resources from Midwest Invasive Plant Network and the Canadian Invasive Species Centre:

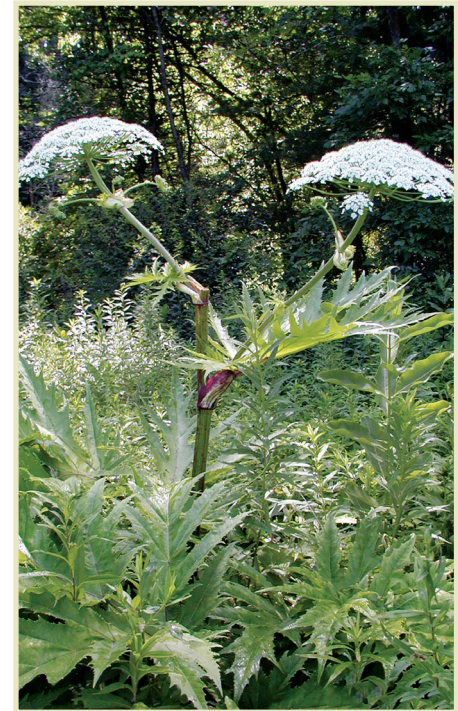
- <https://www.mipn.org/edrr/>
- <https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/learn/invasion-curve/>

Learn about other management challenges we're facing in the Northeast:

<https://www.riscnetwork.org/management-challenges>



Giant Hogweed has both (top) purple spotted stems with coarse white hairs, and (bottom) umbrella-shaped flower heads. (Top, Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org; Bottom, Donna R. Ellis, University of Connecticut Bugwood.org)





NEWS FROM AUDUBON VERMONT

The Intersection of Forest Management, Wildlife Habitat and Recreation

by Jacob Crawford, Audubon Vermont Forest Conservation Intern



A gap in the canopy allows sunlight to reach the trees below. (Jacob Crawford, Audubon Vermont)

Looking down from the skies above, one can easily discern that Vermont is a heavily forested state (74 percent forested, USDA Forest Service 2020). What you cannot see from an aerial view of the state is how these forests are divided amongst landowners, and what values and objectives various landowners hold for their land. Seventy-nine percent of the forest land of Vermont is privately owned, and about 69 percent of all privately owned acres are owned by more than 40,200 family forest owners (Morin et al. 2020, Renfrew 2013).

Some of these family forest owners are focused on promoting timber objectives and may choose to manage their forests for healthy and merchantable trees. Many other landowners listed beauty, wildlife and recreation as being their reasons for owning land (Morin et al. 2020). As a naturalist and aspiring forester by training, I believe these values and objectives are not mutually exclusive, and all can be achieved through appropriate forest management.

I tend to view forests and forest management through the lens of promoting wildlife habitat, particularly through Audubon Vermont's Silviculture with Birds in Mind guidelines (<https://vt.audubon.org/sites/default/files/>

silviculture-options_0.pdf). In my eyes, there are few forested landscapes in the state that could not benefit from some form of silvicultural prescription (a series of forest harvests designed to meet a forest structure and management goal) now or in the next 20 years.

Many silvicultural prescriptions I recommend to landowners are aimed at achieving important bird-friendly and wildlife conservation-based objectives. Bird-friendly silvicultural prescriptions are intended to enhance a healthy forest structure, whether that be vertical or horizontal structure, and, subsequently, promote bird diversity. If a prescription enhances the vertical structure of a forest, it is promoting the growth and/or establishment of both the understory (trees less than 6 feet in height) and midstory (trees 6 to 30 feet in height and largely overtopped by tree canopies above) layers in the forest. Horizontal structure involves promoting a diverse landscape matrix of different forest species compositions, ages and vertical structures. In general, bird-friendly management aligns with objectives of creating healthy, diverse, well-formed, well-structured and resilient forests



A VAST snowmobile trail that has been used for forest harvest access. (Jacob Crawford, Audubon Vermont)

across the landscape in the face of invasive species and climate change.

Bird-friendly forest management can also align well with the objectives of those landowners who mentioned beauty, wildlife and/or timber as being their reason for owning land. But how can recreation be incorporated into these objectives and the management of forests for birds and wildlife? Whether you plan to ride ATVs, mountain bikes or horses, cross country ski, or go for leisurely walks, an established

trail system is usually desired for these activities. The creation of trails throughout forests, however, does have an impact on the land, and frequently used trails must be appropriately routed through the landscape. Depending on the site, some trail systems may require bridges, boardwalks, water bars, ditching or culverts. These are all precautions to lessen the impacts of erosion, which can lead to the introduction of sediments into nearby waterways, thus polluting this aquatic ecosystem (Lake James Environmental Association 2018).



Winter Wren perches on a downed branch. (Jacob Crawford, Audubon Vermont)

Soil compaction is another impact of trails, which can prevent the growth of plant life and contribute to increased water runoff. Additionally, the continued presence of humans passing through the landscape can have a negative impact on seasonally sensitive species and areas such as nesting Northern Goshawks, Peregrine falcons and bald eagles, along with critical wintering areas for white-tailed deer and den sites for bobcats (VTANR 2022). Some natural communities such as wetlands, bogs and high-elevation

INTERSECTION continued on pg. 12

INTERSECTION, *continued from pg. 11*

alpine habitats host sensitive plant communities that easily succumb to human disturbance as well. Proper consideration of these impacts when constructing trails can allow for years of recreational use on your land with only minor disturbance to the landscape, wildlife and waterways.

Trail and road systems within a forest are frequently constructed prior to forest management and timber harvesting activities on a property. As logging operations in Vermont are required to create truck roads and skid trails that follow Vermont's Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) ([*https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest_Management/*](https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest_Management/)

Library/FullDocument-7.29.pdf) to protect water quality (or else a special permit is required), ample planning and drainage/trail infrastructures are implemented into any harvest entry route. This high standard of trail quality and sustainability makes forest management activities on a landowner's property the perfect time to establish a long-lasting and ecologically responsible trail network, but clear communication is crucial. It is important for the landowner to work with the forester and the logging contractor to design trails that adhere to Vermont's AMP guidelines and ensure that all those involved are aware that future use of trails is intended following the timber harvest.

(Here is a great resource outlining the responsibilities of those involved in a timber harvest: [*https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Your_Woods/CutWithConfidence_Brochures/Forester-2.1b.pdf*](https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Your_Woods/CutWithConfidence_Brochures/Forester-2.1b.pdf))

Maintaining and utilizing the roads and skid trails created for a timber or habitat improvement harvest has many benefits for the subsequent users of the land, the forest and the wildlife. Examples of some benefits include consolidating disturbances from logging and recreational use, access to professional trail-building advice from your forester and contractor, and lowered costs and impacts of reopening skid trails for future harvest entries.



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meadowsendco.com

Assuming the silvicultural prescription for the harvest was aimed at promoting bird species diversity, forest health and/or structure, maintaining trails to the harvested area offers ample opportunities for observing the direct impacts of this habitat improvement. There is great opportunity for both public outreach and personal use in harvested areas, whether it be hunting opportunities, bird watching, using the harvest area as an educational demonstration or study site, or foraging for wild goods.

Through the thoughtful and well-planned harvesting of trees, we can promote wildlife habitat and healthy forests while also allowing for recreation. Healthy and resilient forests enhance the beauty and intrinsic, monetary and natural value of the landscape, and ensure access to the natural resources of today for generations to come. None of

these core reasons for owning land are truly mutually exclusive and, with a little creativity, a single forest can be managed to meet all landowner objectives.

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NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE

Walnuts in the Northeast Kingdom

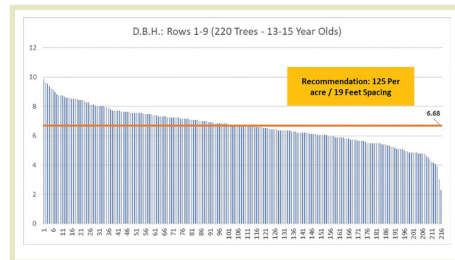
by David Holdridge, *homesteader*

Certainly, to my knowledge, Vermont has been and remains an outlier to the unprecedented industrialization that consumed America after World War II. This is especially evident in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom where my family and I have had a homestead since we migrated north from Massachusetts, 15 years ago.

After 40 years of working as so-called humanitarians in a variety of wars overseas and other associated desperate situations, we longed for the purported calm of owning a few dozen acres of land and manipulating it by day and closing our day at sunset before our campfire at a deep pond, an ubiquitous heritage in Vermont from the glaciers that retreated north 10,000 years ago.

And, so this family began. The trials and tribulations of flatlanders, with only our beloved pick-up, some shovels, a watering tank, and all sorts of hand tools and implements.

Initially, we dug holes ... hundreds of them. We knew that the NEK was getting warmer and that hardiness zones were being adjusted. And, we also knew from some past occasional backyard efforts and allied research in Massachusetts that Black Walnut trees were America's most precious source of high value boards and veneer, and that NEK had a storied history of harvesting trees. Which, as some claim, had served to build Boston in the 19th century.



Walnuts growth chart (David Holdridge)

But that time had long ago passed when we landed in the region in 2007 ... along with sheep and seemingly the traditional dairies. Our best hope for economic revitalization (the E-B 5 rescue program at Jay Peak ski resort) ended catastrophically with a huge, still vacant, excavation on main street in our anchor town of Newport.

So, we dug. We dug because we loved the work, and because it seemed to augur a possible viable fillip for an enhanced future. Tentatively, 44 holes — 12 feet apart — in a first-row planting on what had been a 6-acre hay field between the verge on our forest and the paved road running parallel to it. A soil test revealed an adequate site, and the drainage was good, with a slow eastern slope from road to forest. And absent cloud cover, sunlight was unrelenting. We purchased our stock of bare-root saplings from Saint Lawrence nurseries in Potsdam, New York. We caged each seedling against deer browsing and hung garlic sticks on the stakes. Each plant received an apron of mulch.

Then a second row, a third row and a fourth the following year. No significant browsing ensued, and all the young saplings survived the winter and a couple of hard frosts (covering the vulnerable plants in a slight gully with bags). For accelerators, we purchased some potash at the time of planting as well as using some of the ashes from our nightly campfires. With time, our learning curve began to flatten as each day we compared our reality in the field with available Internet information from the relevant land grant universities (Minnesota/Iowa/Missouri) along the Mississippi where Walnuts are a mainstay. We also became one of Vermont's first members of the National Walnut Council.

By the third year, we began careful pruning of unwanted laterals, guided by video tutorials on YouTube. This was a seminal juncture. Not only was it when I would purposely wound the stem of the tree and thus open a vector for pathological infection, but it also caused a sudden increase in height, effecting a willowy stem, taller than I was. And it brought a poignant realization that I had neglected an essential influence — the wind that rushed toward our erstwhile hayfield across a plateau of neighboring fields. And when wind speed reached gusts of 40 mph, it both snapped plant leaders and in many cases bent the tree to the ground, sometimes splitting the stem vertically. “What a fool,” I thought.



Winter pruning (David Holdridge)

So, we immediately bought large firs and made a wind break and henceforth supplemented them with evergreen transfers from our own land. Now over a decade later, the windbreak has begun to curb the impact of the winds. Simultaneously, we replaced the wooden stakes (many of which had not held) with 3/8-inch thick, 6- to 8-foot-long re-rod stakes. Unfortunately, there were some lasting and dire consequences. Fusarium, as pronounced by the plant pathologist from Montpelier (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources) in response to my call to the county forester for help. About a dozen of the most afflicted trees had to be cut to the ground.

Of course, that night, I shuddered to think what a hurricane would have done. That event, as it turned out, reflected a never-ending tension. To wit: we do not buy genetically modified stock or even the most durable cultivars that are so common in the Mississippi Valley where the cultivation of Black Walnut is a billion-dollar annual business. By contrast, we are a small, albeit innovative, family enterprise.

Our bottom line ... is a 12-foot log, unblemished, at least 18 inches DBH, ready for harvest in 30 more years. In our case, that means pruning at least 12 feet of laterals but never more than 35% of possible photosynthesis and rarely a severed limb of more than 2.5 inches in diameter. Naturally, not only does that make for spindly trees initially but also puts excessive stress on the tree and its immune system as it battles to close the wounds before the parade of pathogens/pests takes the tree down — that deadly procession of Insects, bacteria, fungus, sapsuckers ... ultimately producing “naught but firewood.”

Well, we are now (July 2022) at row 25, right adjacent to the windbreak, and yes, we have suffered Anthracnose, Walnut flea beetle, waves of Japanese beetles and Rose Chafers (picture our family spread out over the field with pails of soapy water). Recently, we have decided we will not go for two logs on a tree unless the tree voluntarily accommodates us. Our ladder is only 16 feet high. In a new mindset, we are now “Going for Girth.”



Summer on the plantation (David Holdridge)

Next year, looking forward, we await the first of many painful events as we prepare for the initial thinning of our first rows that have reached about 8 inches DBH and grown to 35 feet tall. From the start, we had always planned on selling only 200 or less for lumber from the over 1,000 trees that we have planted. And from those eventually harvested, perhaps less than 30% would be of veneer quality.

WALNUTS *continued on pg. 16*

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WALNUTS, *continued from pg. 15*

But triage, anywhere, any place, is very difficult. I mean, don't laugh, but we raised these trees from almost nothing, festooning their branches with ornaments to repel sapsuckers, excising cankers, putting the measuring tape to each and every one annually, calling our county forester (Jared Nunery) more than we deserve but who continues to encourage us. Now, soon enough, we will purposely debase what we created, save for the best of them — those with the great girths and no visible defects.

Now, with volunteer walnut seedlings sprouting up all over our 46 acres of land (courtesy of an abundance of red squirrels) and my new known name in town taking effect, Walnut Man, we are ready for subsequent chapters.

Oaks, (almost non-existent in our neck of the woods) will now be proliferated

across our forest from our established seed beds and additionally from seed taken from our acorn bearing red and white Oaks used as interspersed plantings among the Black Walnut trees. As I write, we are also planning to seed canopy gaps in our surrounding forest using the femelschlag technique and for free distributions to local citizens of Oak and Walnut seedlings in October.

In the end, if this effort succeeds, it will be about increased measurement and analysis and effective advocacy for appropriate legislation from Montpelier to increase funding to support the renaissance of the forestry industry in NEK. We remain a poor part of America with beautiful forests that can produce high value boards/veneer as well as make a significant and positive contribution to sustainable employment, income and our natural environment.

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
- Rita Bizzozero
- Putnam Blodgett
- Clark Bothfeld
- George Buzzell
- Robert Darrow
- Azel S. Hall
- John Hemenway
- John Sr. and Izola Irwin
- Ruth Mengedoht
- Edward Osmer
- Robert Pulaski
- Michael Tatro
- Peter Upton
- Jim Wilkinson

Contributions to the Honorary Fund have been received for:

- Kathy Beland
- Chris Elwell
- Paul Harwood
- Leo Laferriere
- Thom McEvoy
- Steve Miller
- Ross Morgan
- Steven Peckham
- William Sayre
- Steve Sinclair
- 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.

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ANNOUNCING 2022 ANNUAL MEETING!

Saturday, October 29, 2022 • Hulbert Outdoor Center, Fairlee VT

When	What	Why
8:30	Annual meeting registration opens	Enjoy Continental Breakfast while you catch up with old friends or make new ones.
9:45	Walks in the Woods	Convene groups for guided walks in the Aloha Foundation managed forest.
12:00	Lunch	Return to dining room for Lunch, and hear from the new Executive Director.
1:30	Annual meeting presentations begin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business meeting and Tree Farm Awards • Panel discussion: Climate resilience and the forest products supply chain • The State of Vermont's Forests
4:30	Adjourn	Head home or join us on the lawn to continue the celebration and conversation. Bring a lawn chair!

With a full day of events, we invite you to attend all or any part of the day. Please register with this form; it will help us to plan if we know when we'll see you.

-----cut here-----

I'll arrive in time for: Continental Breakfast Walk in the Woods
 (check all that apply) Lunch Annual Meeting

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone : _____

Registration due by October 19: \$40 (per person; children under 12 free; includes Continental Breakfast, Walk, Lunch, and Annual Meeting)

No. attendees: _____ x \$40= \$ _____

Additional contribution to support VWA's mission: \$ _____

Please charge my credit card: Number: _____ Exp _____ Code _____

<p>Total enclosed:</p> <p>\$ _____</p>

Mail to: VWA, PO Box 26, Rupert VT 05768 OR register online at <https://tinyurl.com/VWA22annmtg>



NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE

Tree Farm News

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

On June 14, Dave Wilcox was once again a gracious host for our Tree Farm Inspector Field Day at his family Tree Farm property in West Berlin. In the morning, we worked through the 021 inspection form and applying it to activities on Dave's property. Thank goodness he is a good sport to our questions! We also took the time to

measure a very large white ash near his barn, that at least for a while was posted as the White Ash Big Tree Champion for Vermont.

We spent the afternoon hiking and learning about the new AMP app, a great new tool for foresters, loggers and landowners. ATFS provided all the

SWAG we could want or need, and here you see our inspectors decked out in their orange trucker hats complete with sunglasses for the day.

At lunchtime, we honored our award winning inspectors. Congratulations to Ethan, Andy and Charlie!



Attendees of the Tree Farm Inspector Field Day. Can you find your forester?

In other Tree Farm news, although there are no new Tree Farms this past quarter, inspectors are working hard to bring some of our Pioneers back into being fully certified Tree Farms. Through a grant from the Daybreak Fund (former High Meadows Fund), we are diligently contacting Tree Farmers, inspectors and county foresters to sort out contact information, reassigning inspections and, if desired, getting properties recertified. As of this date, we have recertified two officially, with many others in the pipeline to get recertified. Just clearing up ownerships and identifying next generation landowners has been a positive result of this work.

Required inspections are on track for 2022, and don't forget, Oct. 1 is the deadline for completing those inspections. We have also had a few optional inspections trickle in this quarter.

All County Foresters received new Tree Farm signs in July. If you have a Tree Farmer in need of a sign, it may be picked up at any of the county forester offices across the state. Remember the first sign is free, and after that they are \$10 per sign, payable to Vermont Tree Farm. I also have them here in Clarendon.



Pictured, from the left, are: Ethan Tapper, Outreach & Education Award; Andy McGovern, Most Inspections; and Charlie Hancock, Tree Farm Inspector of the Year.

ADD YOUR TREE FARM STORY

Tree Farmers are busy, busy, busy this time of year. Taking a break and snapping a photo of what you are doing is not always in the forefront of the day. Some evening when you have cooled down from the heat of the day, check and see if you have a picture or two of your trail maintenance, bird habitat work or invasives control, current timber sale or just cutting firewood. Even if you don't have a photo, other Tree Farmers would like to hear about it!

Open your computer, go to vermonttreefarm.org and click on "CLICK HERE FOR TREE FARM MAP & MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DATABASE." When that page opens, scroll down and select "Tree Farmers: Click here to add your management activities to the database." We want to hear about what is going on in your neck of the woods, and include photos if you have them! Please add your story to ours!

Hope you have stayed cool in this very warm summer!



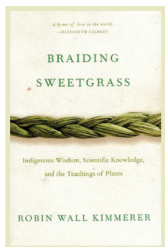
Dave Wilcox sharing information about his family's Tree Farm.



NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE: BOOK REVIEW

Imparted Wisdom Reflects on How Best to Heal the Earth

by Allen Yale, landowner and tree farmer



Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed editions,

2013, pp 390 Paperback \$18.00.

I first learned of this book while sitting in on a zoom seminar this past December titled “Land Ethic Vermont Winter Reading List” in which the several members of the group listed the favorite book(s) each had read recently related to land ethics. Several mentioned *Braiding Sweetgrass*. With this endorsement, I asked my local librarian if she could get a copy for me to read. As soon as I read it, I ordered my own copy, as I knew it was a book I would be returning to again and again. In my opinion, it ranks with Aldo Leopold’s *Sand County Almanac* for its impact on the environmental community.

At first reading, it appears to be merely a collection of 31 stories, some charming, some dark, on a range of topics relating to parenting, teaching, natural history, and the mythology and history of indigenous peoples of North America. It is with careful examination of the cover and table of contents and a second or third reading, that one

fully recognizes the structure of the book and the meaning of the several chapters. And the effort is well worth it.

I’m one who believes in **not** skipping prefaces and introductions, for it is where an author often presents the goal or synopsis of the book. While Kimmerer’s preface is only one-and-a-half pages long, she explains that her goal is to offer a braid of interwoven themes in story form to heal our relationship with the world.



A careful examination of the cover reveals two things in addition to the author’s name and title. The first is the sub-title: “Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants.” The second is a picture of a braid of sweetgrass. This image of a braid is representative of the intertwining of the three elements of the subtitle: indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and lessons plants can teach. Some stories focus on one element, such as the origin story of the indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region in “Skywoman Falling.” Other stories seem to focus on the science of botany, like “The Consolation of Water Lilies.” Some chapters include all three elements simultaneously. But in all these stories, there is a lesson that relates to characteristics humans need to embody in order to be in harmony with the natural world. Often the lesson is taught by understanding some aspect of botany or another natural science.

One of the intriguing features of this book is that Kimmerer occasionally references the “Original Instructions” her people received at the beginning of time, yet she never explicitly identifies what these instructions are. This she leaves to the reader to decipher. The chapter “The Honorable Hunt” lists the characteristics that concept entails (p.183). While these are undoubtedly

part of the “Original Instructions,” there are others that the reader must glean from the several stories.

Sweetgrass is a sacred plant in many indigenous groups and is often used in healing ceremonies, and many of the stories relate to sweetgrass in one way or another. The table of contents is divided into five sections relating to sweetgrass: planting, tending, picking, braiding and burning. It is the reader’s task to tease out the interrelatedness of the chapters Kimmerer grouped within each section.

Kimmerer is especially qualified to write a book with such a sub-title as she is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, with a Ph.D. in botany who teaches at SUNY-ESF in Syracuse, N.Y. Many of the lessons she relates are derived from her teaching or the research she and her students have undertaken.

As we face the challenges confronting our woodlands as a consequence of climate change, the wisdom imparted in this book may help us reflect on how best to heal the earth we share with the rest of the biota.

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.



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.

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- 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



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NEWS FROM SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

SFI Standards - Implementation Phase

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

The SFI Inc. Board of Directors adopted the new revised standards and has begun its implementation process. Third party audits will need to be applied to these standards on all audits starting in 2023.

SFI Vermont's Implementation Committee (SIC) is working with New York, New Hampshire and Maine's SICs to create a Northern New England guide that certified organizations may use to take steps making changes to meet the more rigorous standards. The first phase is focused on the forest management standards, and we began with a workshop on climate smart forestry practices. The guide will offer options that a certified landowner organization may apply to the specific features on their land to adjust management treatments that minimize and mitigate climate change impacts. Other regions are using the same model creating guides that relate more effectively for the forest types found in their region.

To date, more than 375 million acres/152 million hectares are certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard, and tens of millions more certified to the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard. Due to the size of these certified lands, SFI finds itself in a strong leadership role in educating all

forest managers on techniques they can apply to maintain healthy working forests based on how SFI certified organizations adapt to these standards. There will be other workshops taking place soon to address other topics in the new standards, including water quality and quantity, forest fire resiliency and loggers' training programs.

SFI / PLT Annual Meeting 2022

The 2022 SFI Annual Conference took place June 14-16 in Madison, Wis. This was the first time in which SFI and Project Learning Tree (PLT) combined their annual meetings into one big event. Vermont's own PLT Coordinator Rebecca Roy attended the meeting. She reports that it was large, well-attended and was full of excellent learning opportunities.

This year's conference provided engaging ideas and thought-provoking themes, presented by a great lineup of speakers. Takeaways included: best practices on climate-smart forestry and fire resiliency; knowledge and tools to meet and report on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) targets; ways to become a leader in advancing opportunities for diverse communities; and resources to support a forest-literate society. Speakers included Randy Moore, chief, USDA Forest Service.

Both organizations claim the dual conference was successful and plan to combine the meeting every other year.

Outreach Activities

As with all of us, the Vermont SIC found it difficult to move forward with our outreach and education efforts because of Covid-19. After two years of cancelled conferences, expos and summits, we were finally able to gather this year. SFI Vermont had display booths at both the Northeastern Forest Products Equipment Exposition, otherwise known as the Loggers' Expo, held every other year at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, Vt., and at the Vermont Forestry Industry Summit held in Burke, Vt., organized by the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund. Both events were well attended, and people were happy to see each other.

SFI Vermont is also working on bringing back the AIV/SFI Forest Policy Task Force meetings. We invite officials of Vermont's Departments of Forests, Parks and Recreation and Fish and Wildlife and other departments of interest and from the Green Mountain National Forests to provide reports and updates on their current activities. We get a preview on the upcoming Legislative Session and other news pertaining to forestry and the forest products industry. We are also focused

on better understanding carbon storage and sequestration in Vermont's forests and how to engage the public in how important working forests are for climate resiliency and mitigation.

Another important outreach we have missed for three years now is our annual SFI Legislative Breakfast. We held this in the Vermont Statehouse cafeteria usually mid to late March and tie in various meetings and other events if we can. We are looking at returning to the Statehouse for a meet and greet day in some format in 2023.

Project Learning Tree

As with just about everything, efforts to advance PLT growth in Vermont was

hindered by Covid-19. The Steering Committee will meet early fall to regain ground on growing teacher participation. Rebecca Roy received a grant from SFI Inc. to support a facilitators training session later in the fall. Facilitators are trained to be able to demonstrate PLT to teachers. She also reports that the Hubs are working fine but that because of turnover in these various hubs, she needs to provide more training of their new staff to manage PLT in their locality.

Forest landowners, foresters, loggers and others making a living in the forestry sector make great facilitators. If you have interest in getting a more balanced education on forests and forestry to our students and have some

time to commit to reaching out to K-12 teachers, day care providers and other youth-oriented educational programs, we would love to hear from you.

PLT is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Since becoming part of SFI in 2017, PLT has won two Learning® Magazine Teachers' ChoiceSM Awards including for its Energy in Ecosystems curriculum for grades 3-5 in 2019, and its Carbon & Climate curriculum in 2020.

Land Investment Properties - Experience the Value



TIMBER INVESTMENT
431 acres, Colton NY

Chapp Hill Forest:

An ideal timber investment property with outstanding timber quality of sugar maple, black cherry and yellow birch. Fully stocked stands of pole sized growing stock and sawlogs. Timber value above \$300k. Great access roads.

\$389,900

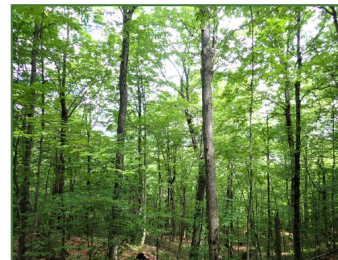


HOMESITE-TIMBER
92 Acres, Moretown VT

Kelley Brook Forest:

Located 6 miles from downtown Montpelier, this property offers frontage along Ward Brook Road, utilities, good homesite options, and a managed timber resource. Trails run through the land leading to the top of the property. A bridge across the brook will be needed before a home can be built.

\$210,900

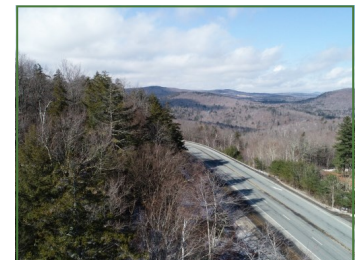


TOP OF MOUNTAIN
116 acres, Moretown, VT

Chase Mountain Forest:

This land is perfect for those seeking a private off-grid property. The land rises to the top of the 2,014' Chase Mountain, timber consists of quality sugar maple. Old camp on land with meadow and tiny pond. Trees and wildlife will be your neighbors, but you'll need a 4x4 vehicle with good clearance to get there.

\$99,000



HOME SITE ON PASS
195 acres, Marlboro, VT

Harrisville Brook Forest:

Southern Vermont location near Willington and Mt. Snow ski area. The potential homesite is on a high mountain pass along Vermont's Route 9 corridor offering sweeping views with tree clearing and easy access to the home site.

\$425,000



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VERMONT TREE FARM INSPECTOR'S LOG

August, Wow It's Hot Outside, 2022

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

It has been a busy, hot and dry summer. I always look forward to summer and all that it brings. Listening and seeing the birds in the forests and fields, wildlife moving everywhere with their babies, butterflies and fishing, everything in shades and hues of green (which, of course, is my favorite color), gardening, swimming, and as much time enjoying family are all part of a busy summer. Recognizing that these may all contribute to why people own forestland is also part of our job as foresters, and as part of the Tree Farm Program.

This year, green has been mottled with spongy moth defoliation in wide swaths in Rutland County, and now maple

leaf cutter defoliation is beginning to show its shotgun hole defoliation on some of the properties we manage. Spongy moth is especially prevalent along Route 4 west to New York, making it now look like early spring in August, with the tiny, slightly chlorotic oak leaves, and dead defoliated pine along the oak ridges and valleys in the Taconics. Combine that with the drought, and every day watching the rain clouds build and then move north or south of my front door, the summer greens are turning brown!

Ever so slowly I am watching the lawn get crispy, and now even the ferns and wildflowers seem to be permanently

wilted. My rain barrels for watering are nearly empty, and I see more wildlife signs close to stream corridors. Just like us, they want to be near the water on these hot summer days. I now even have turkeys that are creating dust baths on top of my septic field. Maybe they are finding something there to eat, or it is just cooler! Either way, we are all using the some space.

Our work and play in the woods happens alongside and within habitat. From the beginning, Tree Farm has been wood, water, wildlife and recreation, and that is no different in these times. I sometimes get to read through other foresters plans and



Three for the day!



Spreading seed



Catch of the day

addendums for the Tree Farm program. It is interesting and enlightening reading these, and learning about everyone's different approaches to making all of that work together for the common goal of being a good steward of their land. Whether a Tree Farmer is harvesting high quality logs, cutting firewood, focusing on habitat, protecting water quality or maintaining trails, all of these are addressed in their plans, and implemented on the ground. How do they make all that work together? Everyone has a different story, and some have unique approaches to their work. Some landowners also have posted their work on the Tree Farm Website in the Management Activities Database, and included photos of some of their projects. I encourage you to take a look, or maybe take a minute and post what you are doing on your land!

Earlier this summer, I was able to spend some one-on-one time with my grandkids, Hannah and Gabe. This was the first year that I would split the week with each of them. I made plans to have them tag along for some "work" days. My granddaughter helped to seed landings with grasses and wildflowers, including lupines, milkweed and butterfly weed. Here's to hoping that they eventually are able to germinate with some rain. We followed that up with a visit to a Tree Farm for the only purpose of catching trout in a stream.

My grandson had hoped to see a skidder in action on another Tree Farm, but alas, even the logger thought that it was too hot that day! So, after collecting birch bark for the purpose of having a small campfire at home for s'mores, we headed to the closest stream and went fishing. Both of them had great success in bringing in some awfully nice brookies in streams that would not carry these populations if the land around them was not managed well.

Both Hannah and Gabe, already recognize the Tree Farm sign as



Gabe and a skidder

meaning something different, something special. They know that it is connected to me, because I always have something Tree Farm related hanging around, or wearing, and they see the sign on the wall of my office. We have talked about what the sign means, and what forestry is all about, so they have some understanding of what I have been doing for most of my life. Hannah and Gabe also love to come to the Vermont State Fair and visit the

Forestry Building. We have so much there to see and touch, and they are truly interested in what is happening there.

Gabe summed it all up when my daughter handed him something small with the Tree Farm logo on it. He looked up at her with the excitement of an almost 7-year old and said: "Forestry?! I love forestry!" I think that says it all. Thank you, Gabe. Me too. Me too.



Welcome New VWA Members

John Lamer, *Montgomery Center, VT*
Peter Post, *Charlotte, VT*
Chris Ralphs, *North Kingstown, RI*

Rudolph Townsend, *Williamstown, VT*
Linda McDonough, *Derby, VT*



NEWS FROM THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Combining Wildlife Habitat and Recreation on Your Property

by Andrea Shortsleeve, *Habitat Biologist, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife*



The ability to recreate in our forests and fields provides Vermont landowners with an outlet for relaxation, exercise and a sense of grounding. Outdoor recreation can inspire a connection to nature and a grounding to place that can often be hard to find in our modern-day life.

Vermonters get a lot of enjoyment out of being able to hike, ski, hunt, ride and view wildlife on their properties, and owning a private space to participate in these activities is one of the primary reasons people own their properties. Woodland owner surveys have repeatedly shown that creating habitat and providing space for wildlife to thrive on properties is also a key driver

for landowners, and at a cursory glance, providing recreation opportunities and managing for wildlife can sometimes seem like competing objectives.

And while these outdoor activities and building trails do have a range of impacts on the wildlife in our woods, forest management and habitat improvement can happen concurrently with recreating on your property with some intentional and wholistic management planning.

Not all recreation is the same, and not all wildlife responds to trails or recreation activities in the same way. There is a growing body of research looking at how recreation impacts

wildlife, and from these studies and literature searches, we can identify some general themes and impacts. Recently, Meredith Naughton, a graduate student at the University of Vermont, completed an exhaustive literature review on the relationship between trail-based recreation and wildlife in the northeastern United States. The general trends that Naughton found in the literature showed, among other themes, that trail-based recreation has a negative impact on wildlife, but these trends can inform forest and habitat management for private landowners who would like to create and enhance wildlife habitat on their properties.



Trail-less areas are a limited, but important resource on the landscape, and studies have shown that simply the presence of trails on the ground creates an impact to wildlife. Some of these impacts can be a short-term, behavioral-based effect, such as a nesting bird being flushed from her nest when a hiker walks by, while some of these impacts can be much more dramatic and sustained, leading to displacement of an animal or group from the property, like when deer will permanently avoid a wintering area with a cross-country ski trail cutting through it.



Taking note of these impacts, it is important to note that designing thoughtful trail locations can be one of the biggest techniques landowners and recreationists can employ to start minimizing impacts on wildlife. Utilizing forest roads and log landings that are already present on the landscape as part of your trail network while restricting any newly constructed trails to a clustered area on the property can help.

Creating and maintaining vegetative buffers between trails and sensitive areas like known nests or wetlands will also help minimize the disturbance. Although the exact width needed for the buffer to prevent disturbance can vary from species to species, a general 200-foot buffer is a good starting point. Paying attention to whether a trail is cutting through or avoiding an interior forest block or an intact grassland can minimize disturbance as well. Trails that run along the edge of a habitat or a transition zone between two habitats will have less of an impact than one that cuts a stand down the middle.

Keeping in mind corridors and other areas of connectivity that you may have enhanced on your property can help decide where trails are placed to minimize impacts. For example, trails that separate vernal pools from dry, upland habitat can create a barrier and

a hazard for salamanders and other amphibians while they are migrating back and forth during breeding seasons. Placing a trail outside of the 500-foot amphibian life zone would be a much better option. Keeping trails away from large snags, cavity trees used for denning, or intentionally girdled trees that may eventually need to be removed will eliminate both a potential safety hazard for trail-users and for the wildlife making a home in them.

The timing of when trail use occurs can also help minimize the impact on the local wildlife. Landowners who have invested in creating young forest habitat or other areas where there is high prevalence of breeding and nesting songbirds would want to avoid these areas during the spring breeding seasons as to not disturb the birds. Similarly, landowners who have implemented mast tree release or other practices to promote nut and acorn production may want to opt out of using those areas in the fall when species like bear and deer are feasting before the winter sets in. Thinking about the time of day when you are recreating or avoiding areas is also another option to minimize your impact. Wildlife is most active during the early morning and evening hours and resting during the heat of the day. Planning trail use around those times

will create less stress for animals in your area.

Providing for both recreational enjoyment and wildlife habitat can occur simultaneously on a property with forward and intentional planning. Landowners interested in learning more about how to accomplish this should reach out to the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife's Habitat program to learn more at <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/node/276> or request a site visit by emailing andrea.shortleeve@vermont.gov.





Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

NEWS FROM VERMONT SUSTAINABLE JOBS FUND

Humanity, Connection at Heart of ShackletonThomas

by Christine McGowan, Vermont Forest Industry Network



(Erica Houskeeper)

Charlie Shackleton has a pretty interesting story to tell. The renowned Vermont furniture maker does not, however, start his story with his connection to Sir Ernest Shackleton of Endurance fame, or with meeting his wife and business partner, Miranda Thomas, in art school. Rather, he begins in the woodshop of a private secondary school in Ireland.

“I went to some of the best private schools in Ireland and England thanks to my grandmother,” said Shackleton. “Most of those schools were gearing kids toward academia or successful careers in business, but I kept finding myself in the

woodshop. I was not an academic person at all. I loved making and creating things.”

Upon graduation from secondary school — the equivalent of high school in the U.S. — Shackleton learned that his parents were unable to afford University. Unsure of what he would study anyway, he took a job working with his father in a flour milling factory. “I had a bit of a crisis,” he said. “I didn’t see a clear path forward.”

It was a car accident at age 18 that jolted Shackleton toward his future. “I could have died,” he recalled. “I realized that I

had better be careful about how I wanted to live my life.”

Shackleton was intrigued by the idea that there were other kids like himself who were “perfectly intelligent but didn’t necessarily operate at their best in traditional academic settings.” He moved to England and took a job teaching craft workshops to refugees.

“There was one thing I was focused on,” he said. “Human beings’ hands are one of their best attributes. We are makers, fundamentally, and not everyone will thrive typing in a cubicle all day.”

It was on a field trip with the refugee group to a nearby art school that Shackleton found his next step. “I took one look and decided this was where I needed to be,” he said. “I had no credentials, but I talked my way in.”



Charlie Shackleton hand planes a piece of wood in his workshop at ShackletonThomas in Bridgewater. Charlie and his wife, potter Miranda Thomas, established ShackletonThomas in 1987. (Erica Houskeeper)



Furniture maker Nick English creates a sleigh armchair at ShackletonThomas in Bridgewater. (Erica Houskeeper)

The making of a maker

Enrolled in school at the West Surrey College of Art & Design, he immersed himself into the program, studying glass, wood, ceramics and metal. Although he loved working with wood, he calculated that glass blowing — a highly skilled occupation — would have better job security. “I figured that if I could learn to blow glass, I’d have a job for the rest of my life because no one else was doing it,” he said.

No one, that is, except for Simon Pearce. A few months before graduation, Shackleton met Pearce, an established glass blower in Ireland who was getting ready to move to America. Over dinner, Pearce offered Shackleton a job. “I said, that’s great,” recalled Shackleton. “It’s February now and I’ll be finished in June and could start then. Simon said, ‘Well, you’ll either start Monday or not at all.’ I started Monday.”

Thus began a lifelong friendship and 15-year partnership between Shackleton and Pearce. After five years of blowing glass in Quechee, Vt, Shackleton found himself spending more and more time making furniture. Again, an unexpected death altered his path. “I met this wonderful guy whose dream was to be a woodworker when he retired,” said Shackleton. “He retired at 65 and died a year later. It made me realize that I better start living the life I want to live now, in the middle years, when I still have the energy.”

Working from a shop in his basement, Shackleton began making furniture. “My first piece was a bed, and Simon bought it,” he said. “He was my first customer.”

For 15 years, Shackleton’s furniture was sold in the Simon Pearce showroom, helping him to build a business and a brand. It wasn’t until 1987 — the year his daughter was born — that Shackleton and his wife, Miranda, a potter, decided to go out on their own. “It was terrifying,” he said. “At that time, I had 27 furniture makers working for me. But we are people people. We know how to sell. We know how to connect. So, we leapt, and ShackletonThomas was born.”

Preserving human, forest connection

Thirty-three years later, Charlie Shackleton remains passionate about his work. “Our main obsession is preserving hand craft,” he said, while sanding a tray he was making for a class later that day. “Our employees make things one-by-one using hand skills. Not only is it a great profession, but for the customer, the final product feels like a human being made it.”

Shackleton takes that human connection one step further with his Naked Table Project (<https://nakedtable.com/>), which invites small groups of people to Vermont to build a table. Made from Vermont’s iconic sugar maple, the experience starts with a forest walk through the land where the maple was harvested.

“To fully understand the process of sustainably making furniture,” said Shackleton, “you must go into the forest. It will change the way you see furniture and your local woods forever.”

As the new president of the Vermont Wood Works Council (<https://vermontwood.com/>), Shackleton hopes to bring that message far and wide. “In order to survive in the wood business, you have to be connected to other people, to talk with them about how they are running their business, using their machinery, and



Furniture maker Nick English creates a sleigh armchair at ShackletonThomas in Bridgewater. (Erica Houskeeper)

VSJF continued on pg. 30

VSJF, continued from pg. 29



Charlie Shackleton hand planes a piece of wood in his workshop in Bridgewater. (Erica Houskeeper)

employing people. That networking piece and feeling that we are all in this together to survive is really important.”

“Unlike other makers who may be focused solely on the beauty of their craft, my wife and I take a hawk-eye view,” said Shackleton. “It’s a lifestyle choice to be deeply connected to the land, it’s what feeds our soul. Our work and what we do plays into our fundamental beliefs about the sustainability of this planet.”

Everyone has a story

Shackleton has one piece of advice for young people interested in forest economy jobs: Do the research. “Whether you’re buying an ATV or

exploring woodworking as a profession, talk to everybody. Find somebody in the wood business — maybe a logger, maybe a furniture maker — and talk to them. Say, ‘I want to be in the wood business. What is your advice? Who do you know?’ That’s what happened to me when I was 18. I took a boat to England and just talked to everyone until I found an answer. Talk to your buddy. Talk to the champion in your field. To this day, when I go out to find logs for the Naked Table project, I talk to the loggers and ask them about their life.”

“Every person has a remarkable story. You need to bask in that particular piece of sunshine and find out about it.”

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.

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.

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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.

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