

Vermont Woodlands Association and Vermont Tree Farm Program

MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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A VOICE FOR HEALTHY FORESTS



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Mission Statements:

Vermont Woodlands Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to advocate for the management, sustainability, perpetuation, and enjoyment of forests through the practice of excellent forestry that employs highly integrated management practices that protect and enhance both the tangible and intangible values of forests - including clean air and water, forest products, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, recreation, scenic beauty, and other resources - for this and future generations. VWA objectives are to communicate the benefits of working forests, recognize exemplary actions of woodland owners and managers, provide educational opportunities, and represent its membership before governmental bodies.

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

2018 on the Horizon... Yikes!

by Kathleen Wanner, Executive Director

It's hard to believe that 2017 is coming to a close. One year seems to roll right into another but each also has its own energy and excitement. Other than regular board meetings on the third Friday of every month, nothing is "regular" about VWA and what we do. So much is happening, my brain just flits from place to place. Here's a bit of what's on my mind...

I attended a Women Owning Woodlands 3-day workshop in October. There were about 30 people from around the county, including myself, Caitlin Cusack from VLT, and Jeannie Bartlett from Franklin Country NRCD. We were all totally energized by the connections and all that we learned from others in the "WOW Net." I reconnected with a woman from Pennsylvania, Nancy Baker, who was my first introduction to WOW back in 2010. Nancy led a "cognitive mapping" activity that I just loved and, no small wonder, the "map" of my land was made with yarn! I look forward to sharing this activity in our upcoming WOW workshops - two in the planning stages for winter and spring.

We've also been very focused on the Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers partnership in southern Vermont. Now in its second year, WWW is an initiative of VWA, Audubon Vermont, and American Forest Foundation to engage landowners in managing for birds and other wildlife. Two forest tours are in the works for December and January. One is a timber harvest site on Alan Calfee's tree farm where invasives treatment took place before marking timber. The

second is our "Habitat for Heat" project. Dan and Pat Stone's management plan includes creation of bird & wildlife habitat with logging to begin any day now. The low grade pine will go to the Pellet Mill where it will be converted into pellets for delivery to a local assisted living facility... a great story of "bird friendly" pellets that can be traced from the landowner to the end user.

As the legislative session tees up, I'd like to remind you that VWA has a seat on the Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) and is part of the WLE Coalition, the group of organizations that have advocated for continued funding of this initiative. WLEB has invested in farm and forest enterprises and funded technical assistance for things such as succession planning for woodland owners. The coalition will once again be advocating for working lands funding and we ask that you be alert to calls for action and contact your legislators when needed... about this or any other topic of importance to forest landowners or the health of our forest.

On a completely different subject... During an early morning chat with a forester, I started thinking about landowner relationships with foresters and how "forest time" can have an influence on these relationships. I recently heard a landowner (who is also a forester) use this term when referring to his thought process. It is in stark contrast to how most of us think, which is more likely monthly, quarterly, annually...

We always suggest that landowners be deliberative about selecting a forester and work to develop a long-term relationship, much as you would with your physician or accountant. But, most of us see our physician and accountant on a fairly regular basis, even if only once a year. You may not see your forester for five years or more, depending on your management plan. Maintaining a relationship with someone you rarely see can be difficult. And in fact, I often hear landowners say, "So and so was my forester but I haven't seen or heard from him or her for five years." They actually are not sure if they still have the same forester or if they should be moving on to someone else. They live in calendar time even though their land lives in forest time.

So I guess the real question is about how we navigate these differences. Perhaps we need to do a better job of setting expectations and think about how to maintain more regular communications between landowners and foresters. This is something I will ponder for a while and hope to get some inspiration. That inspiration could come from you... I love to hear from members with suggestions, comments, questions, etc. You are the heart and soul of VWA and we are completely irrelevant without you! I invite you to join me in stewarding the greatest landowner organization in Vermont.



NEWS FROM VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Pileated Woodpecker

by John Buck, *Wildlife Biologist*



While sitting in my bow stand one quintessential October afternoon I heard the bird before I saw it. A bit like a robin chuckling but more haughty with a hint of the prehistoric. Even through its repeated calling I could hear its wings beating too. Clearly a bird larger and more assertive than a robin. Then silence, followed by the steady and resonate drum roll on what could have been a finely tuned conga. The drum roll abruptly ended and more calling ensued. Then the calling took on different sound phases as the Pileated Woodpecker continued to call while in flight. This phenomenon is a vivid example of the Doppler Effect I vaguely remember from high school physics. As the woodpecker moved from tree to tree it continued to call. Had I been able to recall more of my high school physics, I would have been able to calculate the bird's speed and position relative to me by the frequency of each sound wave as they reached my ear drum. However, my memory, as I said, is vague. But then to my good fortune, the sound waves aligned with an opening in the forest and I caught a distinctive flash of white from the woodpecker's underside as it swooped up to the next excavation site.

With a wing span of nearly 30 inches the Pileated Woodpecker (pronounced with a long 'i' as in 'pile') is Vermont's largest woodpecker. Similar in size to the common crow it is nearly twice that of its relatives the Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and 50 percent larger than the Northern Flicker. In fact it is likely the largest woodpecker in all of North America with the now all but certain extinction of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Although its legal status is that of a migratory bird (i.e. Migratory Bird Treaty Act), the adult pair typically stays within their territory the entire year. In addition to making cavities in trees they excavate for food, they also excavate holes to make their nest. The pileated's hole is very distinctive in that it is oblong in shape not the more common round entrance made



by the other woodpecker species (not to mention much larger than the others too). Interestingly though, the woodpecker pair is not

known to use the same nest hole twice but rather creates a brand new one each nesting season. Not only do the excavation holes in trees serve the pileated, a variety of forest dwelling wildlife, including wood ducks, squirrels, bats, flycatchers, bluebirds, and other woodpecker species, compete for these ready-made homes.

Eggs are laid from mid-May to mid-June with incubation taking about 15 days. A normal clutch size is 3-4 eggs. Hatchlings are born helpless and require attentive parental care. However, they mature quickly and fledge in about 4 weeks from hatching. Ants are among the woodpecker's favorite food, especially carpenter ants. Beetles, insects, and their respective larva comprise the majority of the woodpecker's diet although consumption of some fruit and nuts has been reported.

Pileated Woodpecker habitat is a forest mixture of mature deciduous and coniferous trees (e.g. sugar maple,

WOODPECKER, *continued on pg. 23*

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Forestry Issues in the 2018 Legislature

By Put Blodgett, *President*

In 2017 legislation was passed granting timber harvesting equipment an exemption from the sales tax, similar to the exemption on agricultural equipment—a major help to loggers.

However, much more legislation relating to forestry remains in committee.

H.119, H.137, H.374 and H.461, all relating to employees, independent contractors and workers' compensation, are in the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development. Workers' Comp for loggers adds over 50% to an employee's wages, making it too expensive for many small operators and forcing them to work alone in a dangerous occupation. Combining several high-risk occupations into a larger pool and more safety training are being investigated. A report is due before the legislature reconvenes.

Because low-grade makes up two-thirds to three-quarters of our forests, the loss of low-grade wood markets are a threat to both loggers and landowners. A world-wide surplus of paper thanks to electronic communication has put pulp markets in decline and paper mills out of business. Warm winters and low-cost oil and gas hit the chip, pellet and firewood markets. Nevertheless, Vermont should support even more biomass heat and electricity for our schools and downtowns. The resulting pressure to “cut the best and leave

the rest” threatens to reverse years of improved forestry management.

Vermont needs to study Quebec's support for the forestry industry. Every day on I91 we see the best logs in New England heading north to the modern mills just over the border.

Forested acreage is declining in Vermont. H.233 aims to amend Act 250 to counter forest fragmentation and better protect forest blocks and passed the House in 2017. At the same time, H.424 created a two-year study committee to review and update the 50-year-old Act 250. Both bills will have to be carefully monitored to prevent any adverse effects on all aspects of forestry.

Another matter for careful monitoring is the financing for the clean-up of Vermont's waters. The cost of which is estimated to be 1.2 billion dollars over the next 20 years. Among the financing proposals are a per acre or a per parcel fee and/or a reduction in state support for the Current Use Program.

S.334 was an act to better coordinate state governmental activities in rural areas. As a result the Senate Committee on Agriculture held five public meetings around the state to collect input. Both agriculture and forestry interests were represented.

Of great interest to the forestry industry is S.101, the Right to Practice Forestry,



Put Blodgett

presently in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill “proposes to provide that certain forestry operations would not be subject to liability as a public or private nuisance”—such things as hours of operation, log landings, firewood operations and even such things as changing the view shed by cutting trees. Agriculture already enjoys such protection.

To keep informed on legislative activities, VWA is again employing Jane Clifford, a former lobbyist for the dairy industry, to monitor forestry-related bills and keep the board informed as to what is happening. She will not lobby, that is up to VWA.

That is where you, the VWA member, need to be active. You all have a representative in the House and two county senators. Speak to them if you see them, call them if you don't see them. They need to hear from the forest landowners on issues that affect us.

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.



NEWS FROM VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION

Watch list species highlight: Autumn Olive and Russian Olive

by Elizabeth Spinney, *Invasive Plant Coordinator*

Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) are deciduous shrub species within the Oleaster family, Elaeagnaceae, and are both considered invasive in New England. Autumn olive originates from eastern Asia, and Russian Olive originates from southern Europe and western Asia.

The first introductions of Autumn olive and Russian olive were in the early 1800s as ornamental plantings. From the 1940s till quite recently, their invasive tendencies weren't identified, and they were heralded as conservation plants for their ability to provide shelter and food for wildlife, and stabilize soils. Autumn olive has now spread across much of the entire east coast and central U.S.,



Photo: E. Spinney, VT FPR
Leaves are arranged alternately, and are elongate to lanceolate.

moving west and occurring in places in Montana, Washington, and Oregon. Russian olive has spread across almost all the continental U.S. and adjacent Canadian Provinces. They can be found in prairies, fields, open woods, roadsides, forest edges, and disturbed areas.

Both plants are prolific seed producers, the seeds have high germination rates, both tend to stump sprout when cut, are tolerant of shade and sun, are spread by wildlife, and can fix nitrogen which can disrupt nutrient cycling, which add up to significant negative impacts on native plant composition and wildlife habitat. Russian olive is particularly impactful to riparian areas, where it spreads and becomes the dominant cover, reducing habitat diversity. This documented behavior, and the continued spread in Vermont are reasons these species are listed on Vermont's unofficial invasive plant "watchlist."

The most effective way to tell the plants apart are by the leaves. Autumn olive leaves have silver scales on the lower leaf surface with undulating margins, while Russian olive leaves have silver scales on both sides.

To learn more about Autumn olive and Russian Olive, check out www.VTinvasives.org and these additional resources:



Photo: E. Spinney, VT FPR
Autumn branches are scaled and silver/brown in color.

Autumn Olive-

- www.extension.umaine.edu/publications/2525e/
- www.extension.psu.edu/autumn-olive
- www.cipwg.uconn.edu/autumn-olive

Russian Olive-

- www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialplants/woody/russianolive.html
- www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/invasiveplants/factsheets/pdf/autumn-and-russian-olive.pdf



Photo: Norbert Frank, University of West Hungary, Bugwood.org
Russian olive flowers are yellow, and have four petals.



NEWS FROM VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION

What Now? - Lessons from a windstorm in 2010

by Staff of the Vermont Forest Health program, adapted by Keith Thompson

On December 1, 2010 a windstorm blew through Chittenden County causing damage from Huntington to Underhill. When people were safe, and power was restored, landowners turned their attention to their woodlots. Softwood plantations and old-field pine were hit especially hard. While some landowners lost a few trees others lost hundreds or thousands of trees across their land, and the first sight of the damage was heartbreaking. In some cases, shaded and cathedral-like woods along favorite ski and bike trails became impassable tangles of tree trunks, sharp broken branches, all oozing pitch.

Following a windstorm there is a common question among landowners: “What Now?” Through working with nearly 30 landowners in 2010, I came up with the following list of considerations:

Trails – Trails get landowners in the woods for recreation and harvesting



Hinesburg Town Forest August 16, 2017
Photo by Harris Roen used with permission.

activities. Removal of trees from trails was important and maintained landowner’s connection with the forest. For some this was achieved with a full scale salvage operation across the blowdown area, while others achieved this with a hand crew focusing specifically on removing obstructions from the trail.

Natural disturbance – Topped, dead and broken trees are a natural part of the forest. They build soil, provide homes for wildlife, retain moisture and frankly, our forests could use more. Dead trees are part of a healthy forest. In 2010, leaving them where they fell was a choice that many landowners made, and it was often a good one for forest health.

Regeneration – If there were saplings growing beneath the trees that got knocked over, they seemed to grow faster with the new light created by the opening. Where people brought equipment in to pull out broken trees, many of the saplings were damaged or killed. Depending on the kind of forest landowners wanted, this could be a good or bad thing. Where invasive plants like buckthorn or honeysuckle were established beneath the trees that got knocked over, then these too grew faster under the new light. Killing these plants was important to prevent their spread, and removing the fallen trees made killing these plants safer and



Hinesburg Town Forest July 22nd 2011
Photo by Keith Thompson

easier. On average, salvage was unlikely to delay regeneration of forest trees, though it did affect the kind of trees that would occupy the windblown area.

Money – Trees uprooted or broken by wind were often less valuable than otherwise undamaged standing trees. Trees on the ground began to rot quickly and lose their value in a few summer months. Trees that may have had logs, once knocked over, were often cracked and less valuable. Getting trees to the mill was more labor intensive, dangerous and unpredictable than cutting them from the stump– which meant it was more expensive.

Standing trees – Even on hard-hit properties, the 2010 windstorm didn’t knock down all trees. Many that were left standing but damaged would recover,

BLOWDOWN, continued on pg. 18



VWA CONSULTING FORESTERS

Consulting Forester Profile: Steve Handfield Poultney, VT

For someone that didn't know what his calling was, Steve Handfield sure found it. Handfield's family legacy is 200 forested acres in Middletown Springs. His grandfather purchased the property after he returned from Europe at the end of World War II. Handfield says, "He purchased the property for \$1,200. He didn't tell my grandmother he'd spent \$1,200 or that he'd bought the property for a year or two." Handfield's grandfather fought in the Battle of the Bulge and received \$2,400 from the United States after serving. This family property is near and dear to Handfield and is his favorite place to walk in the woods, saying, "I could probably get around it blindfolded."

Handfield pursued some night classes at the Community College of Vermont and worked first shift at a factory in Rutland while he completed 30 general education credits. He didn't really



Steve Handfield and Blaze

know what he wanted to do but his experiences of walking around the woods led him to decide on forestry as a profession he would enjoy. He had some friends from high school who had attended the school he chose, Paul Smith's College, but they didn't have a lot of positive feedback for him and hadn't completed the program. He decided to go for it anyway, and graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor's of Science in Ecological Forest Management.

While at Paul Smith's, Handfield wrote a management plan for his family's 200 acres in Middletown Springs. The then Rutland County forester, Eric Hansen, was impressed by the plan and recommended Handfield contact Gabe Russo of Southwind Forestry LLC in Rupert who was looking for some help.

While in college someone had told Handfield that there wasn't a big demand for consultants so Handfield had planned to continue his education after earning his Bachelor's degree. It was while working for Southwind Forestry that Handfield realized there was a demand and opportunities for consulting foresters in that area.

Handfield really loves his job. No matter the weather he feels what he's doing is just another exciting day in the woods and it doesn't feel like work. When asked what makes him wake up every morning, he replied, "The opportunity to get out in the woods, to inventory

timber, mark a timber sale, or recon a boundary line... I eat breathe and sleep forestry, and I truly enjoy almost every aspect of my job. The positives outweigh any perceived negatives ten-fold." Even when he's climbing a mountain or marking a timber sale at -20 degrees, it rarely feels like work and it accomplishes his number one responsibility to support his family.

His interactions with landowners have been predominantly positive. "I think every job is a challenge in its own way, but not in a negative sense. I just make sure that I've crossed all my t's and dotted all my i's... that I give 100% all the time. The feeling of accomplishment of finishing a plan or closing out a timber sale is fantastic."

Handfield encourages those looking to get into forestry to really get themselves to events and to network. While in college he was in the student chapter of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and made sure he introduced himself to different professionals at conferences and events. Joining organizations like the SAF and attending regional SAF conferences is a great starting point for someone getting into the field. Even if it doesn't directly result in any jobs or specific opportunities, it is important to know who the players are in the industry, what they do, and to build rapport with them. If anything, putting yourself out

CONSULTING, *continued on pg. 22*



NEWS FROM THE VERMONT TREE FARM COMMITTEE

Tree Farm (and VWA) Politics II

by Alan Robertson, Co-chair VT Tree Farm Committee

In the fall edition I explained what the VWA Tree Farm Committee planned to do in the legislative effort of the 2019 Federal Farm Bill, and our participation in the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition. Well, our fly-in to Washington is over now and I can report on what we have accomplished.

Kathleen Wanner and I spent the 4th of October in the offices of our congressional delegation in Washington. I should mention that this was preceded by a joint visit to our delegations' local staffers in Burlington. It's important to keep the senators' and congressman's staff up to speed on our proposals so the locals get a first cut at what we think needs an effort or funding. Vermont is lucky to have a delegation of only three, all of which are significantly more in tune with their constituent needs than those in a lot of states. And because Vermont has so much forest, and relies so much on the economic impact those forests have in the state- whether forest products or recreation- the delegation does listen to representative forest organizations. I say lucky to have only three because their office buildings and their locations at the capitol are not "user friendly." There's a long, but beautiful walk between the congressional offices and the senatorial offices. And

inevitably there are long lines of children and demonstrators at the entrances waiting to pass through the security and detector gauntlet. Scheduling visits without sufficient time between can ruin the best prepared efforts and lose rare opportunities. With several years' experience we have little difficulty scheduling all three necessary visits in one day. Larger states' Tree Farm Committees don't have that luxury.

So, what did we discuss with the staffers we talked to? And, yes, we generally only deal with staffers. That's because the politicians are usually in session and they rely on a coterie of experts in various fields to keep them educated on all the issues they must deal with and look smart about. Talking to a staffer and not knowing exactly what you want, and what the present law and situation actually is, can be very embarrassing, so preparation on our part is critical. That's why it took almost 6 years for VWA to develop a proposal on invasives, and why we rely on similar set of staffers working at AFF to do the necessary background and development on the huge number of legislative proposals in the farm bill. The coalition has about 100 members with very divergent feelings so getting all those folks and organizations together and

getting consensus on issues is very difficult. Our five invasives proposals we hoped for approval on from the FIFB faced a lot of scrutiny, but we had some success! Two of those proposals were included in the official FIFB plank.

Our briefings to the staffers included our two invasive proposals as well as those that didn't make the cut, but the fact that two made the cut boosted their credibility to the staffers and also our credibility on the rest. Those two proposals outline a research program, based on competitive grants, to resurrect tree species threatened with extinction from invasive attacks (think ash, butternut, hemlock, whitebark pine, etc), and more emergency funding availability for the Secretary of Agriculture to deal with invasive emergencies. In that case APHIS historic fiscal inability to react to an invasive discovery has meant allowing the problem to quickly get out of hand, and cost much more than what some funding to quickly react would have been.

POLITICS, *continued on pg. 20*

The Forest in the Farm Bill (FIFB) Coalition is a diverse coalition of interests, including forest owners, conservationists, hunters, anglers, forest industry and natural resource professionals, that has worked together for over 15 years to build consensus forest sector platforms for the last three Farm Bills

Visit our website at www.vermontreefarm.org for information on the Tree Farm program, workshop opportunities, forestry related programs for students and teachers, and much more.



Thanks to our Tree Farm Inspectors

The success of the Tree Farm program is totally dependent on a dedicated corps of inspectors who help us uphold the high standard of excellence. We wish to thank our inspectors who completed required or regular inspections for us in the last three months.

Russ Barrett
Kathy Beland
Richard Carbonetti
Paul Harwood

Andy Hutchison
Don Tobi
Jeremy Turner
Randy Wilcox



Welcome new VWA members

As a membership organization, our strength is in numbers. When you join VWA you add your voice to ours in our mission to be *The Voice for Healthy Forests*. Our thanks to all for joining and welcome to VWA.

Our membership includes landowners, friends & family, and supports from 26 states in the US and Canada. Several of our new members are next generation landowners who were given the gift of membership by a family member. Whether you live in Vermont full-time or part-time, we hope you will be an active member and take advantage of the many opportunities we offer to learn, network, and enjoy Vermont's working woodlands.

Athena Aicher
Vineyard Haven, MA
Michael Ammel
So. Royalton, VT
John Ausura
Fernandina Beach, FL
Eileen Baker
Brownington, VT
Lou & Jean Bottiggi
Brentwood, TN
Anne & Michael Castine
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VERMONT TREE FARM INSPECTOR'S LOG

Star Date 11.13.17 - Senses, Scents, and Sensibility...

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

I am always amazed that one smell or one taste can somersault my mind to a different day and time in my life.

When I bite into a tree-ripened black plum, I return to late August in Maryland, the week of the Maryland State Fair in Timonium. With each bite, I am transported to riding in the back seat of my Aunt Jeanette's car, with as many kids as we can cram in- one sitting up- one sitting back, in late summer Maryland humidity, it was a sticky ride. Another bite, and we are entering our projects in hopes of a ribbon to place, not just the green participation ribbon. The sweet juices drip down the front of my shirt and there we are having a picnic on the grass outside the 4-H building. That was such a spread, Granny's fried chicken, always black plums, Utz potato chips, watermelon, probably macaroni salad, sweet tea or lemonade, and I can't remember what else!! At the time, I think

all of us just wanted to go to the midway and eat fair food, which was probably cheap by today's standards, but was pricey for all of us! I realize now that if we had done that, my black plum musings would not transport me back to such a simple time. One more bite, and I am watching my mom win the Governor's Cake Contest. She did the entire Maryland Flag on that cake- transporting it from Westminster to Timonium in likely one of our old ugly Plymouth station wagons with no air conditioning. It was a miracle that it didn't melt away. In that last bite, when the flesh fell away from the pit cleanly and completely, it was perfection in a plum, the measure of a perfect day and perfect memory. It is disappointing, to say the least, that actually experiencing a perfect black plum is a rare occurrence these days. I believe they are picked long before the sweetness settles in, but even without the flavor, without the experience, but instead just thinking

about it, just settling my gaze on one, takes me back, and puts a smile on my face. Not because it was a great plum, but because well, my mom, my sisters and cousins and Aunts and grandmother were there, all together, at the state fair! They are good memories.

The change of seasons does that to me as well, fall colors, and the smell of the leaves, takes me to 729 Uniontown Road and big Norway maples in the yard and what seemed like 10 tons of leaves. Gigantic leaf piles, the smell of the woods in the fall, picking up acorns and other treasures, remembering Mom and Dad announcing we were going for a walk in the woods, and being so excited and moved quickly to get there. A quick walk past the cherry trees, across the meadow, down the lane and then I was

INSPECTOR'S LOG, *continued on pg. 21*

Vermont Tree Farm Standards Review Standard #4-Air, Water, and Soil Protection

In this article, we continue the review of the 8 Standards set by the American Forest Foundation for the American Tree Farm System. Because it is the responsibility of the landowner to make sure these standards are being met on their property, the Vermont Tree Farm Committee has decided to review these standards for your education. Today we discuss "Standard 4-Air, Water, and Soil Protection."

Standard 4: Air, Water, and Soil Protection- Forest management practices maintain or enhance the environment and ecosystems, including air, water, soil, and site quality. When we think of using best management practices one of the first things that comes to mind in regards to forestry are Vermont's Acceptable Management Practices, otherwise known as AMPs. These guidelines

assist foresters, landowners, and loggers in the protection of water quality through practices that limit soil erosion, accidental petroleum discharge, and through limiting woody debris from entering into Vermont's waters. These practices can be described in more detail by either your consulting forester,

STANDARDS, *continued on pg. 23*

TOURS, MEETINGS, & WORKSHOPS

WINTER TREE ID WITH KYLE MASON

Saturday, December 16, 2017
10am – 12pm
One World Conservation Center
Bennington, VT

HISTORICAL LAND USE CHANGE & THE WILDLIFE OF VERMONT WITH KIM ROYAR

Tuesday, January 23, 2018
6:30pm – 8:00pm (Room 105)
College of Saint Joseph
Rutland, VT
and

Thursday, February 15, 2018
7pm – 8pm
One World Conservation Center
Bennington, VT

WHO GOES THERE? WILDLIFE TRACKING WORKSHOP

Saturday, February 3, 2018
1pm – 4pm
One World Conservation Center
Bennington, VT

WALK IN THE WOODS: TRACKS & TREES WITH LYNN LEVINE

Saturday, February 10, 2018
(Backup date Sunday, Feb. 11)
9am – 4pm
Dummerston, VT, USA

SKI AND SNOWSHOE IN THE WOODS

Saturday, February 17, 2018
10am – 1pm
North Woods Stewardship Center
East Charleston, VT

RATTLESNAKES IN VERMONT

Thursday, March 8, 2018
7:00pm – 8:30pm
Community College of Vermont
Rutland, VT

TREE FARM REWIND

Beating a Dead Horse... or The Infamous Need for a Tree Farm Inspection!

by Alan Robertson, *Co-chair VT Tree Farm Committee*

I've written about these before, and Kathy (and Kathleen) have taught the company line about paperwork and inspections until Kathy can't find the Enterprise any more (Yes, she's a Trekkie!) but we have a naïve hope that, with a snappy title and a nice new magazine format, everyone will read this and do what's necessary to make the system work.

What I'm talking about are the various types of official forester visits (ominously called inspections) and paperwork (the treacherous and bureaucratic 004 Form!) the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) requires of foresters and landowners to maintain good standing as a third-party certified property in the program. Vermont is one of the ATFS states that decided to stay with third party certification because of the high standard it sets and the need to maintain a high degree of credibility in forest management. Unfortunately, to maintain this level of credibility there is a need for a lot of oversight in the form of "process" and "paperwork" to ensure the standards are being met. Frankly, most of the work and training deals with "bureaucracy". Not surprisingly, the same is true for all the companies and organizations who have signed up to the ISO 9001 and 14001 management system standards. But it is worth it when one sees the level of quality and credibility those folks have achieved in their fields. Tree Farm is the same.

So, there are annual "required" inspections that are determined secretly by AFF; generally a statistical sample of the number of Tree Farms, of various sizes, in the state at a certain point in time. The list is sent to us in January

and we must have a certified TF forester conduct an "inspection" of that property, and complete a Form 004, not later than the middle of December of that year. The forester can be the landowner's forester because these checks are considered "maintenance" checks within the system.

Then there are "audits" conducted by a certified third party (like PricewaterhouseCoopers- PwC) every few years (a bone of contention for us as we seem to be targeted too often) to confirm the findings of the maintenance inspections and to both reward those who excel and identify problems needing resolution in the system. The audits are conducted by a forester from out of the state and they generally compare the quality of the management plan with the actions on the ground in the landowner's forest. The plan must have certain elements, and the work on the ground must match the plan. The auditing forester likes to have either the landowner or forester (or both) along during the property inspection.

Finally, there are "optional" inspections. These used to be a routine requirement of the old Tree Farm system where a landowner would receive a visit from a forester every 5-6 years and fill out a 004 form, and that was all that ever happened. The requirement went away when the ATFS changed the requirements a few years ago and went to the "required" statistical samples, but Vermont kept them on... Why would we do that, and increase our demands on

HORSE *continued on pg. 24*

VT TREE FARMER PROFILE

Vermont Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year Tour

Silvia Cassano, VWA Executive Assistant

While touring the Stoner Family Tree Farm on a lovely summer day in August, it was clear to all participants that the family is connected to their land and everything it offers to them, to their community, and to what it provides to those outside of its boundary lines.

David and Jenny Stoner were presented with the 2017 Vermont Tree Farmer of the Year Award at the Vermont Woodlands Association Annual Meeting in April. There, David gave an informational presentation on the history of their quest to find a parcel of land in Vermont, their progression into learning how to properly manage their woodlands, and how they interact with the forestry community helping them manage their lands and the community in which they live.

Throughout the years they have provided valuable outreach to community members through various workshops, tours, and hands-on projects. They themselves have continued to learn and shape their stewardship ethic. Initially they had attended a class taught by Ross Morgan, who became their forester. He was a mentor to the Stoners in adopting

their priorities and management strategies for their woodlands.

Fast forward to present day, and the Stoner Family has worked on many of the management objectives including several thinnings, two-acre patch cuts, releasing more than 300 wild apple trees, planting berries and fruits to provide native food for wildlife, preserving water quality, and providing recreational opportunities for their community. It was evident that David and Jenny involved generations of their family in the management of their land, and have gained not only an interest in continuing the sound management from their children, but from their grandchildren too.

There were three tours offered during the TFOY celebration. Among the approximately 100 attendees were certified Tree Farmers, foresters, natural resource professionals, community members, and family friends.

The Wildlife Habitat Management and Land Use History Tour was co- led by Farley Brown and Jared Nunery. Brown is a professor of ecology at Sterling College, and former executive director of Vermont Coverts and VWA, while Nunery is the Orleans County Forester and nominated David and Jenny for the



Vermont Tree Farmer of the Year Award. This tour took participants to locations showcasing over two decades of habitat improvement work, and included some historical context of the Vermont landscape, then and now, and how that influences the landscape today.

The Silviculture and Natural Communities Tour was led by Ross Morgan of Northern Forest Conservation Services LLC (their forester), Vermont Land Trust's Liz Thompson, and Dawn Morgan, wetlands ecologist and Ross' daughter. This tour had many foresters in attendance, and went across the most difficult terrain.

TREE FARMER *continued on pg. 24*



TREE FARMERS & VWA MEMBER PROFILE

Meet Rick Bizzozero

Many VWA members and Tree Farmers are familiar with the Bizzozero name and although we are featuring Rick Bizzozero, current VWA member and Tree Farmer, the story really begins with his parents, Richard “Biz” and his wife Rita whose tradition of stewardship began 60 years ago on the family Tree Farm. Rick now manages the property in Brookfield and credits his interest in stewardship to his parents who nurtured his curiosity and learning along the way. The prevalent theme in the Bizzozero family land stewardship history is that it was very much a family affair.

Rick says, “Part of my dad’s motivation was to encourage my interest and participation in the property. I spent a lot of time as a kid playing in the streams and making little dams and pools and seeing the brook trout in the stream.”

The family lived in Burlington and had been searching for property as a weekend retreat. There were two original parcels of 60 acres each that were purchased in 1957. The two parcels were accessible by a right of way across the Taylor Farm, which divided the property. When the Taylor Farm parcel came up for sale in 1963, Biz purchased the farm and



Rita and Biz

all three parcels were now connected, totaling 219 acres. This was the family woodlot and they were technically absentee landowners, although they made day trips from Burlington...

“We had very active management,” Rick said. “My father was always very conservative about trees that he would remove, always planning for the future with an eye towards improving the long-term quality of the timber.” When Rick was a teenager, every summer he and his father would do timber stand improvement (TSI) on a 10 acre stand with funding that was available during that 10-15 year period. “My father gave me an incentive – the \$500 cost share to help out. It was work we could both do together, and I think, was a way of encouraging my participation and interest in the property.”

Not only did Rick help his father with the TSI, when he was 14 he decided to start a Christmas tree plantation on a couple of acres. His mother and father helped him establish it, and although it was a hobby, he ran it as a business. Rick and his parents planted the first thousand Balsam fir and Scotch pine in 1969 and Rick ran this operation for the next 45 years.

Another idea the young Bizzozero had in his college years was to build a log cabin on the property using the Norway spruce planted on the property in 1919.

“During the month of June, we’d cut some trees and peel the bark from them. That was a learning experience and the project ended up being bigger than I



Rick leads a tour of the Bizzozero Family Tree Farm in 2007.

expected. I never finished the cabin. It sat for about 10 years after the steam ran out, and long story short, eventually one of the loggers ended up bulldozing the rotting cabin into the woods as part of a logging job close out work,” Rick recollected. “My parents encouraged and helped peel the logs, but they weren’t going to build it for me.”

In 1997, when Rick said he was, “a little wiser” and possessed “a little more resources” and had some help, he built a barn to house the equipment that is used to manage the property. While his father was alive the equipment was stored down the hill at the neighbor’s barn. Having the tractor and equipment storage on the property has been very helpful and more efficient.

The eight to ten acres of field are mowed once a year in mid-August to be mindful of the nesting birds. There are sections that are mowed once every three years to encourage diversity of habitat. There is some wild chervil in the fields that has shown up especially after the soil was disturbed from recent logging operations.

PROFILE *continued on pg. 25*

Crop Tree Release

By Kyle Mason, Bennington County Forester and Tree Farm Inspector

Last night I finally finished stacking my six cords of firewood that I will be using to heat my house this winter. As I sat back admiring my neatly stacked pile I started reminiscing about all the times my father forced my brother and me to help him fell, buck, split, move, and stack countless cords. At the time, I hated doing the work but as an adult I am grateful for the time I spent out in the woods working with him. In fact, I blame these forced labors on being a big reason I became a forester.

In Vermont harvesting your own firewood is almost as “Vermontish” as boiling maple syrup and for many of us, it even becomes a sort of rite of passage. Besides the romantic side of burning wood, using it to heat your home supports the local economy, helps to reduce carbon emissions (burning firewood is carbon neutral; it releases carbon that was pulled out of the atmosphere instead of carbon that was stored below ground), along with promoting good forestry. Without a strong firewood market removing undesirable trees would be much more difficult.

As the Bennington County Forester, I spend as much time in the woods with landowners as possible and one of the things we often talk about is how to effectively harvest firewood. Many folks like to harvest dead standing trees and blow downs or will focus their attention on getting rid of the “bad trees” on their land. Well folks, I’m here to tell you today that there is a better way to do it and it’s called the “Crop Tree Release Method.”

Why is this method a “better way,” you may ask? Well, when using the crop tree release method, you shift your focus from what you’re removing to what you want to grow. It takes the same amount

of physical work as the methods I described earlier (though there is some additional mental work). And, it still gets you the firewood you desire while increasing the growth rates of future saw logs, the amount of food trees can produce for wildlife, and/or the overall health of your forest all at once.

Before I get into how you actually do it, let me touch on the problems with the first methods I described above, starting with harvesting dead standing trees and blow downs. I completely understand why folks would target these; they are easy to get, and they’re already dead so you don’t have to kill a tree to get your firewood from them. Both of those things are true; however, if you think you’re helping your forest by removing these elements, you’re really not. Dead and downed material in a forest is a natural part of every forest and these things are so important to the forest that ecologists have given them special scientific names: “snags” and “coarse woody debris.” They are extremely important to a variety of wildlife that needs them to survive. But don’t take my word for it. Take a moment to google the two terms and learn all about them. Additionally, the BTUs you get from them is extremely diminished when compared to the BTUs you get from harvesting live trees. Basically, doing this diminishes your forest’s ecosystem while giving you a less desirable product and still forcing you to do the same amount of work as other methods.

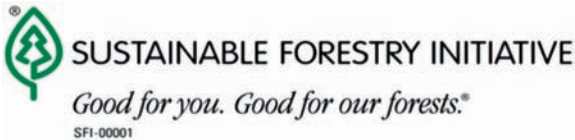
The second method I mentioned before was cutting out the “bad trees.” I have far less negative comments on this method though you also won’t find me praising it as much as the crop tree release method. Harvesting a “bad tree” does not diminish the ecological value

of a forest, and it does produce a quality product with maximum BTU values. But what you need to ask yourself is, “What did I gain from this other than the firewood?” True you did remove a bad tree from your forest, which you will never hear me complaining about, but how is your forest now going to react to what you just did? Most likely, the tree you removed was competing with neighboring trees for sunlight. These trees you left behind will now take full advantage of the gap you just created and in about 8 years they will have expanded their crowns into the gap and as a result they will be growing faster, be healthier, and if they are a tree like an oak, be producing more food for wildlife. But what if those neighboring trees are also “bad trees”? What have you really gained? The answer is, not much other than firewood. If in doing this you accidentally released a “good tree” then you also just accidentally did a crop tree release and you might as well be using the method I’m preaching in this article already.

At this point I’m hoping you’re sold on the idea of giving this method a try so let’s get into how it’s done. Beside possibly teaching your kids some valuable life lessons and getting firewood to get through a long Vermont winter, the goal of a crop tree release is to increase the crown sizes of desirable trees. It’s a big change from looking for trees to cut, to looking for trees to grow but once you get it down, it will become second nature to you. Here is what to do:

1. **Select a crop tree.** They can be future saw logs (focus on the first 10 feet of a tree: it should be straight,

CROP continued on pg. 19



NEWS FROM SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Vermont SFI® Update

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

SFI Vermont continues to promote the principle of sustainability as our private forest landowners manage for the future. The use of a third-party certification program develops confidence in buyers and consumers of forest products that these forestlands are well managed today and will be here for generations to come. SFI® is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting forest sustainability and supporting the links between sustainable forests and communities through carefully targeted research, direct leadership of critical initiatives, and partnerships that effectively contribute to multiple conservation objectives. Nationwide, Forests certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard cover more than 285 million acres. Millions more acres benefit from the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard. SFI's Forest Management, Fiber Sourcing and Chain of Custody Standards work to ensure the health and future of forests. Through application of these certification standards, SFI's on-product labels help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions. SFI Inc. is governed by an independent three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally. Learn more at sfiprogram.org.

Seeking Solutions in High Workers' Compensation Costs
For the 20-year history of SFI,

loggers' education including safety has been a cornerstone of the certification standards. Trained loggers better understand their impacts on the land, environment, tree health and safety. With Workers' Compensation (WC) cost spiraling out of control for Vermont logging contractors, we are now seeing more attention by Government Officials and Legislators. VFPA has had WC reform as a priority issue for its entire 40-year history. Deputy Commissioner Sam Lincoln has spearheaded the effort bringing industry leaders, educators, regulators and insurance carriers together to flush out ideas and practical solutions to address affordability. SFI Vermont is at the table to find what support we can provide to enhance Vermont's premier Loggers Education to Advance Professionalism (LEAP) to do an even

better job teaching loggers safety that regulators and insurance carriers will recognize and offer lower rates to trained loggers. Because SFI has been a driver of loggers training for certification, we can become a resource to assist and support these efforts.

SFI Launches 22nd Annual Progress Report

SFI has officially launched the 2017 Progress Report - Forests. A Way of Life. The report is now available for download here: <http://www.sfiprogram.org/files/pdf/2017-sfi-progress-report/>.

This 18-month calendar shows how the important work of sustainable forest management is a year-round endeavor. It also illustrates how our well-

SFI, continued on pg. 19

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Local Wood. Local Good.

By Put Blodgett, *President*

Downhill skiing was growing in popularity in the early 1930s and to join the flow, Dartmouth fixed up an old horse shed at an abandoned logging camp on the east side of Moosilauke. This proved wildly popular in the winters of '33-'34 and '34-'35 but the renovated horse barn burned to the ground in the fall of 1935. The manager and his wife purchased a local home and continued to take skiers, but the college wanted to return to the mountain.

Hiring Maine guide Ross McKinney in 1937, Dartmouth now had the skilled leader who could do something grand with logs. Fortunately, virgin spruce were cut and skidded out in the winter of '37-'38. The Lodge was under construction when the Hurricane of 9/21/38 hit. The logs would probably have been inaccessible in the jackstraw mess that resulted from the hurricane. A crew from Warren, NH who knew how to work and handle an axe and cross-cut had the Lodge completed by mid-winter.

It was estimated to last between 35 and 50 years but lasted 77. Logs crack lengthwise, but laid horizontally they pick up rain and snow leading to rot. Bringing the building up to modern building codes would have cost as much as constructing new, so the latter course was followed. The building is a combination of log and stick construction for energy efficiency. I was pleased to have contributed my best white pine logs and some unique wood as a part of the log construction.



Exterior: Front of Lodge under construction.



Corner detail—the level of complexity achieved by Nininger and his crew.



Joinery: This demonstrates the fine joinery of round log to round log by master log builder John Nininger of Newbury, VT and his crew.



Double tenons: These tenons secured two trusses going in two directions on two levels. Extremely difficult workmanship.



Upside down trusses: The purlins (longitudinal rafters) are shallowly sawed on one side to achieve a flat surface and then that side placed against an upside-down v-frame. This results in a flat roof with the vertical uprights holding up the trusses cut to length to match the diameter of the various trusses.



T-bone: This T-shaped tenon and mortise secures the truss to the upright both laterally and longitudinally.



Roof purlins - Roof purlins in place on top of log trusses. Most visible logs came from Put Blodgett's Bradford Tree Farm.



Hoisting logs - Notice tenons on top of uprights to fit into mortises (holes cut to receive tenons)

BLOWDOWN, *continued from pg. 7*

while others would not. Trees can recover from a surprising amount of damage. Decisions on which standing trees to cut or leave were difficult to make. In some cases where blowdown occurred it made sense to conduct salvage in conjunction with other forest management. This worked best under the guidance of a consulting forester.

Harvest Layout – In a normal setting, a logger can cut the tree so that it can be efficiently and delicately removed from the forest. When trees were knocked over by wind in 2010, loggers had less control over how the trees were approached and removed. This made it more difficult to protect the remaining healthy trees, streams, wet ground or recreational trails during the salvage. Anecdotally, dry or frozen ground in combination with the right equipment and good planning made for happier landowners following salvage work.

Safety – Trees leaning near homes and

parking lots were common. Rootballs of uprooted trees often re-righted themselves when the tree was severed. Trees bent and pinned contained massive amounts of tension and had explosive force when released by cutting. It required expert care and the right equipment to approach work in these areas. For individual trees near homes or structures, arborists were often the best resource. For larger numbers of trees, away from structures, foresters and loggers offered a lot of help.

Expectations – Few forests were meaningfully “cleaned up” from the blowdown. Trails got cleared, financial value realized, invasive plants controlled but few if any landowners felt like they “had their old forest back.” The blowdown was irreversible. The landowners that were most happy following the blowdown had help from a forester in considering their options and had realistic expectations related to the costs, benefits and risks of their decisions.

Urgency - The speed with which the blowdown occurred in 2010 felt like it had to be matched by a speedy response. In some cases, less than respectable individuals took advantage of this and urged landowners to rush decisions. It may be true that the window for action in response to wind damage is narrower than other forest management decisions – however, rushed activities with heavy equipment can have irreversible consequences. Working with foresters helped landowners to approach the situation with the degree of urgency that fit their situation.

Advice - Know that with few exceptions leaving broken trees in Vermont’s woods is good for the forest. On the other hand, there are a lot of good reasons to pull the damaged trees from the forest (money, access, invasive plant control, aesthetics, future species composition). Because few trees get moved without heavy equipment, and heavy equipment has a big impact on land, it’s important to have a game plan: “*what does the road system look like? How will streams be avoided? What happens if the weather doesn’t cooperate?*” To make a plan, call your county forester, work with a consulting forester, and have a contract with your logger. Review the Landowner Guides for a Successful Timber Harvest and download them for free from www.VTcutWithConfidence.com.

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CROP, *continued from pg. 15*

have no rot, and hardwoods should be branch free) and/or valuable wildlife trees (any oak, any cherry, any hickory, basswood, serviceberry, apple, hawthorn, or yellow birch). Any sized tree is good; remember they will grow. Pick ones with crowns that poke out into the sunlight (suppressed trees will not respond as well to a release).

- 2. Figure out which trees are competing with the MAIN canopy of your crop tree.** Trees that are growing next to your crop tree that are below the canopy line are not affecting your crop tree and should be left. In fact, these trees are helping to protect your crop tree from wind, ice and sun scald damage and should be left. Only

select the trees that are in direct competition with your crop tree's crown. Often, the trunks of these trees are further away from your crop tree's trunk than you will expect.

- 3. Harvest your firewood from the competing trees.** Do this on any trees to the north, east and west of your crop tree. If it's an apple tree, hawthorn, or serviceberry, also remove the competing trees to the south. Removing the competing tree to the south with other crop trees may result in negative effects from sunlight striking the bowl of a tree that is used to being in the shade.

For more information on how to use this method properly, I suggest

checking out the "Technical Guide to Crop Tree Release in Hardwood Forests" done with USDA Forest Service Stewardship funds, which can be found on line. Or better yet, consult with a licensed forestry professional or your local County Forester.

I hope this article was helpful to you. I am looking forward to the day when my two toddler sons are old enough for me to drag them out into the woods under the pretense of forced labor to share with them the joys of cutting our own firewood. Having some free labor is going to be great. I think my dad was on to something with this one!

SFI, *continued from pg. 16*

managed forests provide conservation, community and economic benefits that improve the lives of millions of people.

Project Learning Tree and Sustainable Forestry Initiative Join Forces to Expand Youth Environmental Education Programs

SFI and the American Forest Foundation (AFF) announced this past July that SFI has become the new home of Project Learning Tree (PLT). PLT is an award-winning environmental education program that uses trees and forests as windows on the world to increase youth understanding of the environment and actions they can take to conserve it. PLT's integration into SFI provides an opportunity for the program to expand its reach and impact. And SFI's role as a sustainability leader will be bolstered by PLT's expertise in education, an increasing focus in SFI's community engagement work.

In Vermont, PLT is housed in the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation in Montpelier. Rebecca Roy is the Vermont PLT Coordinator. SFI VT met with Rebecca to learn about how she is integrating PLT curriculum into our schools and other educational venues such as preschools, daycares, summer camps and Boy and Girl Scouts.

In Vermont PLT uses the Vermont Tree Farm Board as an advisory Board with the leadership of the Vermont Woodlands Association. SFI VT has been invited to attend the meetings to learn what role SFI can play to be most supportive of PLT efforts.

2017 Boy Scouts National Jamboree SFI staff provided support for the 2017 Boy Scouts National Jamboree, held at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. The SFI display booth represented a stop on the "Conservation Trail", providing an opportunity to

highlight the use and meaning of the SFI label across a range of products. Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has consistently applied the label and used certified content in a range of BSA publications, and underscored its importance in the Sustainability Merit Badge handbook. Well over 1,000 scouts and leaders visited the SFI booth over the course of several days. The Summit Bechtel Reserve itself is among several properties totaling over 100,000 acres managed by BSA, and certified to the SFI Forest Management Standards. A highlight of the visit included presentation of a plaque of appreciation to SFI by leadership at BSA.

SFI Vermont works closely with others involved in the forestry sector, trade associations, educational institutions, safety program leaders, State and Federal Government Officials and lawmakers.

POLITICS, *continued from pg. 9*

Also promoted were:

- HR.2862/S.1872- the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. At present all agencies/programs funded through the interior appropriations bill, like the USFS (including the NRCS, EQIP, etc.), National Park Service, BLM, US Fish and Wildlife, etc. is forced to use money from all of their different accounts to cover the inadequate funding budgeted for wildfire suppression. The act would treat wildfires as the emergencies they are and allow the budget caps

- under the Budget Control Act to be adjusted upward.
- HR.1380/S.538- Timber Innovation Act- this act would help develop new wood technologies and markets for wood. Of note is the recent development of structural softwood panel systems that allow the construction of multistory high-rises. Typically, here in the east, the wood used is hemlock, spruce-fir, or pine.
- HR.3161/S.1480- Biomass Thermal Utilization Act- This act would increase the residential renewable energy investment tax credit, and improve the market for low quality wood.
- Careful settlement of the Canadian Softwood trade dispute- Most of this controversy is out west. What is not so obvious here in the east is that a lot of the lumber coming out of Canada is made from New England logs. Our mills need protection from unreasonably low milling opportunities north of the border but loggers and landowners also need a market for their logs.
- The many landowner and conservation programs Vermont relies on for forest health, conservation, and sustainable management- EQIP, CSP, CRP, CIG, RCPP, HFRP, CWEP, Bio-based Markets program, etc.

the state legislative season in January 2018. Like the federal side, VWA has several legislative goals, and will be monitoring the legislature for legislation that could be harmful to our members. Some of the open items left over from last year include:

- Protection, funding and maintenance of the Use Value Appraisal (current use) tax abatement program for managed forests
- A strong Right to Practice Forestry law that protects landowners against frivolous law suits
- Equality between forestry and farming in tax and environmental policy
- Help for low quality wood markets through increased use of biofuels in public buildings
- Truck weight comparability with surrounding states on state highways
- Fees on the lake Champlain cleanup-recognition that forests are the solution to the pollution not the cause
- State estate tax policy comparable to the federal policy
- Structuring forest integrity programs against fragmentation through incentive-based solutions rather than broadening Act 250 to include this issue

You can be a part of our political activity. If you have a concern about a legislative proposal, send us an e-mail. If you think a law or regulation is needed, send us an e-mail. Grass roots participation and input is the most important source of information to the process. The most effective way to make a point with a legislator, in the process, is to testify about how the proposal has or will affect your life or land. Those are the stories we need to capture and you are the ones who have to be prepared to come and relate the story. We are looking for a few good stories out there and if you think you have one please contact VWA!

The actual Farm Bill is being developed right now by the Senate and House Agriculture Committees. The coalition will be testifying on the bill over the next few months and members of those committees are seeking input from their constituents right now, so the fly-in timing was perfect for having our voice heard. We'll keep you informed in our e-news and magazines as we find out how the bill is sugaring off.

For Vermont our next legislative challenge is coming up with the start of

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www.woodlandowners.org/insurance

INSPECTOR'S LOG, *continued from pg. 11*

in heaven. Or when they said we were going to the mountains, which meant maybe a 45-minute drive to Thurmont where we had a choice of Catoctin Mountain Park, or Cunningham Falls State Park. We would drive through Uniontown, and Detour (so named because it flooded a lot), Rocky Ridge and then through Thurmont, up Route 77 and would begin to gain elevation. The hemlocks enveloped Big Hunting Creek, the temperature dropped, and with the window open, that smell of water and leaf mold made me breathe easier, just as it does now when I am in the woods. Those moments, triggered by my senses likely contributed to my career choice.

Sometimes, when I stop long enough to not be thinking of just work, and the task at hand, I breathe deep, and am transported to looking for crayfish at the base of Cunningham Falls, and I can hear my mom yelling at my Dad and I and my sisters when we climb up the rock faces to, "Get off of those rocks! You all are going to break your necks!" Puts a smile on my face every time! And I am now listening to my own daughter giving out dire warnings to my grandkids and their dad when they do crazy stunts. It is hard not to listen to her and hear myself, and my mother and grandmother, or not be transported back in time looking at the grandkids in a leaf pile and not see Erin and Joey, and my sisters and I, all sitting next to them.

All that from the smell of leaves and the taste of a plum. In case you didn't notice, I used the word transport, pretty generously. It is almost like beaming ourselves back in time with our scents and senses! Although we aren't quite there in this cyber age, we surely do it with our data and mapping and email. Remember when all we had were typewriters, then electric typewriters, then word processors, and then came the personal computer? What a crazy wild ride, when now most of us carry a computer in our pocket,

and rely on it for so much of our lives. I think it must be pretty overwhelming to be an elderly person in 2017, having seen technology change so much in their lifetime. Many of you reading this may have personally experienced cross-cut sawing, and loading 4-foot pulpwood by hand. Now we see just about every type of logging in the woods.

As foresters, we use our GPS units, maybe an iPad or other electronic data collection, but I for one, will never give up on carrying a paper map along with all of my rechargeable equipment, and making handwritten notes. I just can't seem to let that go. Sometimes- I long for the days of just the paper, and the quiet of compiling data, the scritch-scratch of pencil and hand drawing maps, but oh the time it took. And time just seems to keep moving forward, especially when there is something I know I need to do, but just can't remember what it was. And many times, that something is Tree Farm. Maybe it was that I did that field inspection, and never completed the 004. Maybe it was that I need to do an inspection, but just haven't scheduled a time to be there. Did I take that course- or miss a meeting? Attend a workshop? Schedule a Tree Farm tour? Or – whoops! - I needed to send out notifications to all of you inspectors to remind YOU to do your 004's, complete an online training, take an in-person training, and remain certified! I try, but like you, time does just slip away, and sometimes the sensible approach of just prioritizing and getting something done, slips through my now arthritic fingertips! So I will be sensible now, and let you in on a secret. We all do it. We forget. We delay. We push things to the bottom of the pile, and time slips away. No black plum or leaf pile will bring that back! So I am going to prioritize a list for all of you and me too. Here goes:

1. Check your email, and read your snail mail for updates for Tree Farm Inspectors. We send out

postcards to all of you to keep you informed. Sightline eNews is your ATFS newsletter for Inspectors. Pay attention to these! There is always something pertinent!

2. With number one in mind, details of the new Inspector Training Policy are in the Sightline from November 8th. This is IMPORTANT to maintain your status.
3. Check your certification status online, or with Kathleen or myself. You may have fallen out of active status. If you read a recent notice from ATFS, you would be aware that ATFS is extending your ability to maintain certification by taking an online refresher for inspectors by 12/31/17. If you miss this date, you will be required to take an in person training to maintain your status. This newsletter will likely go out after our December 6th training. We won't schedule another training until sometime in February at the earliest.
4. A good way to complete those optional 5-year inspections is to complete them when you are on the property completing field work, updating a plan, or checking a timber sale. The landowner does not have to be with you, or sign the 004, but should be notified that you are completing one, in case they want to tag along.

I could add so much more, but for this time of year, I am trying to maintain some decorum of sensibility for our busy lives. These are a few simple items for you to take care of. Hopefully, this leaves plenty of time for the last leaf piles to jump into before we smell the snow in the air, taste the flakes on our tongue, view the winter landscape, feel the cold on our cheeks, and listen to the quiet of a snow covered forest at daybreak. It doesn't get much better than that, unless of course, there is a black plum involved.

CONSULTING, *continued from pg. 8*

there is a great way to meet new forestry professionals that you may continue to see or work with in the future.

When asked what he has noticed in any shifting demographics within his region of Vermont, Handfield says that in the past two years a lot of landowners have been adding onto their existing holding by acquiring neighboring parcels as they are put up for sale. Additionally, there are 30-45 year old professionals moving back part-time or full time looking to enhance or continue a family legacy property. Either that or they have been trying to start their own by acquiring a sizeable property; and, there has been minimal development other than a house or camp here or there. It's worth noting that the trend in other parts of

the state has been toward smaller parcels.

Handfield's favorite forest types are ones with oaks and hickories, though he loved the forests surrounding Paul Smith's College. As a hunter, he really appreciates the wildlife benefits of oak and hickory. Handfield has had so many positive experiences with landowners that he had to think about one to share with readers. But his most recent memorable experience is surely one he won't forget.

"I was walking a portion of a large family holding where I had recently marked a sale. The owner of almost 60 years and her adult daughter joined me to look at and discuss the marking. We weren't able to go far from the vehicles, but as we were standing in one of the

woods roads a family of ermine came through. I've only seen ermine once or twice before, but this family spent about 10 minutes checking us out. They were hanging out on a stone wall about six feet away and kept standing up on their hind legs looking at us. It was a great experience the three of us shared that I'll never forget."

To us it sounds like Handfield knew his calling all along, but maybe it took a long walk in the woods for him to really settle on it. Steve now works for himself as a consulting forester licensed in Vermont and New York. He is based out of Poultney, Vermont.



Vermont Woodlands Consulting Foresters

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

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WOODPECKER, *continued from pg. 4*

American beech, eastern hemlock) that are spiced with large diameter trees (18"+) some of which have died or are nearing their end. Pileateds make use of younger aged forests too as long as there are sufficient individual large diameter trees available for feeding and nesting within the stand. Being able to live in a variety of forest combinations such as these gives the pileated a generalist's advantage. That is, its success in life does not hinge on a single limited factor. This is one of the reasons the Pileated Woodpecker has been relatively successful compared to

most North American bird species and is found throughout Vermont.

As late afternoon lead to sunset and quickly to darkness I found myself in the stillness of night. Now barred owls and coyotes resumed the dialogue of the forest as the daytime animals settled in for their overnight rest. I decided to leave my head lamp turned off to better collate with the surrounding culture and eased my way down the 15-foot tree stand to ground level. The deer had decided to take an alternate route on this evening leaving me to engage



with the forest's many other residents. For that I was not disappointed but very thankful for the opportunity to be a part of, however small, one of the forest's more flamboyant species.

STANDARDS, *continued from pg. 11*

county forester, or through visiting http://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/vermonts_forests/amps. AMPs became effective in 1987 and were revised in 2016. If you have not recently read over the changes from 2016 it would be a good time to revisit them. It is important to have a conversation with your forester or logger and have a contract that clearly dictates who is responsible for implementing the AMPs during any logging operation on your land; but at the end of the day the responsibility lies on the landowner to make sure they are in place and functioning.

Vermont's AMPs help protect water quality through providing assistance to landowners in how to construct roads, maintain trails with water bars, sizing culverts, and properly setting bridge panels or other types of stream crossings. An indicator within Standard 4 is that landowners shall minimize the construction of roads and/or other disturbances within riparian zones or wetlands. If it's necessary to do so, Vermont's AMPs can assist with how to minimize the impact to these areas and

limit long term discharges. Acceptable (or Best) Management Practices apply not only to water quality, but also management that might require prescribed fire or herbicide applications. Unfortunately invasive species have become a common occurrence within our Vermont forest, and herbicide treatment is becoming more of an acceptable practice to treat them. If non-chemical practices are not deemed affective or are too costly, then herbicides are used but must be used and discarded as described on their label. This is a federal law and licensed herbicide applicators are familiar with how to best handle herbicides, what applications are best suited for your specific need, and how to discard containers and clean equipment on site. Certain herbicides can only be used around wetlands and riparian areas, so hiring a licensed applicator who has received the necessary training is highly recommended. To find a licensed applicator or to gain more information please visit http://agriculture.vermont.gov/pesticide_regulation.

Although prescribed fire is not as common in New England, especially within Vermont, there are scenarios where it makes sense to use it in the management of your forest for assisting species in regenerating or through promoting wildlife habitat. If this is the case, than your town's Forest Fire Warden should be contacted to discuss Vermont laws pertaining to fire, to obtain a permit, and to gain proper training/assistance so that an unwanted wildland fire doesn't occur as a result of poor planning or practice. Fire is greatly manipulated by weather, slope, and vegetation that allow it to quickly get out of hand, so only individuals with a depth of experience should be assisting you. To contact your local Fire Warden or to gain more information regarding training please visit <http://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/fires>.

The next article will focus on Standard #5-Fish, Wildlife, Biodiversity, and Forest Health.

HORSE, *continued from pg. 12*

landowners and foresters? Very simple-attention span. It's getting shorter every year among the public and forestry is, by definition, a very long term proposition. If we don't have an interaction between a forester and a landowner once in a while the system starts to unravel; foresters retire, or die, or move on, or landowners sell their land, move on or die, or forget what they wanted to do... Even with this extra inspection we know that we're not in contact with the landowner/forester enough and the committee spends a LOT of time calling landowners and foresters to remind them that something might be missing or that we don't think the management plan has been revised to meet the latest TF standard.

To add complexity to this the UVA (current use) plan is good- with no visits or little paperwork- except conformance

reports if something is done on the land- for TEN YEARS! That can span two different Tree Farm Standards- which are revised every five years, and a couple of inspections and 004's. Many foresters don't see the need for the bureaucracy-added visits and paperwork. We have acknowledged this and have a solution. If you want to wait and do an optional inspection on the anniversary of the UVA plan update- kill two bureaucratic birds with one stone-just tell us! We'll put you in the Pioneer program and wait for you to send us the 004 on the plan update, whereupon you'll be reinstated into fully third party certified.

But there is another possibility...Many of our foresters do plans of such a high quality, and manage to such a degree, that a Tree Farm optional inspection may not actually be needed during the

10 year period. The one confirmation we need that this is the case is an acknowledgement that the landowner/forester has reviewed any new TF standards that have happened during that ten year period, and that the existing plan meets the new standard or an addendum has been filled out (VERY easy- we have copies that are easy to fill out) and is located with the old plan. All of this may be confirmed with a phone call to us. Simple, fast, cheap, and you're good to go.

So there it is. There are requirements, and there are ways to meet the obligations. Now you know why we call and why it's necessary. We hope you'll take the time to read and understand what we're all facing and help us continue to be one of the highest scores in the national audits.

TREE FARMER, *continued from pg. 13*

The third tour focused on Multiple Use Tree Farm Management and was led by Rick Morrill of Northern Forest Conservation Service, LLC and Judy Geer of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center. This tour really focused on the community overlap of recreational trails and how the Stoner Family Tree Farm and their foresters were able to work to communicate any management activities or closures to the recreation community.

The tours concluded with a few presentations and speeches. Senator John Rodgers of Glover spoke about the importance of working lands and the legislation that passed recently to eliminate sales tax on forestry equipment. He spoke too of future possible ways to increase the importance of forestry in Vermont through potential legislative actions.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Habitat Biologist, Andrea Shortsleeve, spoke of how important it is to integrate wildlife habitat considerations into forestry plans. The Nature Conservancy of Vermont's Director of Critical Lands and Conservation Science, Rose Paul, showed samples of certain invasive plants and spoke about invasive species and climate change. She stressed how they may impact forestry in Vermont as a whole, and how woodland owners in the Orleans County of Vermont can really get ahead of other parts of Vermont if they come up with a plan for managing invasives, and begin to act to protect the value of their woodlands.

The event concluded with the presentation of the award to the Stoner Family and a roundup of all those involved in the management of the

Stoner Family Tree Farm. Everyone enjoyed the local eats catered by the Craftsbury General Store with donations of produce, cheese, and more from Pete's Greens, Jasper Hill Cellars, Bonnevieu Farm, and Shadagee Farm.

The day was a really great way to highlight what these landowners have done to steward the multiple facets of their property. Their land is important to two major watersheds in Vermont, with most of the drainage making its way to the Black River and north to Lake Memphremagog, as well as a smaller portion flowing into Caspian Lake in Greensboro, which then flows to the Lamoille. As pointed out in the

TREE FARMER *continued on pg. 26*

PROFILE, *continued from pg. 14*

One big improvement in the timber harvesting operations has been the use of a forwarder that logger Calvin Johnson has used on the last four logging jobs during the last 12 years. The forwarder negotiates through the trees better and leaves less residual stand damage. Trees get dropped and cut right where they fall, thus having a lighter touch on the forest. Logging operations recently have removed many damaged and now rotting pine trees that had been damaged due to logging practices in the 1980s, where the entire tree was dragged through the forest with a cable skidder that damaging the butt log on many trees. The Bizzozero Tree Farm contains about 50% white pine, 20% hemlock, 20% mixed hardwoods, and about 10% northern hardwoods.

After his father's passing in 2001, Rick's mother Rita took charge of the stewardship on the property. Working with Tom Sweet, their consulting forester for the past 20 years, Rick would consult Rita and she would give the final executive approval. Many of the improvements to access roads were made at the end of the logging job while a logger was there with equipment. Three new skid roads were improved to help expand the access across the property. Since Rita's passing this past March at the young age of 91, Rick and his wife Cynthia are the stewards.

The Bizzozero Memorial Fund was created in 2004 by the family in memory of Bizz. Over the years, the fund has grown through both wise investment and ongoing contributions from Vermont's tree farmers. It's dedicated to

supporting the tenets of the Tree Farm program – wood, wildlife, water, and recreation – and to funding purchase of the Vermont Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year sign presented annually to an exemplary Tree Farmer.

Something that Rick and Cynthia have done to ensure the legacy of their land is passed on is to set up a charitable trust in their will. They have two or three organizations that they believe in and when their estate is settled a percentage of the estate will be donated to the Vermont Tree Farm program as well as a few other organizations.

People who are interested in giving to an organization whose mission they feel strongly about, should consider doing the same, and to not put it off. By contributing out of their estate their will can direct money or resources to that program.

“It is something that people hear about but they don't really know how to do it. When my wife and I did our estate planning, our attorney really guided us. It was really easy. If you're doing estate planning, I think that is a very good

time to set something like that up. You don't have to fund it, as your estate will take care of that when you pass.”

As Rick and Cynthia do not have children, they also wanted to make sure that a succession plan was in place. The property is in Rita's trust, so when Rick and Cynthia pass, their portion will go to his sister's children who are currently in their 30s. Rick and his nephew recently attended a VWA succession planning workshop together. An interesting piece of history is how Bizz got involved in owning and managing a woodlot in the first place. He went to college on the GI bill after the war and his next door neighbor in Syracuse was Hank Duckett who was also from Vermont. Hank was studying to be a forester and this chance meeting of the two led to the family's purchase of the land and a 40 year professional relationship with Duckett. The guidance that the Bizzozero family sought along the way truly shaped their land ethic and helped them make good decisions in caring for their Tree Farm all these years – decisions that will sustain the 219-acre Tree Farm into the next generation.

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TREE FARMER, *part 2, continued from pg. 24*

Multiple Use Tree Farm Management Tour, their land is smack dab in the middle of an important wildlife connectivity corridor which is part of the Staying Connected Initiative. The historic uses of the property were highlighted and new Acceptable Management Practices for water quality (a new culvert and ditching) were

shown on all tours. The four tenants of the American Tree Farm System were highlighted (wood, water, wildlife and recreation) well throughout the tours.

The takeaway for many was that this parcel of land not only is important to the generations of the Stoner Family that have invested in current and future

stewardship of the property, but it is important to the region. The Stoner Family Tree Farm offers many teachable moments for the greater community to examine and use as an exemplary way to visualize what is possible with the help of dedicated natural resource professionals and motivated land stewards.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION (Note: existing members will receive an invoice)

Vermont Woodlands Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to advocate for the management, sustainability, perpetuation, and enjoyment of forests through the practice of excellent forestry that employs highly integrated management practices that protect and enhance both the tangible and intangible values of forests—including clean air and water, forest products, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, recreation, scenic beauty, and other resources—for this and future generations. You may also visit www.vermontwoodlands.org to join online.

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- 201-500 acres..... \$60
- 501-1,000 acres..... \$70
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Woodland acres _____ Tree Farm member? _____ Enrolled in the Value Appraisal Program? _____

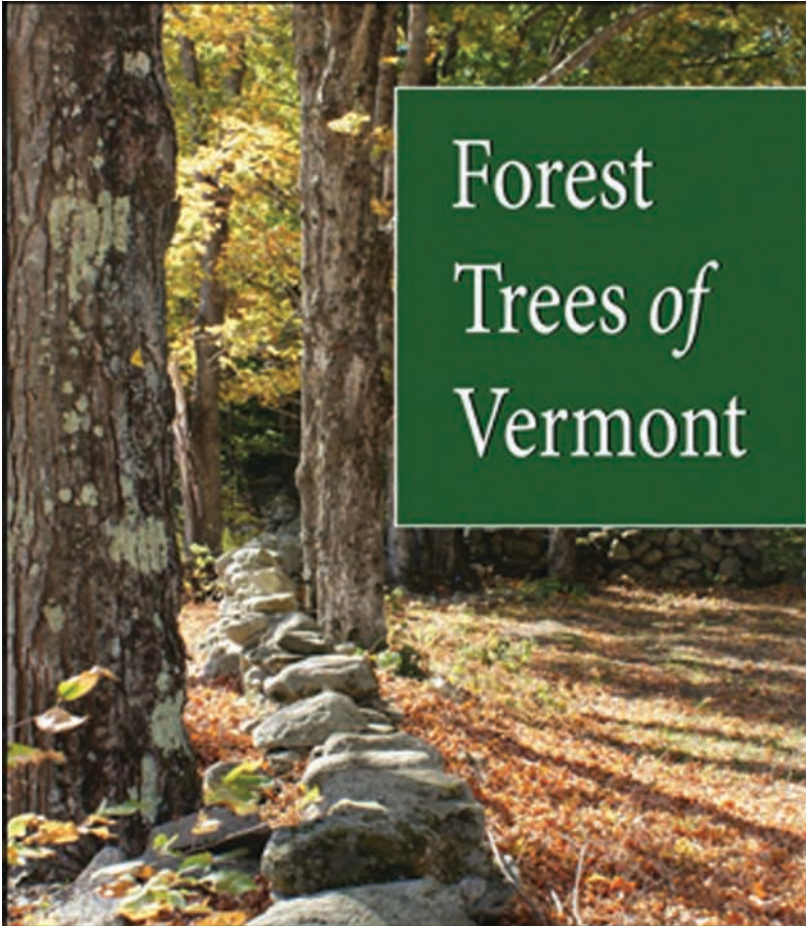
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