

Vermont Environmental Report

The State Planning Office

"The Concern For Planning is Economic"

A New Mission

"The Governor's concern for planning is economic." This is the comment of Leonard Wilson, former Director of the State Planning Office, who is quick to add that the "Governor is sincerely concerned about the compatibility of economic development and environmental quality."

Despite Wilson's feeling that the Governor has strong environmental concerns, it seems hardly accidental that John Simson, the man whom Governor Snelling has appointed as Director of the State Planning Office, was past Commissioner of Housing & Community Affairs in the Agency of Development & Community Affairs. After all, it is jobs and economic development that are among the chief objectives of the Snelling Administration, and Development & Community Affairs is the Agency charged with carrying the torch for development projects.

"The new mission of the Planning Office reflects the growing role of the Governor as financial manager," Leonard Wilson explains. Snelling's aim of making the Planning Office the coordinating agency within state government reflects the Governor's perception of the need to develop a planning framework for the financial management of the state's affairs. "A businessman," Wilson says, "would want to use the planning staff to find out what the divisions of government were up to and what strategies they were employing to meet their objectives."

The Planning Office Since 1963

Curiously enough, the mission of the Planning Office today seems not so different from when it was first established by Governor Hoff in 1963. The need for a State Planning Office first became apparent after Phil Hoff was elected Governor in November 1962. Hoff found himself suddenly confronted with the task of putting together a state budget. Faced with requests from departments of state government for appropriations, Hoff felt the need for more direction. And a State Planning Office was created.

Since its founding in 1963, the Planning Office has taken on many responsibilities. In the late 1960's, the Planning Office turned its attention to the task of organizing the state's 13 regional planning commissions and assisting Vermont's 246 towns and cities in dealing with problems of local planning and zoning.

Then came the land development crisis of the early 1970's with the threat of massive, uncontrolled land subdivision in southern Vermont communities such as Wilmington and Dover. Deane Davis, a Republican Governor was at the helm, and the Davis Administration and the General Assembly responded to the land development crisis with the passage of Act 250. Act 250 created a State Environmental Board, nine District Environmental Commissions, and legal process for reviewing land development proposals.

And important element of Act 250 was the provision for three additional land use planning steps: an **Interim Land Capability & Development Plan**, a **Capability & Development Plan**, and the third and final step of a **State Land Use Plan**. This ultimate step, though hotly debated by successive legislatures in the 1970's, was never passed into law.

Public Disenchantment with State-Directed Planning

Much has been written about the unwillingness of the General Assembly to pass a State Land Use Plan.

According to Leonard Wilson, many Vermonters were distressed when they found that their land was being divided on a map by arbitrary lines denoting land use categories. "Why should this part of my land be zoned for 'development' and an immediately adjacent parcel be zoned for 'agriculture'?" The lines on the map didn't make any sense to people. And Wilson goes on to say, "The people who pounded on the table and said this was **state zoning** were right. I think this was understood, that [state-wide zoning] was what Act 250 was proposing."

About this period, Wilson says, "It got to be a very muddled, unpleasant fight." Governor Salmon stayed with the idea of a State Land Use Plan until it became very clear that it had no chance of being approved by the legislature. When the land use

Continued on Page 2

battle had ended, says Wilson, "there was an atmosphere of clear hesitancy in the Salmon Administration" in pushing further statewide planning proposals.

The Snelling Administration's Approach to State Planning

In the wake of public disenchantment with statewide planning, the remarks of Planning Office Director John Simson suggest that the Snelling Administration has retreated from any thoughts of a state-directed land use planning effort.

Simson feels that public acceptance of planning ideas is growing. It is a question of getting people to accept new values and internalize them. "When I first got involved with planning," Simson says, "people looked at property in a mercenary way." Simson remembers when developers were looking for suitable cornfields as tracts of land for industrial sites. But this attitude, Simson feels, has changed. And now, in Simson's view, it is more appropriate for the State of Vermont to take an indirect approach to planning. This means that the State should evaluate its own capital investment and internal planning decisions and weigh the impact of these decisions upon when and where development will take place.

In practice, this means that under the Snelling Administration, land use planning decisions have been left to local and regional planning bodies that are closer to the people. "We are not pretending that we [the state] can plan everybody's property and everybody's life," Simson says. But the state can do something. It can put its own house in order. It can make careful capital investment decisions. It can coordinate state agency planning to support common goals. And in this way, Simson believes, the state can play a positive role in influencing the course of development.

The New Agenda at the State Planning Office

John Simson's agenda at the State Planning Office involves five specific activities.

First, is a ten-year state Capital Investment Plan that has been prepared by the Snelling Administration and that will be submitted to the legislature. Simson is the first to admit that some of the line items in the state's Capital Investment Plan have been "spoken for" already. That is, some decisions have been made already as to where a school will be built, or where a highway will be constructed. But other capital investment decisions have not been made. So there is considerable flexibility.

Second on the Planning Office agenda is the review of the five-year plans of state government agencies. Since the Planning Office has no fixed responsibilities it can act as an "enlightened neutral" in the annual review and amendment of these five-year agency plans. A careful review, Simson explains, could reveal, for example, that the Environmental Agency has decided to place a high priority on the preservation of Vermont's wetlands. If this were the case, other agencies, such as Transportation, could cooperate through modifications in its road-building and maintenance program in achieving this objective.

Since local planning bodies have the prime responsibility under the Snelling Administration for making basic land use planning

decisions, they will need competent technical assistance. This is Simson's third agenda item. He is encouraging towns and cities to take advantage of the help that is being offered through the Division of Local Government Services in the Agency of Development & Community Affairs.

Simson proposes to use the mechanism of the "Conference of New England Governors" to give Vermont a voice in determining a national rural policy. This is Simson's fourth agenda item. And he says, "What is good for Iowa is not necessarily good for Vermont."

A fifth and new activity of the State Planning Office is the establishment of a **Vermont Information Service**. "I felt when we moved in here," Simson says, "that there was an awful lot of information -- studies, records, maps, measurements." Simson wants the Planning Office to make an inventory of these materials and publish a directory. Then instead of commissioning new studies that have been done, or starting from scratch without the benefit of previous work, state and local government will have access to resources that are available already.

Simson takes seriously the responsibility of the Planning Office to provide staff assistance to the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors. This Council is composed of certain key cabinet members and citizen experts from the academic and business world.

By informing the deliberations of the Council of Economic Advisors, by monitoring and directing the use of the state's capital investment funds, by determining the probability of financial returns on these expenditures, by eliminating duplication among state agencies, by getting agencies to work together to support common objectives, by assessing the needs of communities as articulated by local planning bodies -- in all these ways -- Simson hopes to sharpen the managerial performance of state government. This new agenda, in Simson's view, constitutes, "a far more comprehensive approach to state government" that will move the Planning Office into the mainstream of governmental affairs.

Some Unanswered Questions

There are at least two people who are not fully convinced that the State Planning Office is pursuing an aggressive enough course of action in addressing the problems of development that presently confront the state. Leonard Wilson is one person. The other is Beth Humstone who until recently was a Planner at the State Planning Office.

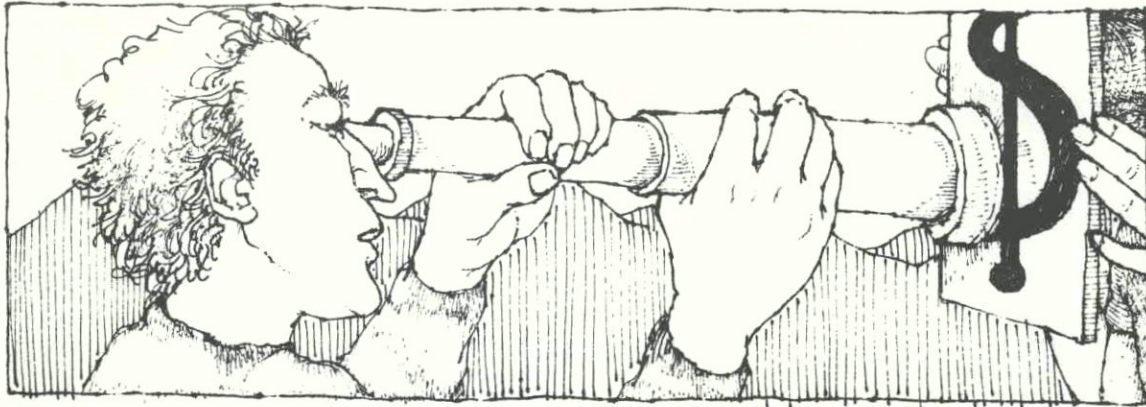
Leonard Wilson has a number of concerns that are not answered by the goals of the State Planning Office under the Snelling Administration. Looking out the window of his home in rural Waitsfield, Wilson can see his neighbor's farm. Once it was in active production. Now the crops on his neighbor's land are houses. "We have prevented the wholesale development of tiny lots," Wilson says. "But we have by no means prevented 'bits-and-pieces' development."

"It's amoebic," Wilson said about the progressive subdivision of rural land into ten, or even 25-acre lots across the state.

Beth Humstone has similar concerns about the future of

Vermont's prime agricultural lands. "What are the trends in land development?" Humstone asks. She feels that this is a legitimate question that the State Planning Office ought to be addressing.

Beth Humstone has been working with the Lake Champlain Basin Study Committee and has been examining agricultural lands in the Champlain Valley region. She has drawn heavily on the work of Mark Lapping of UVM who has studied the economic viability of agricultural lands in the shoreland towns bordering Lake Champlain. Humstone says, "The work of this study shows that we will lose a lot more agricultural land in Chittenden County. The state has got to decide if it cares," she says. "Is Chittenden County a sacrificial lamb?"



Drawings by Barbara Carter

She goes on to raise questions about highway planning. In Addison County, Humstone reports, there is today a strong concentration of agricultural land. But what would happen if improvements to Route 7 brought the equivalent of an interstate highway into Addison County? Humstone says that people in Addison County are very concerned about improvements to Route 7. "If you start improving the highway will this create an incentive for industries to develop?" she asks. "We should plan our roads where we want our development to be," she says, "it has to be tied into an overall objective for the state." Humstone says that Capital Investment Planning is a useful tool. But it has to go further than just that. It has to include land use and development concerns. Then she observes, "Transportation planning at the moment is single-purpose planning."

Leonard Wilson talks about the basic ineffectiveness of local and regional planning. "The purists," says Wilson, "will argue that the citizens elect the City Council [or the Board of Selectmen] and that they ought to represent the broad view." But this doesn't work out in practice. "That's the problem with the 'bottom-up' system where people are antagonistic to planning and want to use it to promote their own interests. What we are left with in the State of Vermont," Wilson says, "is no state land use plan, ineffectual regional plans, and local plans complicated by local pressures."

Looking at a recent proposal to develop a regional shopping mall in the Central Vermont town of Berlin, Wilson notes that Berlin is dominated by commercial interests. "It's going to be from outside of Berlin that the concern is expressed," Wilson observes. And he adds, "History is not clear about

Barre and Montpelier getting their socks up. For Barre, the Berlin shopping center could be horrendous."

Beth Humstone supports efforts at the State Planning Office to use the existing legal structure. She favors using Act 250, using the review process for the siting of utilities, using the state's Capital Investment Plan. But if Vermont continues to be inundated by developments with a region-wide impact of the size of a Pyramid Mall, then she says, "We will have to go back and look at a land use plan or whatever you want to call it."

But in the best of all possible worlds, Humstone would rather see the state put its efforts into helping towns like Williston. "The state has an opportunity to review local

zoning bylaws," she says. "We also need to review regional plans. The Administration could set guidelines. The Agency of Development & Community Affairs could suggest guidelines to the legislature that could be incorporated into Vermont's Municipal & Regional Planning Law. Humstone speculates that Pyramid Mall might not have happened if the Town of Williston had defined exactly the kind of commercial development it wanted.

Leonard Wilson is critical of the State's failure in recent years to plan for the future of its natural resources -- its farms, its forests, its natural areas, its wetlands. "I think under Martin Johnson, and Governor Salmon, and the present regime," Wilson says, "the responsibility for 'technical resource planning' has not been adequately pursued."

"Where are the wetlands? Where are the natural areas? Where are the prime agricultural lands? Where should we develop?" The answers to these questions is what technical resource planning is all about. And the search for these answers, Wilson believes, has been wanting.

This is a theme repeated by Beth Humstone. "What's out there?" she asks. "You have to know what's out there," she says, in calling for a program to identify key agricultural areas in the state. But then she remarks, sadly, that there is not a lot of money floating around for a detailed study of agricultural land.

Leonard Wilson who has travelled widely in his work for the Council of State Governments is not encouraged about the prospect of arriving at a quick and simple answer to the

question of what to do about saving Vermont's best agricultural lands. "I don't get the impression," Wilson says, "that there is a state in the country that has developed a successful land system, or anti-encroachment system. There are dozens of states that have developed one form or another of protection. And they don't seem to be working effectively. I haven't found anyone who has said, 'Go to such-and-such a state. They have the answer.'"

As Wilson surveys the present mood of the times, he remarks that the will to move forward seems to have gone out of the planning movement. "I think Vermont is pretty typical," he says, "of those states that have been leading the land use crusade. In all of them the momentum has been lost with political problems and the recession of 1973." Wilson discerns

increasingly critical resource problems ahead of us, with water shortages in the West, with rising transportation costs, with huge amounts of energy absorbed by modern agriculture, and with problems inherent in widespread pesticide use.

The threat of heedless development, the need for transportation planning that is sensitive to over-all objectives, the need for technical planning for the state's natural resources, the future of agricultural land -- all these issues were discussed by Beth Humstone and Leonard Wilson.

But is the State Planning Office too concerned (some would say too obsessed) with the idea of managing state government effectively and encouraging economic growth? And is the State Planning Office ready to face the other urgent questions that demand attention?

VNRC INTERNS: A Summer of Achievement

This summer, four graduate student interns worked for VNRC on a number of pressing environmental problems. These problems include: forestry planning, the Pyramid Mall controversy, town plans and zoning bylaws, and the use of Vermont's wetlands.

The following is a brief summary of the accomplishments of the four summer interns.

Vermont Forest Resource

Anthony Andresen, a graduate student in Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania, spearheaded VNRC's participation in the **Yankee Forest Project**. This project has been described in a recently published *Prospectus*, produced under the direction of Professor Carl Reidel with the help of several graduate students at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. Among the recommendations of the Yankee Forest Project is the need for each New England state to identify and assess its own forest resource. This work must be completed before any regional assessment can be made. Andresen has helped begin that process in Vermont. Working with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, & Recreation, Andresen researched and reported on key forestry issues facing the state. He also organized a conference on "Wood Energy & the Future of Vermont Forest Resources." This conference is scheduled for November 4 in Montpelier. (For further information on the conference, please see the enclosed flyer.)

Pyramid Mall - Legal Groundwork

Ronald Stamm, a third-year law student at Vermont Law School in South Royalton, assisted VNRC's staff attorney, Darby Bradley, in his work on the Pyramid Mall case. Stamm investigated the air pollution question to help Bradley prepare for the upcoming fight over Pyramid's air quality permit application. This work involved examining legal issues as well as

unravelling complex technical questions that concern air pollution. In addition to his work on the Pyramid case, Stamm prepared legal memoranda on clearcutting, on conservation restrictions, and looked into the question of the liability of VNRC Directors for actions of the Council.

Survey of Adoption Procedures for Town Plans & Zoning Laws

Walter Roth, also a law student at Vermont Law School, conducted research on the validity of town plans and zoning bylaws. VNRC has been concerned for some time about the difficulty of adoption procedures for town plans and zoning laws and the vulnerability of such plans and zoning bylaws to legal attack. The extremely complex adoption procedures contained in the enabling legislation and the ruling of the Vermont Supreme Court in favor of strict compliance, appear to be at the root of the problem. When Roth is finished with his research he may be able to provide information that will be needed to pursue legislative action to ensure the validity of local plans and bylaws.

Vermont Wetlands Disturbance

Tom Storrow, a UVM student working under the guidance of Professor Ian Worley, measured construction and other land use activities in and around Vermont wetlands. He examined a sample of 100 wetlands comprising approximately 10,000 acres. Storrow used aerial photographs dating back to 1942. He observed that 73% of the state's wetlands have been subject to some disturbance through filling, draining, logging, or construction. Storrow's work will continue this fall with an evaluation of the extent of this disturbance and the magnitude of the impact on these 100 wetland areas. This work, when completed, will provide a solid base of information from which to determine whether Vermont needs to enact more stringent laws to protect wetland areas.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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A conference on "WOOD ENERGY AND THE FUTURE OF THE VERMONT FOREST RESOURCE" will be held on Saturday, November 4, in Montpelier, Vermont. The public is urged to attend.

Wood already supplies 11% of Vermont's total energy needs. As more homeowners, businesses and industrial firms begin to use wood to replace petroleum fuels, this percentage may rise dramatically. While the reliance upon a local fuel source has obvious advantages in terms of providing more jobs, revenues, and an opportunity to manage forestlands, it also raises many questions such as the amount of wood that can be reasonably harvested, the environmental impacts of the harvests, and the potential conflict with other uses of the forest resource.

The purpose of the conference is to examine these and other issues. The morning session will look at current developments in the harvesting and utilization of wood for energy in Vermont, including whole-tree harvesting in the northeast, experiments at South Duxbury, Waterbury and Burlington, and the plans for the Burlington Electric Department to construct a 50-megawatt wood-burning electrical plant. The afternoon session will be devoted to the long-range issues and the choices which Vermont faces in the coming years if it relies increasingly upon wood as a source of energy. The speakers will address the questions of how much wood is available, the sizing of wood-burning plants, and the role of government in insuring that the resource is used in the best interest of the State.

The conference is being sponsored by the Vermont Timberland Owners Association, Green Mountain Club, Vermont Timber Truckers and Producers Association, Green Mountain Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, Vermont Tree Farm Committee, Vermont Natural Resources Council, and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation.

The conference will be held in the Auditorium of the Pavilion Building in Montpelier, beginning at 9:00 a.m. FOR MORE INFORMATION, WRITE OR CALL THE VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL, 26 STATE STREET, MONTPELIER, VT. 05602, Tel. 223-2328.

WOOD ENERGY AND THE FUTURE OF THE VERMONT FOREST RESOURCE

The Auditorium of the Pavilion Building, State Street, Montpelier, Vt.

Saturday, November 4, 1978

Registration and a newly released movie on the subject of multiple-use forest management on National Forests will begin the program at 9:00 a.m.

NAME _____	Conference registration @ \$2.00 per person	\$ _____
ADDRESS _____	Buffet luncheon at the Tavern Motor Inn (optional) @ \$5.00 per person	\$ _____
_____ ZIP _____		
TELEPHONE _____	Total enclosed	\$ _____

Please make checks payable to "VNRC - Forestry Conference."

Detach and mail to VNRC, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vt. 05602 at least ten days prior to conference

Speculating on Dickey – Lincoln

Environmentalists are continuing to speculate about the fate of the proposed multi-million dollar Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric dam project in northern Maine.

The Dickey-Lincoln project, conceived in 1919, would consist of two dams on the St. John River. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$839 million to construct, and when operating at full capacity, Dickey-Lincoln would be capable of supplying one to two and a half hours of peaking power to southern New England. Northern New England would receive only a fraction of this peaking power.

The environmental impact of Dickey-Lincoln would be significant. It would flood over 88,000 acres of timberland. And according to Ogden Tanner, author of **New England Wilds**, the waters impounded by Dickey-Lincoln, "would ruin, once and for all, the finest wild river in the Northeast."

Dickey-Lincoln faces two crucial tests in the coming months.

One of these tests will be in the U.S. Congress. This past summer a Senate-House Conference Committee approved H.R.12928, a \$10.1 billion Public Works Appropriation Bill. Buried deep within this bill is \$1.78 million for further design and planning of Dickey-Lincoln.

In mid-September, the U.S. House passed the Conference Committee's version of the Public Works Bill. The Senate is expected to follow suit. But Congressional observers in Washington and New England expect the Public Works bill to be vetoed by President Carter. The President warned Congress last year that he would not support what he considers to be a federal "pork barrel" public works appropriations bill. He dramatically underscored this threat by recommending that 18 dam and water control projects be terminated. Dickey-Lincoln was one of them.

Will the President's expected veto be sustained in Congress? And if the President's veto is sustained, will Dickey-Lincoln survive another go-around in Congress?

The answers to these questions will depend to a large extent on how Senators and Representatives read the mood of their constituents in this election year. The recent adoption of Proposition 13 in California and the emergence of an embryonic taxpayers' revolt throughout the country would seem to indicate

that the voting public is unhappy with government largess. Another sign which may foreshadow the defeat of Dickey-Lincoln is the increase in the number of New England legislators in Congress who oppose the project. According to Tom Arnold, spokesperson for the Friends of the St. John River, in Boston, in 1974 three out of 25 New England members of Congress opposed Dickey-Lincoln. Now 15 out of 25 are against it.

Environmentalists who want the Dickey-Lincoln project stopped, now hope that pressure from a cost-conscious public, coupled with increased opposition in Congress, will result in an eventual decision to eliminate funding for Dickey-Lincoln. If Carter vetoes the bill, Congress has the choice of overriding the veto or redrafting the legislation. If the bill is redrafted, funding for Dickey-Lincoln could be cut.

A second key test for Dickey-Lincoln will be the upcoming elections in Maine. The race for Governor is crucial. Linwood Palmer, the Republican candidate for Governor, and "Buddy" Frankland, the Independent hopeful, are both opposed to Dickey-Lincoln. Joe Brennan, the Democratic candidate, has come out in favor of the project. If either Palmer or Frankland wins, the chance for scrapping Dickey-Lincoln permanently will increase significantly.

The outcome of the U.S. Senate race in Maine could also be a factor leading to the eventual demise of Dickey-Lincoln. William Cohen, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, has stated his opposition to Dickey-Lincoln. William Hathaway, the incumbent Democrat, has consistently supported the project, along with Maine's senior Senator Edmund Muskie. If Cohen wins, there may be enough strength in the new Senate to stop Dickey-Lincoln.

Environmental groups in Maine, led by the Maine Natural Resources Council, are concentrating their efforts in opposition to Dickey-Lincoln on the state elections. The purpose is to make the elections a referendum on Dickey-Lincoln. Rob Gardiner, newly-appointed Executive Director of the Maine NRC, is cautiously optimistic. He says, "As long as the tractors haven't started rolling, we have a chance to defeat Dickey-Lincoln." □

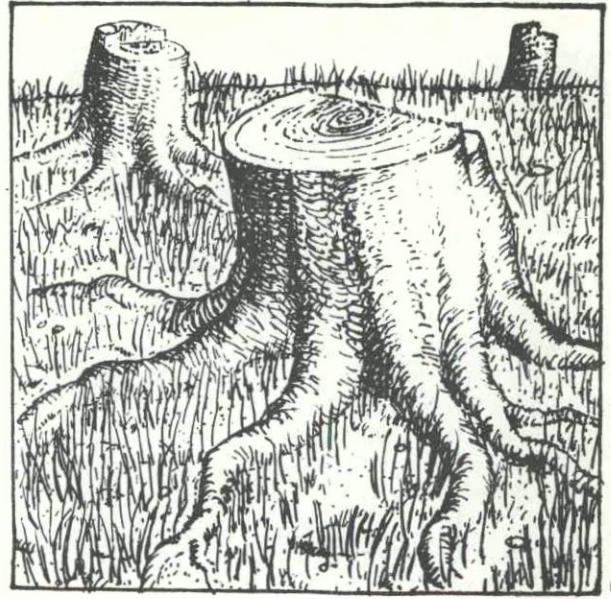
Pyramid Mall

In early September the Vermont Agency of Environmental Conservation again denied an air pollution permit for the proposed Pyramid Mall in Williston.

The Pyramid Company has been trying to obtain this permit for the past 18 months. The permit was denied last April on the grounds that the carbon monoxide generated by the additional traffic at Essex Junction would prevent Vermont from meeting federal air quality standards by the 1982 deadline.

Since July, Pyramid has sought to persuade the Agency to use a new method of analysis to predict pollution levels. The latest decision turns down that request because there is insufficient data in the Agency's judgment to support using Pyramid's new method of air pollution analysis.

VNRC and other citizen groups are planning to seek party status in any proceedings appealing the Agency's air pollution decision. At the present time, it is unclear when such an appeal might occur. □



Drawings by Edward Epstein

An Editorial

The following editorial comment was written by VNRC's staff attorney, Darby Bradley. Bradley is a member of the (State) Forest Resources Advisory Council (FRAC) and sits on a FRAC sub-committee that is looking into whole-tree harvesting.

Surely one of the most emotional issues surrounding the debate over the use of wood for energy is the fear of clearcutting.

Many people feel that because of the high capital costs associated with whole-tree harvesting operations, clearcutting will be a fact of life. Indeed, virtually all the paper companies and private logging contractors who have been harvesting wood chips in northern New Hampshire and northeastern Vermont have concluded that selective cutting is not economic - not at least in the hilly terrain of northern New England, and not in today's market situation. If this is the perception of people in the industry, it is small wonder that wood energy has become synonymous with clearcutting in the eyes of many people.

Those who insist that clearcutting is inevitable have these economic arguments. Whole-tree harvesters cost between \$50,000 and \$150,000. And the capital investment in a chip harvesting operation may run up to \$400,000. But in spite of these economic facts of life, at least one logger in this region does not hold the predominant view and is demonstrating that **selective cutting is feasible**, even on hilly terrain.

Last month I visited a chipping operation in upstate New York's Adirondack Park where a logger has been selectively thinning hardwood stands for the past three years. The chips are being sold to a paper mill in Canada. The price this logger is receiving is slightly higher than current prices being paid for whole-tree chips in Vermont and New Hampshire. But his average

trucking distances are longer. Although much of the early harvesting was done on fairly level ground, more recently he has moved onto steeper slopes.

It may be unwise to draw conclusions about this operation on the basis of one visit. Certainly I found the selectively harvested stands more pleasing aesthetically than some nearby clearcuts and stripcuts. The quality of regeneration was also better. Since cutting on the steeper slopes was only begun this summer, it is still too early to evaluate how much erosion will occur. One noticeable problem is skidder damage to trees that are not cut. While more careful layout of the logging job by a professional forester might have reduced this damage, skidder damage is likely to be an inherent problem in a selective cutting operation.

The most obvious conclusion that can be drawn is that the selective cutting operation is a financial success. Despite some severe handicaps (the nearest supplier of spare parts is located over three hours away) this logger is still in business after three years. Given the gloomy assessments about the possibility of selectively cutting and making ends meet, this logger is justified in feeling proud about the results of his work. It looks good and he believes he is doing the right thing.

Whether Vermont loggers will actually use selective cutting, if the state turns to wood chips for energy, is an open question. The answer depends on the price consumers are willing to pay for chips, the preference of the property owner, and whether or not there are governmental regulations on clearcutting. The answer will also depend on the perceptions of chipper operators. It is they who will have to judge whether or not selective harvesting is economic.

I believe that if Vermont continues to substitute wood for oil, the most common method of whole-tree harvesting ought to be selective cutting. I oppose the use of clearcutting as the standard management tool for northern hardwood stands. Let me say why.

First, selective cutting has a much less damaging visual impact. It will therefore be more acceptable to the public. Second, the likelihood that the regeneration will be of less desirable species (such as striped maple and pin cherry) is greater in clearcuts than in stands where trees are left for shade. Third, we are more likely to protect Vermont's future timber stock through selective cutting.

One of the often-cited advantages of using wood energy is that it would provide a market for the junk wood in our forests that is crowding out higher quality trees. If clear-cutting becomes the standard harvesting procedure, the pole-size trees that will become our future sawtimber will be cut together with the weed trees. This would be a tremendous waste of a valuable resource.

I am not suggesting that clearcutting be outlawed entirely.

Certainly clearcutting is a legitimate forest management tool, especially in softwood stands or in hardwood stands that have been so severely "high-graded" that too few young, high-quality trees remain. And it is true that small clearcuts can provide important wildlife habitat. The judgement of professionals will be needed here. But my main thesis stands.

Wood energy will not be cheap and if loggers are required to practice selective harvesting they should receive fair compensation for the additional time and expense involved. The \$12 to \$13 per ton price that Burlington Electric and the State of Vermont are paying for wood chips today at their Moran and Waterbury plants will have to increase, and increase substantially. But in the long run, both the producers and the consumers of wood energy will be better off in making the choice for selective cutting. The forest will look better, there will be more wood, and it will be of higher quality. □

The Endangered Species Act: Jeffords To Fight Weakening Amendments

In response to a personal letter from Nat Frothingham, Congressman James Jeffords has indicated his opposition to proposed amendments to the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, particularly Section 7 of that Act, is considered by many environmentalists as one of the cornerstones of federal resource planning and evaluation. Section 7 provides not only for the protection of endangered species themselves but also for the preservation of the habitat of such species that is indispensable to their survival.

Earlier in the 1978 Session, the U.S. Senate passed the so-called Culver-Baker amendment to the Endangered Species Act. This amendment would change, and some Congressmen feel, weaken, the process by which endangered species are protected.

Since the Endangered Species Act was first passed into law in 1973, there have been only three conflicts between development projects and endangered species that were not resolved following consultations with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. One such conflict involves the survival of the three-inch snail darter. An unresolved conflict about the protection of the snail darter has stopped further construction of the Tellico Dam, a \$116 million project by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Completion of the Tellico Dam has been blocked by court action and the project is now under review by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Department of Interior.

At any rate, there has been increasing pressure in Congress to modify the Endangered Species Act, to make it more flexible. The Culver-Baker Amendment, as passed by the Senate, would create a seven person review committee to resolve future conflicts between endangered species and development projects. According to the Culver-Baker amendment, if five of the seven members of the review committee vote to exempt a species from protection under the Act, a development project could proceed. The review committee would consist of Secretaries of Agriculture, Army, Interior, heads of the Council on

Environmental Quality, Environmental Projection Agency, and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, and the governor of the state involved.

It is this amendment, and any weakening of the Endangered Species Act, that Congressman Jeffords opposes.

The following is Congressman Jeffords' letter of September 8, 1978.

Dear Mr. Frothingham:

Thank you for your recent letter urging me to oppose any efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

As you know, the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973 with overwhelming support in both Houses of Congress. Since enactment, this measure has worked efficiently to protect an important part of our natural resource base from destruction.

However, because of controversy arising from the Tellico Dam in Tennessee the Senate acted earlier this year to substantially weaken the Act. This action, referred to as the Culver-Baker amendment, is unacceptable to me and I believe it opens the entire process to political pressure.

Earlier this year I testified before the House Subcommittee on Wildlife Conservation and strongly urged the Subcommittee to reauthorize the Act without making changes that would hinder the effective protection of our endangered species. This issue will be coming before the House in the near future, and you can be assured that I will fight to retain the strongest law possible.

Again, many thanks for taking the time to write. I hope you will continue to keep me informed of your views on any issue that comes before Congress.

Sincerely, James M. Jeffords

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"Yankee Prospectus" Available

The Vermont Natural Resources Council is accepting requests for copies of a 32-page, illustrated report entitled **The Yankee Forest: A Prospectus**.

Yankee Forest was written by Professor Carl Reidel with the assistance of graduate students at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. It examines the problems that must be overcome if the New England forest resource is to realize its full potential.

Writing in the introduction to the **Prospectus**, Dean Charles H. W. Foster of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies says, "The Fifth Forest [the Yankee Forest] is important for two reasons. First, it is a significant natural resource that lies largely fallow in terms of public recognition and prospective utilization. And second, I am apprehensive about its future if it remains subject to random, single purpose, development proposals designed to advance the interest of a particular entrepreneur rather than that of the region as a whole."

Taken in its entirety, **Yankee Forest** is a description of the work that remains to be done before we can manage the New England forest resource intelligently. It is a statement of key forestry issues. And it is an argument for seeing the New England forest as a regional resource.

Single copies of **The Yankee Forest: A Prospectus** are available from VNRC for \$3.00 postpaid. For further information please write VNRC, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602, or call (802) 223 2328. □

Sewage Treatment Conference, October 25 and 26

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will present a two-day workshop on environmental assessments for sewage treatment facility plans prepared under the Federal Construction Grants Program. The workshop will be held on October 25 and 26, at the Howard Johnson Conference Center, at the Junction of I-89 and I-91 in White River Junction.

Topics covered will include: identifying sanitary needs and water quality problems, hydrology and water quality impacts, wetlands and floodplain impacts, secondary effects and land use impacts, land disposal impacts, and public participation.

There will be no registration fee. Registration is requested no later than October 20, 1978. Send your name, organization, address, phone number, and subjects of interest to: Robert Mendoza, Environmental & Economic Impact Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, JFK Federal Building, Boston, Massachusetts 02203, (617) 223-3190. For more information contact Robert Mendoza at EPA in Boston or Michele Frome at the Vermont Natural Resources Council. □

Correction

There was a textual error in the July 1978 issue of the **VER** in the article entitled, "Michele Frome to Lead Grassroots Effort."

The last sentence in the first column on page 3 should have read, "Frome points out that **both** [not neither as printed] of these villages may want to take advantage of the new provision in the Federal Grants Program for funding individual and alternative systems." □

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Contents

- State Planning Office: "Concern is Economic"
- Clearcutting: An Editorial
- Speculating on Dickey-Lincoln

Address Correction Requested

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