

Vermont Environmental Report

After the Pyramid decision

How Should Vermont Use Its Reprieve?

The ink is hardly dry on the October 12th decision of the District No. 4 Environmental Commission that denies the Pyramid Mall application to construct a \$10 million enclosed shopping mall in the semi-rural Town of Williston.

But already lawyers, planners, public officials and interested citizens are sifting through the 68-page decision, pondering its meaning, and raising serious questions about the planning process for developments of the size of a Pyramid Mall, and about Act 250 itself.

The Pyramid application was one of the largest development projects ever to come under Act 250 review. The mall would have had two large department stores, 80 smaller shops, and would have been built on a 200-acre parcel of land.

According to the developer's timetable, construction of the Mall was to have begun as early as the Spring of 1978. But the Act 250 hearings that began in August, 1977 dragged on and on, and the final testimony was heard just a few months ago. It was a marathon process.

It was also expensive. To make its presentation in the case, the State of Vermont spent a reported \$200,000. The developer spent over \$2 million.

The hearing process tested the stamina of all parties on both sides of the case. The burden was particularly acute on the three-member District Environmental Commission. The hearing process posed another test as well. It was a sharp challenge to the workings of Vermont's fundamental land use and development law -- Act 250.

Now that the Commission has rendered its decision, the Pyramid Company must decide whether to appeal the case to the State Environmental Board, or to the Superior Court, or to modify the project.

"Wearying," "fatiguing," "excruciating," -- these words were used by more than one participant in the Pyramid Mall review

hearings to describe the enormous task of gathering the information that was demanded in the Act 250 process. Behind these words lie more than just a personal reluctance of the participants to contemplate what a future hearing process might be like, should there be another case involving a development of the size of a Pyramid Mall. Behind these words lie the fear that the State of Vermont, or a District Commission, or a given community might not be able to summon the necessary resources, a second, a third time, to make a convincing presentation in an Act 250 review process.

John Ponsetto, the attorney who coordinated the State's presentation in the Pyramid case, had this to say, "I really question the ability of the State to muster their resources to handle very many of these applications (of the size of a Pyramid Mall) on a case-by-case basis." Ponsetto wondered aloud if a District Commission which had spent its energies on a review of a case like Pyramid would be willing to endure the same process with another development proposal in the near future. Ponsetto speculated that rather than do this, a Commission might simply resign en masse.

Jeff Squires, a planner with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission in Montpelier, played an active role before the District No. 4 Commission in the Pyramid case. Squires notes that the District Commission in Central Vermont will soon be considering an application by the Juster Associates to build a 220,000 square foot enclosed mall in Berlin. "The whole game will have to be played all over again," Squires says.

Squires feels that the Pyramid decision has broken important new ground. As he sees it, the District No. 4 Commission has made a judgment that a free-standing shopping mall of the size of Pyramid can definitely prove harmful to existing urban centers.

But can the judgment on Pyramid be made to stick on the

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application by the Juster Associates in Berlin? Squires is familiar with the regional plan for Central Vermont. He says that the regional plan identifies the site of the proposed Berlin Mall as an urbanizing area. This means that the proposed site should be able to accommodate all forms of urban uses after a close review. But what about questions of size and degree of urbanization? The regional plan for Central Vermont is silent on this point.

David Stainton, Vice Chairman of the Williston Town Planning Commission also feels that questions of size and scale in a development as large as Pyramid Mall are important. He says about the District No. 4 Commission's denial of Pyramid, "It can all be summarized by these words: it was the wrong place and the wrong scale." Stainton notes however that the law and regulations don't talk about scale. And Stainton believes that the effect of a development proposal doesn't so much depend on "what it is" but "how big it is."

Developing this point, Stainton says that Williston residents were sincere in designating the site on which Pyramid wanted to build as a commercial area. But had they been asked, Stainton feels, if they wanted half of downtown commercial Burlington transferred to Williston they would have said "no."

Stainton is careful to qualify his comments. He thinks that questions of scale have to be defined in relation to a given community. You can't just rule out all developments of a certain size. You have to look at their impact on a particular community.

Many of the participants in the Pyramid case believe that if new planning proposals are to emerge from the Pyramid experience that regional planning commissions will be the focal point of these new efforts.

Considering the amount of time spent by the District No. 4 Commission in deliberating on the Pyramid application, John Ponsetto says, "If the District Commission could have made a decision on the basis of a regional plan, it could have avoided months of hearings. Which is applicable, regional or town plans -- we got into months of hearings on those things," Ponsetto remarks. Ponsetto feels that regional plans could be developed, regional plans with real teeth in them. "You have the regional planning commission with 18 members," Ponsetto says, "and maybe that's where the guidance ought to come from."

Darby Bradley, VNRC's Staff Attorney, was the lawyer representing a coalition of groups opposing the Mall. This is how Bradley summarizes his impressions of the Pyramid review

process and the recent decision.

Bradley says, "This decision is a reprieve for Chittenden County. If they don't use it, they will be faced with the same situation with another development proposal in the foreseeable future. Bradley feels that public officials, planners and concerned citizens in Chittenden County should use the months and years ahead to do some good regional planning, particularly as it relates to large-scale developments.

Bradley's second response to the Pyramid hearing process is more complex. He has strong doubts about the wisdom of depending solely upon a permit process to handle developments of the size of a Pyramid Mall. To those who opposed the Mall, the Pyramid case was a "black-and-white" situation. But Bradley warns, "This won't always be the case."

One key figure in the hierarchy of planning in Chittenden County is Arthur Hogan, Executive Director of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

Hogan's response to the Pyramid decision is in contrast to some of the other participants in the hearing process.

"I would take issue," Hogan declares, "with the view that the State of Vermont couldn't summon the resources to do it again." And Hogan continued, "I would take issue that the District Commission couldn't do it again."

Hogan sees a lively tradition of government service in Vermont. The Pyramid application, though large-scale in its potential impact, is not the only application of this kind to come before the District No. 4 Commission in recent years. Hogan recalls the Green Meadows case where a development was proposed in the town of Westford, a community of 991 people. The developer wanted to build 1,320 units in a subdivision in Westford. The District Commission took on the Green Meadows case, ruled on it, just as it has taken on the Pyramid case, and ruled on it. Hogan says, "Citizens rise to the occasion."

Hogan does not see the power to implement planning policies gravitating away from the local towns to the regional commissions. Instead he sees a lively, organic process at work. Planning at every level will respond to the lessons of the Pyramid case, particularly Hogan feels, to questions of scale in development proposals. Regional plans will become more sophisticated. Local plans will become more sophisticated. Planning will improve at both levels. "If there is a message from Pyramid," Hogan says, "it is a message for everybody." But he says firmly, "Planning in Vermont is implemented at a local level." □

Buttoning Up For Winter

Two books are available that will prove helpful to Vermont homeowners who are getting in a supply of wood and fastening up their houses for the winter.

The first is **The Woodstove Annual**, published by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. This 180-page pocketbook is a layperson's guide to fuelwood cutting, chain saw operation and safety, wood stove selection and installation, and chimney cleaning and inspection. **The Woodstove Annual** is available for \$2.50 postpaid to VNRC members, and \$2.95

postpaid to non-members. Write, VNRC, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602.

The second book is **The Complete Energy-Saving Home Improvement Guide**. This 148-page resource book discusses all facets of home winterization and insulation. The **Home Improvement Guide** is available free of charge by writing, the Vermont State Energy Office, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602, or by calling the Energy Office on the toll-free action line (1) (800) 642-3281.

The prospectus calls for better information about the region's forest industries and markets. It calls for more detailed information on the import and export of wood and wood products in and out of the region.

As part of its recommendations, the prospectus suggests that the U.S. Forest Service refine and synchronize and intensify its forest survey techniques; that the universities of the region work together more closely in gathering and interpreting forest data. Furthermore, the Yale report recommends the establishment of a "New England Forest Information Center" to concentrate and coordinate the flow of information about the regional forest resource.

The Need For Strong Regional Institutions

The second and the most serious problem area identified by the Yankee Forest study is the present organizational disarray among forestry agencies in New England that ought to be providing leadership in planning the future of the region's forest resource.

After reviewing the forestry institutions of New England -- the state forest departments, the schools of forestry, the private, non-profit forestry organizations, -- the study concluded, "We were unable to identify a single public or private institution actively concerned with the region's forest resources, much less one explicitly advocating such an integrated approach." Nor was there an organization, public or private, on the horizon that seemed capable of being able to provide such regional leadership.

A serious institutional problem identified in the Yankee report is the failure of present federal programs to respond to the needs of the New England region. The prospectus points out that the U.S. Forest Service presently looks at New England as part of a much larger 20-state planning region. This region stretches from the Canadian border to the north, as far south as West Virginia, as far east as the Atlantic Ocean, and as far west as the states of Iowa and Minnesota.

Another acutely serious problem in every New England state, says the report, "is the major erosion of state budgets for forestry agencies." Budget stringencies have all but crippled the ability of state forestry departments to do much more than provide a caretaker function. "None can do an adequate job of planning," the report states.

In recommending a cure for these organizational problems, the Yankee report proposes two courses of action. First, an effort to strengthen existing forestry institutions. And second, research and study to evaluate existing programs and to suggest alternative forestry programs.

These are some of the immediate steps that the Yankee Forest report suggests ought to be taken.

- (1) The establishment of forest policy commissions, like the Vermont Forest Resources Advisory Council, in each New England state;
- (2) The establishment of a regional conservation commission to review regional forest policy;
- (3) The establishment of a distinct New England region as part of the U.S. Forest Service planning process;
- (4) The holding of Congressional oversight hearings in New England to evaluate the effectiveness of existing federal forestry programs and activities.

Over the long term, the prospectus recommends a comprehensive study of state forestry agencies (their programs, structures and budgets); the creation of experimental landowner

cooperatives as a way of developing forest resources on small private holdings; and an independent review of land grant university forestry programs.

The Need For Better Public Awareness

The serious lack of public awareness and understanding of the New England forest resource is the third problem area addressed by the Yankee Forest study.

While the Yankee study acknowledges that extension agents of the Cooperative Extension Service have done a creditable job, -- still there are problems. The report attacks the leadership of the Cooperative Extension Service at state and national levels. The report states, "Most state extension programs are organized on the basis of agricultural commodities with forestry treated as but one of many sub-programs." The report goes on to say, "Little recognition is given to the broad range of social and economic values of the forest resource."

"The need for a vigorous planning action program for New England's forest is clear"

A further problem is that most extension programs are directed at the rural farm community. This ignores the fact that an increasing number of forest owners and the vast majority of forest users are not farmers. Many non-farm forest owners do not have wood production as the major objective for their lands. The Yankee report states, "These fundamental problems of program emphasis and lack of sensitivity to owner objectives on the part of some forestry professionals, present significant obstacles to meeting the region's needs for public education and information."

Among the recommendations that the Yankee report makes on the subject of improving the public education effort are these: in the short term, the development of a region-wide information program, including the use of books, films, educational conferences, and the use of regional newspapers, magazines and organizational newsletters. So much for interim measures. Over the long term, the Yankee Forest prospectus recommends an independent evaluation of the information and education programs of the Cooperative Extension Service, state forestry agencies, and federal agencies with private forestry programs. A second long-term recommendation is the appointment of a special task force to develop a plan for the continuing education of forestry professionals.

A New Agenda For Action

About its new agenda for action, the Yankee Forest report says, "The need for a vigorous planning and action program for New England's forests is clear. And while the feasibility of such an effort is questionable, we do not believe the apparent obstacles are grounds for abandoning Dean Foster's call for a region-wide planning strategy. Rather our findings suggest the need for a more vigorous effort than initially envisioned -- for an effort that addresses even more fundamental issues than he suggested."

This, then, is the Yankee Forest manifesto. □

Recycling in Vermont: Getting Started

This past summer a small group of citizens gathered to launch a second recycling effort in Montpelier.

A first recycling program had been started in Montpelier in 1971 by a group of citizens who gave to their project the name of EARTH, to mean, "Environmental Association for Recycling Trash Heaps."

EARTH lasted three years until 1974. During the life of the project, EARTH volunteers collected and processed some 200 tons of paper. In one year alone, some 43 tons of glass were crushed in 55-gallon drums and shipped to Burlington for transfer to a glass factory in Dayville, Connecticut.

The problem was not supply; it was public apathy. In the end, the volunteers got sick of turning up on Saturday mornings to recycle everyone else's scrap paper and glass. So the project folded.

The group that met this past summer to launch a second recycling effort in Montpelier decided to proceed cautiously. As a first step, they organized a public discussion with the purpose of drawing on people throughout the state who had special knowledge of recycling or who had sustained successful community recycling programs.

This public meeting took place on Saturday, August 19 at the Unitarian Church Hall in Montpelier. Out of this August 19 public meeting has now emerged an edited summary of the proceedings, entitled, **RECYCLING IN VERMONT: GETTING STARTED**.

Not everyone who spoke to the public meeting in Montpelier on August 19 had encouraging words to say.

Bill Haines, a Social Studies teacher at Montpelier High School and one of the prime movers of EARTH, listed four lessons that could be drawn from the 1971-1974 venture. **LESSON ONE:** Get an adequate, heated storage space particularly for the collection of newsprint. It is important to be able to hold back materials until prices are favorable. **LESSON TWO:** Be sure to make good arrangements for the transportation of collected materials. **LESSON THREE:** Be sure you have accessible markets that offer a fair price. **LESSON FOUR:** Be prepared to pay the people who process and handle the collected materials because "other satisfactions" run out.

The economics of recycling was a constant theme throughout the public discussion. Andre Dupuis, a landfill operator in Randolph, said that until recently he had been collecting and hauling scrap paper and cardboard at the Randolph landfill. Last spring, Dupuis quit recycling and started burying recyclable materials once again. Supply was not the problem. He simply couldn't make enough money to pay for hauling, and he couldn't afford to accept the prices he was being offered by the middlemen.

Frederick Brousseau, Montpelier's landfill operator, is still recycling aluminum, brass, and copper which bring \$400 per ton. But he has stopped recycling paper because at \$30 to \$40 per ton it just wasn't a profit-making operation.

Talking about the economics of recycling, Andy Rouleau of Vermont's Division of Solid Waste drew the same moderate conclusion. Rouleau said, "It is doubtful that Montpelier can make money in recycling."

Eugene Novogrodsky, a former teacher at Union 32 High School and a Montpelier resident, struck a different note. Novogrodsky deplored the present waste of useful materials in our society. He argued that there were compelling ecological reasons for returning to our rural traditions in which there was a use for everything and nothing was thrown away. "We must return to this way of life," Novogrodsky said. He suggested that we package paper for curbside pick-up; separate bottles for reuse or crushing; recycle garbage into the soil; take our own bags to stores to be refilled; discontinue the use of garbage disposals; and demand consumer goods that are not pre-packaged in throwaway containers.

Three speakers at the August 19 meeting described successful recycling efforts in their communities.

Frank Teagle, who has been the driving force behind a successful recycling effort in Woodstock, reported that the Woodstock project had achieved its purpose of keeping at least two tons of refuse a week from going to the local landfill. At the present time, only glass and aluminum are being recycled in Woodstock. Teagle reported that he has personally collected almost 10,000 deposit bottles and is on his second ton of aluminum in seven years (pie tins, foil, etc.)

Lucia Howard and Ralph Wright explained the successful recycling program in Bennington.

The Bennington recycling effort began in November, 1972 as a cooperative project between the League of Women Voters and the Town of Bennington. Since 1972, the Town of Bennington has annually reappointed a six-member Town Recycling Committee. Until early 1977, this Town Committee ran a pick-up point for paper, glass and tin cans. In 1977, this recycling effort was merged with the Bennington Redemption Center.

The Bennington Redemption Center is an educational/business project under the direction of Ralph Wright who is a teacher employed by the Mt. Anthony Union High School. The Redemption Center is the centerpiece of an alternative school for "problem boys" who are in trouble at the local high school, or on probation from the courts or from the Weeks School.

The Center itself is a collection depot run out of a rented, two-story, brick building just back of Main Street in downtown Bennington. Last year the Redemption Center took in some 3.5 million bottles and cans across the counter. The Center gets paid a penny apiece for handling each bottle or can. Soft drinks are also sold at the Center. The Center deals with 70 percent of all the deposit bottles and cans in Bennington and surrounding towns. Last year, for everything that was redeemed, for its sales of soda pop, and for its sales of paper and aluminum, the Center took in a gross of \$40,000. Expenses were \$25,000. The Center was able to turn back \$15,000 to the local School Board.

To request a copy of **RECYCLING IN VERMONT: GETTING STARTED**, write Mr. Andy Rouleau, Vermont Division of Solid Waste, Agency of Environmental Conservation, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 □

Yankee Forest: A Prospectus

The Forest Pie: Who Will Get Served?

"Less than a day's drive from virtually any point in New England lies one of the largest forests in the nation. I call it the 'Fifth Forest' in recognition of the successive waves of utilization that first swept over New England, then the Lake States, then the West, and most recently the South. It is only a question of time before the extensive forest resource of the Northeast, the nation's prospective Fifth Forest, is subject to widespread exploitation and development."

"The Fifth 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."

"Why has so singularly valuable a resource remained underutilized?"

"We need a master plan for the Fifth Forest, and we need it soon."

(From the keynote address before the New England Section of the Society of American Foresters, Boston, March 11, 1976, by Charles H. W. Foster, Dean of the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University.)

After years of mismanagement and neglect, a new wind is blowing through the forests of New England and a new agenda for action is being written.

One of the many signs of a resurgence of interest in the future of the New England forest is the recent publication of a report entitled, **THE YANKEE FOREST: A PROSPECTUS**. This handsomely-designed, 32-page report is the result of a six-month research effort by a team of graduate students at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies under the direction of Dr. Carl Reidel of the University of Vermont.

In an introductory note to the prospectus, Carl Reidel defines the scope of the Yankee Forest study.

One thing the study is not. It is not the 'master plan' called for by Dean Foster in his March 1976 keynote address to the New England Section of the Society of American Foresters. Says Reidel, "We did not attempt to write the 'master plan' suggested by Dean Foster. That must come from the people of the region and from those state and regional institutions responsible for New England's forests. Our objectives," Reidel continues, "were to identify some of the key issues that must be faced by such a planning effort and to assess the feasibility of launching a truly regional program of forest policy planning and action. This prospectus reflects our perceptions, conclusions and recommendations. Our hope is that it will be a catalyst for the regional cooperation we believe is essential to the future of the Yankee Forest."

Two Themes of the Report: "Region" and "Planning"

Two themes run the entire length of the Yankee Forest report.

The first is the conviction that the forests of New England ought to be perceived as a regional resource and that regional cooperation will be needed to attack the problems of managing the Yankee Forest intelligently.

What is this regional forest, or Yankee Forest, that the Study team discusses in the prospectus?

The Yale researchers refuse to be dogmatic in defining the

Yankee Forest. They say, "The flow of forest products, recreational users, and water across state lines cannot be ignored. The states [of New England] are inextricably linked by transportation systems, energy needs, and economic patterns."

The Yale study emphasizes the importance of seeing the New England forest as a regional resource. But it consciously sidesteps the question of defining the regional forest in terms of neat geographical boundaries. The Yankee Forest is the New England forest. Yes. But drawing an arbitrary boundary is not the chief concern of the Yale study team. They have another focus. And that focus is clearly not the entire New England forest, but a large piece of it.

The study team says, "We were not specifically concerned with large industrial ownerships nor with larger state and federal forests. Obviously these lands are an integral part of the Yankee Forest and must be considered in any regional planning effort. But since forest planning is well underway on many of these public and industrial forests, we felt that our limited resources should be directed to those long-neglected small private ownerships. These are the lands, we believe," the report goes on to say, "that will be shaped by decisions of individual landowners responding to the economic, governmental and social influences they encounter. This is the Yankee Forest of today."

The second theme of the Yankee Forest report is an insistence on the need for planning. The authors write, "Throughout this report we have returned again and again to the words of 'region' and 'planning'. Neither of these words, nor the ideas they suggest, are especially popular in New England. State and local independence has been a Yankee tradition for far too long to take lightly. But somehow, we must find ways to respect this tradition and yet deal effectively with an important natural resource that knows no political boundaries."

In the judgment of the Yale study team, the choice to plan or not to plan is really no choice at all. The authors say, "But whether we choose to plan or not as a region, we are 'planning' nonetheless. The choice is either to consciously shape the future of the Yankee Forest, or yield it, again, to careless exploitation."

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Problems in the Yankee Forest

Here is how the Yale University study describes the problems of the small, privately-held woodlands of New England.

The study reveals the surprising fact that 8 out of every 10 acres of land in New England today are forested. But this fact needs to be explained. The report states, "Much of this Yankee Forest is in extremely poor condition by any standards of scientific forestry or potential commercial productivity. Most stands are overstocked in terms of trees per acre, primarily in small, low-quality trees. Over 13 percent of the trees are classified as 'rough or rotten' by the U.S. Forest Service, with even higher percentages in poor condition for producing quality wood products." The Yale researchers found that the region's forests are producing only 1/3 to 1/2 of their potential in quality wood fiber (with some estimates as low as 1/10 of potential productivity).

Nor is this all. Not only is the forest in poor condition and producing far below its potential. The Yankee Forest prospectus says that less than 50 percent of the present annual growth of the region's forests is being used by New England's forest industries.

Given the rising costs of energy and transportation, given the rising demand for wood and wood products -- the report asks these questions, "How long will it be possible to continue to import wood from outside the New England region?" And "What would be the economic consequences if supplies of wood into New England were to be cut off?"

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The prospect appears hopeful or grim -- depending on what happens. If a transition can be made to local supplies of wood, then as many as 60,000 new jobs can be created in the region. This assumes that the full potential of the region's forests can be utilized. If however the region fails to make this transition to local supplies, then New England could be faced with the loss of as many as 50,000 jobs in wood-related industries.

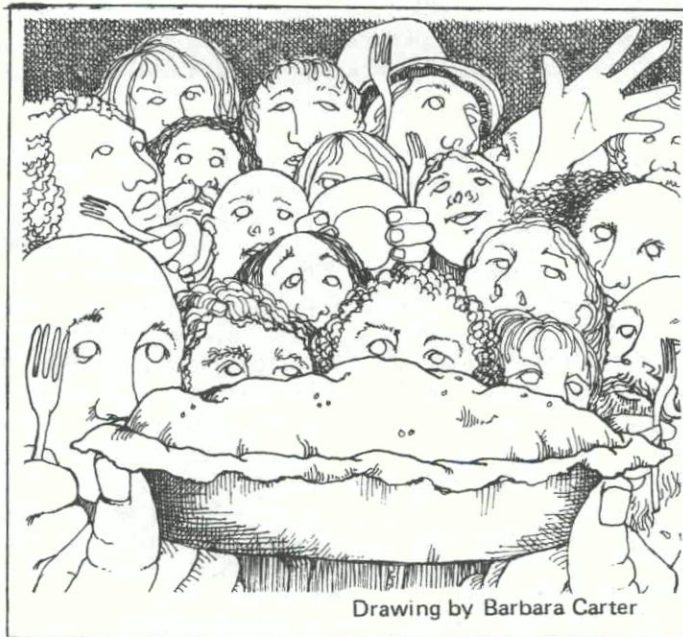
Why has the New England region neglected the opportunity of managing and using its forest resource to full advantage? This is a question that the Yankee prospectus discusses.

One problem is the existence of literally thousands of small, privately-held, individual forest tracts in New England. When the large industrial holdings in northern Maine are excluded, upwards of 75 percent of the Yankee Forest is found to be in private, individual ownership. In most states of the region the average ownership is less than 50 acres in size. And the report says, "As few as 12 percent of those in southern [New England] states have ever harvested trees from their land." So the resource is there. But it is either being neglected completely or mismanaged. And as a potential source of wood to supply a commercial forest industry or to meet a consumer demand it might as well not exist at all.

In concluding its description of the current situation of the Yankee Forest, the report says, "In summary, the same critical problems were cited by virtually every person interviewed during our study: lack of markets for low-quality trees, inadequately funded state forestry agencies and incentive programs,

outmoded forest regulations, and the fragmentation of forest ownerships into smaller and smaller tracts."

The prospectus continues, "Authorities in every state expressed deep concern that the Yankee Forest is being fragmented into tracts too small to manage effectively, a trend that will continue until property taxes are reduced and stabilized and improved economic incentives and technical assistance are available to small landowners. A key element, all agreed, must be an expanded public information and education effort to bring the plight of the Yankee Forest before the people of the region."



Drawing by Barbara Carter

The Need for Better Information

Fully half of the Yankee Forest prospectus is devoted to a statement of conclusions and recommendations flowing from the present situation of the New England forest.

The Yale study team identified three broad problem areas that demand attention.

The first broad problem area is the need for better information about the New England forest resource.

The Yale researchers found many inadequacies in present timberland inventory systems. "While considerable data exists," the prospectus says, "it is our conclusion that most is too fragmentary and generalized to provide essential information necessary for an effective program of planning and action."

Specifically, the Yale study team found that information currently available cannot be applied to sub-state regions or counties. Nor does the current inventory system reflect the more recent changes in harvesting and wood utilization technologies or the greatly increased interest in firewood procurement.

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● Champlain Study Heads for the Finish Line

In April, 1977, the states of New York and Vermont in cooperation with the New England River Basins Commission embarked on a two-year, \$1 million, study of natural resource and management problems in the Lake Champlain region.

Now, some 18 months later, the Lake Champlain Basin Study is nearing completion and members of the study team are circulating the findings of the project and asking for public comment on its preliminary recommendations.

Over the past 18 months the Lake Champlain Basin Study has been accumulating a long list of credits. Thirty technical reports have now been released. These reports cover a wide range of social, economic, and environmental issues. Specific topics discussed in these reports include: nuisance aquatic plants, shoreline erosion, public access to the Lake, the economic viability of agricultural lands, and the influence of Vermont's Act 250 on development in the Lake basin.

One major publication of the Study is the **Lake Champlain Atlas: Water Quality and Shoreline**. This 11" x 17", bound collection of maps and accompanying text serves as a companion volume to the technical reports. The **Atlas** is an inventory of the natural resources of the Lake region.

But gathering information has been only a part of the Basin Study's mission. Another important feature of the Study's work has been to encourage public participation in making decisions about the character and quality of the Lake in the years ahead.

One of the Study's first activities was a survey of young people and adults on both sides of the Lake. The purpose of this survey was to determine the public's perception of the Lake. Participants in the survey were asked to rank in order of importance those issues they felt were most critical to the future of the region. The results of this survey played a major role in

identifying the topics for study in the technical reports.

Another effort to bring citizens into the decision-making process is the recently-published document **Time For Choice -- Issues and Solutions**. This 68-page publication summarizes the technical reports and presents several alternative solutions to particular problems. **Issues and Solutions** provides space for the citizen to write comments, together with a mail-back form. Richard Dworsky, Study Manager for the Basin Study project, says, "We are interested in citizen comment. These comments will help us select the Study's final solutions and recommendations as we conclude our work."

Cheryl King, Public Involvement Coordinator for the Study, is currently organizing public meetings in Vermont and New York. The staff of the project is presenting the results of the Study through a 20-minute slide-tape show, entitled **Lake Champlain: A Time of Choice**. In discussing the purpose of the public meetings, Cheryl King says, "We want the meetings to be more than an effort to get the word out. We want these meetings to be forums for public discussion of the Lake."

"The Study has accomplished a lot in the past 18 months," comments Assistant Study Manager, Monty Fischer, "but it's not enough, -- there's more to be done." Staff members of the project feel that if the findings are to be of value they must be translated into action. This means that state and local governments must find ways to cooperate in solving common problems; that legislation must be passed; and that citizens must take an active role in preserving the quality of the Lake and the land that borders its shores.

For more information about the Study or its publications, please call or write Cheryl King, Public Involvement Coordinator, Lake Champlain Basin Study, 177 Battery Street, Ice House, Burlington, Vermont 05401, (802) 862-8270 □

VNRC Annual Meeting

Close to 180 VNRC members attended the Council's 1978 Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 9, at the Basin Harbor Club on Lake Champlain, near Vergennes.

In the morning, VNRC members participated in a program of field trips. These trips included a canoe trip on Dead Creek in the teeth of a brisk wind, a guided tour of Button Bay State Park, a tour of the International Paper Company plant at Ticonderoga, and a forest management workshop in Shelburne.

During the afternoon business meeting, David Marvin, Chairman of the VNRC Board of Directors, announced receipt by the Council of an anonymous gift of \$250,000. Marvin said that the gift would be used to establish a VNRC endowment fund.

A tribute to Mrs. Bernice Burnham provided a singularly warm and graceful moment at the close of the business meeting. Mrs. Burnham is a past member of the VNRC Board and has continued to serve the Council for many years as its volunteer bookkeeper. In honoring Mrs. Burnham with life membership in the Council, Executive Director, Seward Weber, said, "VNRC salutes you, Bernice, for what you have

done to enrich us. We are particularly aware of your loyalty and devotion to the cause of environmental welfare and we are grateful for the selfless manner in which you have pursued this cause."

Elected at the business meeting to membership on the VNRC Board of Directors were the following incumbents: Stanton Allaben of Londonderry; Armand J. Beliveau of St. George; John von Behren of Wolcott; Wesley Ward of Marlboro; David Firestone of Barnard; and Charles Johnson of Stowe.

Elected as new members of the VNRC Board were Anne Just of Warren and Montgomery Fischer of Montpelier. Just was a Representative to the Vermont General Assembly in the last session and served on the House Agricultural Committee. Fischer is Assistant Study Manager of the Lake Champlain Basin Study.

Copies of the minutes of the 1978 VNRC Annual Meeting and of a memorandum entitled "1978 Activities to Date" that describes VNRC work this past year are available. To request copies, please write VNRC, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602. □

Wood Energy Conference Set for Nov. 4

The Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) has announced an all-day conference on the subject of "Wood Energy and the Future of the Vermont Forest Resource."

The conference is open to the general public and will be held on Saturday, November 4, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Pavilion Office Building on State Street in downtown Montpelier.

In explaining the purpose of the conference, Seward Weber, Executive Director of the VNRC, said, "No one needs to tell Vermonters about the enormous potential in the use of wood, both for home heating and electrical energy. What's exciting is the prospect of more jobs and a boost in economic activity, and a new opportunity for better forest management."

"At the same time," Weber cautioned, "we've got to exercise care and we've got to ask the right questions. We've got to find out how much wood can be reasonably harvested. We need to measure the environmental impacts of new harvesting equipment. And perhaps most important, we've got to determine how our use of wood for energy will affect other legitimate uses of the Vermont forest resource."

The November 4 conference will address these and other questions. The morning program will examine current developments in the harvesting and utilization of wood for energy in Vermont. Two panels, one chaired by Dr. Hugo John, Director of the UVM School of Natural Resources, and the other chaired by J. Philip Rich of JPR Associates in Stowe will look at current developments in wood for energy, and forest management.

After lunch at noon, the conference will hear a keynote address from Charles H. W. Foster, Dean of the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University. Dean Foster has been deeply involved in calling for a program of region-wide planning and action for New England's forests. A recently published report, entitled **THE YANKEE FOREST: A PROSPECTUS**, was written under Dean Foster's guidance at the Yale School of Forestry and this report is presently the subject of wide discussion in New England forestry circles.

In the afternoon, the conference will look at the future of the forest resource. A panel chaired by Dr. Mark Lapping of the UVM Environmental Studies Program will deal with such questions as "How We Can Encourage the Value-Added Manufacturing of Forest Products" and the "Role of Government in Making Forestry Choices."

The November 4 conference is being sponsored by the Vermont Timberland Owners Association, Green Mountain Club, Vermont Timber Truckers & 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.

To register for the November 4 conference, please send \$2.00 per person registration fee, and \$5.00 per person (optional) for a buffet luncheon at the Tavern Motor Inn. Make checks payable to: VNRC -- Forestry Conference." Send your registration and check to: VNRC, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602, or call (802) 223-2328. □

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Published monthly by the Vermont Natural Resources Council, a non-profit citizens' conservation organization, supported by membership dues and contributions. VNRC, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602. (802) 223-2328. Chairman: David R. Marvin; -Executive Director: Seward Weber; Editor: Nat Frothingham. VNRC is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. The VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT is published in the interest of examining environmental issues and creating a wider understanding of such issues. Its contents are not intended to represent official VNRC policy unless specifically stated.