

The background of the cover is a photograph of a forest floor in autumn. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The ground is covered in fallen yellow and orange leaves. Several dark tree trunks are visible, standing vertically. The overall mood is serene and natural.

VNRC

Vermont

Environmental Report

Published
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Natural
Resources
Council, Inc.

How Do We Sustain Forests?

**A BALANCING ACT FOR
VERMONT WOODLANDS**

October
1997

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The Vermont Natural Resources Council, Inc., is a nonprofit environmental organization founded in 1963 to protect Vermont's natural resources and environment for present and future generations through research, education, and advocacy.

VNRC is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

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Join VNRC in protecting Vermont with your membership of \$35 (or \$20 for introductory and gift rates).



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Vermont Environmental Report

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October, 1997

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THE INSIDE WORD

FORESTS ARE FOREVER

Sustainable Actions Pushed by VNRC

Almost certainly, 1997 will be remembered as the year when Vermont got tough on poor forestry. Two new laws passed the legislature, H.36 and S.28, to protect forests in Vermont. Our state's woodlands will now be managed better; they will no longer be a setting for rapacious harvests and inappropriate use of chemical herbicides.

We at VNRC are providing an overview of major forest issues in Vermont with this issue of the *Vermont Environmental Report*. While not intended to be comprehensive in its scope, we hope this issue will help you understand the importance of sustaining Vermont's forests.

In addition, we are pleased to introduce Jim Northup, our new Forest Program Director (see page 25). Jim Northup replaces Jim Shallow, who directed VNRC's efforts in forestry and outreach, and who now leads the Vermont field office for the National Audubon Society.

Indeed, forests are critical to Vermont's ecological, economic, and social well-being. But there is no single vision for the recovery of the Northern Forest—or for that matter, for forests elsewhere in Vermont, such as the Green Mountain National Forest. It may be helpful to reflect on the wisdom of the Northern Forest Lands Council (NFLC). The following concepts were put forth by the NFLC to help guide decisions. (Excerpted from the NFLC report, *Finding Common Ground: Conserving the Northern Forest*, September 1994.)

"It is essential to recognize and understand the concerns of those who live within and care about the Northern Forest;

"We must view human and biological relationships to the land with equal regard;

"The potential for undesirable change still exists. We must act now to direct and guide change;

"The forest must be viewed as an integrated landscape that includes both private and public lands;

"The Northern Forest has been and can continue to be a powerful force for long-term economic well-being for its residents and the Northeast region in general; and

"The Northern Forest can continue to provide a great diversity of values and serve many interests and constituencies."



Elizabeth Courtney, VNRC's
new Executive Director.

VNRC needs to help find this "common ground"—and a good place to begin is to examine the fundamental points offered in the NFLC report. Moreover, we need to consider how the NFLC recommendations could be applied to forests around Vermont.

Major opportunities exist in Vermont right now to perpetuate thoughtful, forward-thinking forestry and land management for years to come. We need to make sure that the citizens of Vermont **have a voice** in protecting the wild forests they love—for themselves, their children, and grandchildren — and in promoting ecologically sound, economically profitable forest cutting.

That is why we are providing VNRC members with an issue of the VER devoted to sustaining Vermont's forests—wild and working. Forests are more than wood fiber—they are the basis for environmental quality, at the heart of many communities' economies, and they are the essence of Vermont.



ELIZABETH COURTNEY APPOINTED NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Diverse Background Will Help Protect Vermont

As the new Executive Director of VNRC, Elizabeth Courtney plans to use her familiarity with Vermont's land use laws and her ties to the business community, educators, preservationists, and political leaders to build coalitions to protect Vermont's environment. Her experience includes:

- Chairing the Vermont Environmental Board from 1991 to 1994, and serving on the Board a total of 9 years.
- In 1994, Elizabeth was awarded a Loeb Fellowship in Advanced Environmental Studies at Harvard University where she conducted research in community sustainability at the Kennedy School of Government.
- Elizabeth is a landscape architect with an MA in Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture, and was the principal of ECOS, an environmental consulting firm specializing in conflict mediation, negotiation, community planning, and natural resources management.
- She serves as advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and as a Trustee at the Vermont Law School.
- Elizabeth is a visiting lecturer at Bennington and Middlebury Colleges, and she is the author of a Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' publication, *Understanding Vermont's Scenic Landscape: A Guide for Growth and Protection*.

As Executive Director, Elizabeth hopes to lead the Board and staff of VNRC into a new era of coalition building for the common good of Vermont. In order to realize this vision, the environment needs to be looked at as a whole system.

From Elizabeth's perspective, when the environment is viewed as a whole system, there are three basic aspects to it: The natural environment, the economic environment, and the civic environment. All aspects of the environment need to be working in harmony.

If VNRC's goal is harmonizing the natural, economic, and civic environments, as opposed to ensuring that one

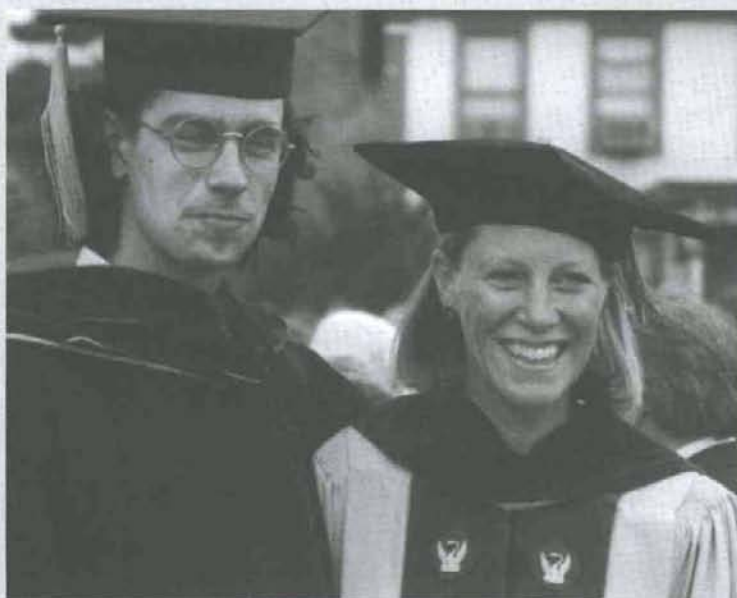


Elizabeth presents her daughter, Hannah, with a birthday cake at her 9th birthday celebration.

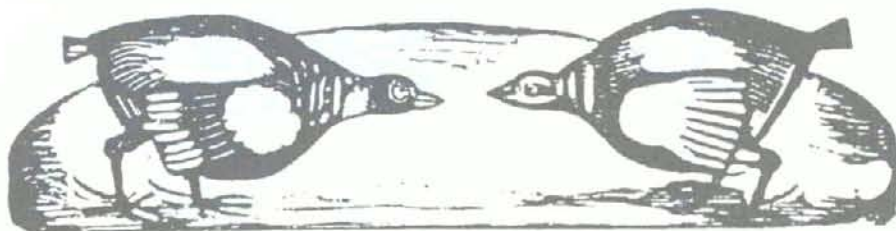
aspect "wins out" over the other, we will have a revitalized approach to protecting resources. This approach requires establishing sound relationships among individuals and groups who

represent these three types of environments.

A coalition-building approach to resource protection is perhaps best explained with an analogy to the medical profession. VNRC will practice a kind of preventative health care for the environment so that we can avoid the unfortunate necessity of an expensive, energy-consuming and possibly perilous "surgical" procedure in the future. This way, common ground is established, and the challenges of meeting competing objectives are resolved more effectively.



As a Trustee of the Vermont Law School, Elizabeth was able to "hood" her son, Jonas Kron, at graduation ceremonies in May, 1997.



TENACITY PAYS OFF

I am writing to thank all of you for your hard work on the agreement with New England Power regarding the Deerfield River and surrounding lands. The time and energy that staff and Board of VNRC have extended to make this project work has been invaluable. I know that all of you spent many hours reviewing and refining a workable agreement.

The staff's commitment to aggressively pursuing natural resource concerns resulted in a deal that makes sense for the environment. The Board's willingness to get involved in the details of negotiation helped in thinking through myriad issues. On the whole, VNRC's teamwork and assistance was impressive. I can safely say that we wouldn't be able to protect 16,000 acres of land without VNRC's tenacity.

I greatly appreciate Steve Holmes, Chris Kilian, Job Heintz, Mary Ashcroft, Paul Bruhn, and Len Wilson spending more than a full day to reach agreement in the final round of discussions. I know it was a marathon, and I am happy that everyone was a winner.

Thank you all again. I look forward to working with you toward agreement on Fifteen Mile Falls and hope for continued success.

Howard Dean, M.D.
Governor

OBJECTIONS TO LAMOILLE ARTICLE

I read with interest the article in the January VNRC Bulletin concerning the Water Resources Board's recent decision on the Lamoille River Hydroelectric Project. The article has significant shortcomings, especially in its failure to acknowledge the extent of mitigation that was required by the Agency of Natural Resources in addressing the project's historic and continuing degradation of the river. The article leaves the reader with the impression that the agency had rubber-stamped CVPS's proposal. That is far from the case. In fact, VNRC was not alone in appealing the Agency's water quality certification—the utility also appealed it, finding it to be too restrictive. The many environmental issues cited in your article had been identified by the Agency and addressed in the certification. Special flows were required for protection of the intrinsic value of the major waterfalls bypassed by the project; flow regimes to restore aquatic habitat were required, as well as significant drawdown restrictions at Arrowhead Mountain Reservoir.

The lower Lamoille River is a magnificent ecological, visual, recreational, and cultural resource. The original federal license for the Lamoille River Hydroelectric Project expired almost a decade ago. Until this water quality certification process is brought to a conclusion, the federal license will remain in limbo and restoration of this reach of river will be further delayed. I am hopeful that VNRC and CVPS will work cooperatively with the Agency to resolve this impasse.

Jeffrey R. Cueto, P.E.
Principal Hydrologist
Water Quality Division, ANR

KUDOS AND MORE DETAILS

Congratulations on the great March issue of *Vermont Environmental Report* and its comprehensive, informative articles about the relationship between new communications technology and Vermont's environment. I count on the VER to increase my understanding of how business, biology, politics, and individual actions continue to shape Vermont's natural heritage.

A footnote to your reference to the Act 250 case concerning a proposal communications tower on Bemis Hill in Rockingham:

I took some interest in this case, as a neighbor, a Windham Regional Commission representative from an abutting town, and an architectural historian who provided testimony to the District Environmental Commission concerning its potential impact on historic resources.

As you reported, the regional plan's support for *co-location* with existing towers has taken the wind out of this application's sails for the time being.

But one of the aspects of this tower proposal that most infuriated residents is the FCC practice of issuing radio broadcast licenses for *under-served* locations, which are considered *prima facie* as serving the public good. In this case, the applicant obtained an FCC license to establish a radio station to serve Walpole, N.H., and then argued that a hilltop 10 miles away in Vermont was the only possible place to site a transmitter.

Local residents remain convinced that the economic benefits to be obtained from operating such a small-time radio station are not sufficient reason for the applicant to go through all the trouble and expense of constructing the tower. They surmise that

if the tower is constructed, it would soon become the site, under *co-location* approval, for a variety of other communications towers and antennas.

My thanks to VNRC and others who are fighting to have such important decisions made in Vermont, not in Washington.

Richard Ewald
Wesminster West, VT

Note from the Editor: Thanks for your thoughts—and many thanks to Will Lindner for his impressive work on the March, 1997, VER issue and on the research paper he prepared for VNRC on telecommunications and broadcasting transmission facilities (see page 26 for more information).

THANKS FOR YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT!

Keep up the good work!

Susan Clark
Worcester, VT

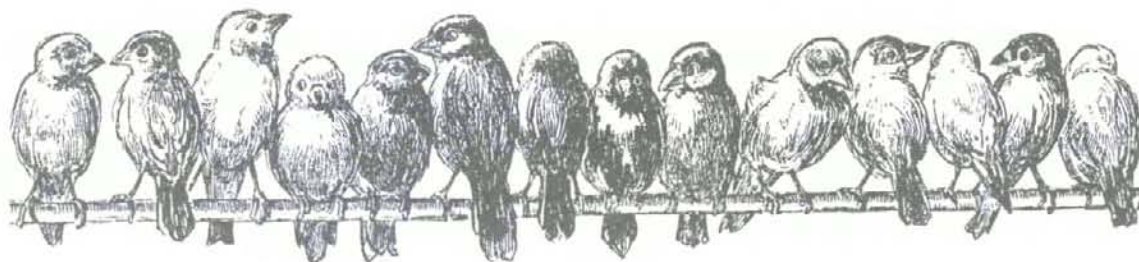
...We read your publications with interest and we feel supportive of the work you are undertaking. We chose the VNRC and the VLT in preference to a comparable organization which seemed to us to be spending too much of its money on

regional offices, slick promotion, and administrative overhead.

Gladys Minear
Guilford, CT

Best wishes and hope you're enjoying the summer. Keep up the good work!

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This LAND IS OUR LAND

Vermonters Urged to Participate in Plan

By
JIM NORTHUP,
VNRC

The Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) is one of Vermont's most valuable environmental, social, and economic assets. Its vast, unbroken forests provide sparkling water, fresh air, and habitats for rare songbirds and mammals. Its simple, natural beauty and opportunities for solitude provide much-needed sources of inspiration and re-creation for people wearied by the hectic pace of modern life. And, its outstanding environmental amenities attract and hold business owners and workers



who value those amenities and the high quality of life that they create.

One of the most wonderful things about the GMNF, however, is that we—the people—own it. However, with ownership comes responsibility. Over the next couple of years, the U.S. Forest Service will decide how these precious public lands will be managed during the next decade. Our responsibility is to help the agency make the right decisions. This article outlines the agency's planning and decisionmaking

process, and suggests a number of items for the agency to consider during that process.

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

The GMNF's mixture of wild woods and working woods follow the spine of the Green Mountains from the Massachusetts border to Appalachian Gap (Route 17) with only a relatively small break in federal ownership along the mountains east of Rutland.

The GMNF includes almost 6 percent of Vermont—about 350,000 acres. If all of these acres could be consolidated they would fill about 15 average-sized Vermont towns. As it stands, the GMNF's land is scattered over 42 towns.

Our national forest contains: six congressionally designated Wildernesses; a national recreation area; portions of the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail; four alpine ski areas; many miles of trails for hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, and other uses; habitat conditions for several uncommon species, and tens of thousands of acres where trees are managed for wood production.

REVISION OF THE GMNF MANAGEMENT PLAN HAS BEGUN

The January 1987 adoption of the Green Mountain National Forest plan marked the end of an intensive, six year planning process and the beginning of the plan implementation process. Federal regulations require that National Forest plans be reviewed and, if necessary, revised every 10 to 15 years. This means it is time for the agency to take stock of what they learned during plan implementation, to respond to new issues and information that have come up, and to meaningfully involve interested citizens in setting new policies to guide management of our national forest at the start of the next millennium.

The Forest Service hosted a series of public meetings earlier this summer to launch the planning process. More public meetings are planned for this fall and winter. If all goes according to schedule, the agency will do the bulk of its analysis and planning during 1998, issue a Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 1999, and adopt the Final Plan in 2000. Citizens will be invited to participate throughout the process.

Two primary sets of rules guide the agency's planning process: The National Forest Management Act regulations (36 CFR Part 219) and the National

Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 - 1508). Anyone interested in understanding and influencing the agency's plan

revision process should request copies of these rules and the current management plan from the Forest Service.

[231 North Main Street, Rutland, VT 05701 (802) 747-6700].

CURRENT VISION FOR THE GMNF

The best place for the agency to begin a re-vision of the GMNF plan is to take a look at the vision expressed in the current forest plan. If the vision expressed in the current plan still reflects society's needs, wants, and values, then any proposed changes to the plan that would strengthen and promote that vision should be adopted—and any proposed changes that would be contrary to the vision should be rejected. Simple.

The Forest Service expressed society's vision for the GMNF in several places in the current plan. The following philosophy is at the heart of that vision:

We believe that public land in New England is scarce and precious: Our management philosophy reflects that belief. The Green Mountain National Forest should be managed to provide benefits that private land does not... With its large blocks of land in remote areas, the GMNF is particularly well suited to providing opportunities for backcountry recreation and wilderness. (GMNF Plan, p. 4.03).

If anything, the philosophy underlying the plan's vision is even more relevant today than it was ten years ago. The Forest Service needs to hear that we want the agency to continue to embrace this philosophy as it sets new policy and management direction for our scarce and precious public land. We need to hear that they intend to do so.

There are many things the Forest Service could do to promote society's current vision for the GMNF. A number of examples are listed below. Keep them in mind and add to them as you participate in the plan revision process.

PERFORM TIMBER CUTTING PRIMARILY FOR DEMONSTRATION AND EDUCATION

This plan recognizes that increased timber volumes can be removed from private land, while large, remote areas can only be provided by the Green Mountain National Forest. (GMNF Plan, p. 3.01). *Private lands are more numerous, better able and better suited to meet timber demands.* (GMNF Plan, p. 5.07). *The Green Mountain National Forest should be used for research, education, and for demonstration of various types and techniques of management.* (GMNF Record of Decision, p. 4).

Over the past decade, the Forest Service continued its long-standing tradition of practicing industrial-style forestry—relatively large, intensive cuts—even though it acknowledges that wood production should not be its primary goal. Old habits are hard to break.

As part of its planning process, the Forest Service should consider shifting its emphasis from production of wood to





forest—big and small—that have been cut, roaded, and disturbed in other ways by humans. These conditions are amply provided on private forestland. Other species, however, need large tracts of relatively undisturbed, unbroken forest to ensure their survival. The National Forest is the best, perhaps the only, place to ensure the protection of such habitats in Vermont over the long term.

The Forest Service should look at the possibility of increasing the number and extent of large, unroaded areas on the GMNF. This could be done by halting the construction of planned roads, closing some existing roads, and adding newly acquired areas to the unroaded land base. A few potential

additions to the unroaded lands deserve particular attention—Glastenbury Mountain, the large unroaded basin along Lamb Brook, and areas adjacent to land now designated as Wilderness or Primitive.

CREATE AN ECOLOGICAL RESERVE SYSTEM SPANNING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND

We share the public's belief that the Green Mountain National Forest has an important role to play in providing backcountry recreation and scarce wildlife habitats that private lands cannot provide. (GMNF Record of Decision, p. 38).

One of the biggest opportunities we face when revising the GMNF plan is figuring out how to begin the creation of a system of Ecological Reserves (see page 11). The concept of Ecological Reserve systems is relatively new and was not given much attention during the last round of forest planning. Ecological Reserves are large blocks of wildland that many scientists believe are essential to ecosystem function—continued life as we know it

on this planet—and the preservation of biodiversity. However, in order for the ecological reserves to function, they must be part of a system—surrounded by appropriately managed buffers and connected by functional corridors.

The GMNF provides an ideal nucleus for the creation of an Ecological Reserve system in Vermont. Several large National Forest wildland reserves already exist and a few more could be created to fill in any big gaps in these ecological “stepping stones.” Management of surrounding land could be tailored to protect and complement the reserves, and land in between could be managed to enable wildlife to move easily between the reserves. All it takes is the will to do it, a landscape view, and coordination and cooperation among affected land-owners.

CREATE CLOSE, LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CITIZENS, LOGGERS, AND FOREST SERVICE

Each segment of the public, indeed, each individual, has a unique relationship with this National Forest. The needs and wants of these groups often differ — sometimes dramatically... The interests and relationships of all people and all uses of the National Forest (must be) considered since the Forest Plan will affect management options for many years. (GMNF Record of Decision, pp. 6-7).

National Forest planning need not limit itself to considerations of land and resources. People are important too. As part of its planning process, the Forest Service has a chance to rethink and reshape its relationships with the individuals, groups, and contractors who use and enjoy the GMNF.

There is much to be gained by creating new, ongoing social institutions and processes to promote dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among the diverse groups that have an interest in the whole National Forest. Establishing a GMNF Citizen Roundtable would provide an excellent forum for dialogue about forestwide policies and issues. These small groups of citizens could be organized to advise the Forest Service and private landowners about management goals and actions in local watersheds and monitor the results of those actions over time (see page 11). This would be helpful to the natural resources, the local communities, and the agency.

Stewardship of the national forest might also be improved if long-term relationships

education of private woodland owners through demonstration of small-scale, sustainable forest practices on highly visible and easily accessible sites. If this were done, it could substantially increase the number of small, private forest landowners who are managing for wood production. This, in turn, could result in substantially more high quality wood available for cutting than could ever be available from the GMNF.

PROVIDE MORE LARGE BLOCKS OF UNDISTURBED FOREST

Private lands are unlikely to provide “wildland” conditions in the future. The population will continue to grow and greater pressures will be placed on all lands to meet society's needs. Private lands are best suited to meet the needs for housing, lumber, minerals and roaded, natural appearing areas....Public lands in Vermont are best suited to provide large tracts of unroaded, “wildlands.” (GMNF Record of Decision, p. 19).

Many wildlife species thrive in patches of

could be created between local loggers, local citizens, and local areas of the National Forest. As it stands now, each timber sale must be bid on separately, and this means that several different loggers could end up cutting timber in one local watershed over a ten year period. Lack of familiarity with and long-term accountability for the land by loggers may result in unnecessary environmental harm and taxpayer expense. Local citizen involvement could inform the process and inspire greater accountability from the agency and the loggers.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS

Woody Allen once said that, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." Well, the Forest Service has begun the process of



revising the current GMNF management plan, and it is essential that VNRC members and other conservationists show up when the agency hosts public meetings and asks for public comments—written and oral. This is the only way to keep the current vision for the GMNF alive and ensure that policies and actions are adopted to promote and strengthen that vision.

Please contact VNRC at (802) 223-2328 if you would like to be involved or want more information about the planning process. We'll keep you updated regularly and will let you know how you can help.



LOGGING ON THE GMNF — DOLLARS AND SENSE

The current plan for the GMNF calls for prudent and profitable timber management aimed primarily at enhancing scarce, important wildlife habitats and demonstrating sustainable forest management techniques to private landowners.

The plan states that wood production should not be a primary goal of the GMNF since Vermont's private forestlands can easily meet society's demand for wood. The plan says that it is more important to manage the GMNF for those things that private lands cannot be relied on to provide—backcountry recreation, remote wildlife habitats, wilderness, and scenic beauty.

Unfortunately, timber cutting on the GMNF during the decade following the adoption of the 1987 plan has not been in keeping with these principles. The Forest Service continues to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars annually while logging the GMNF; wood production has been the primary goal of its most controversial and least profitable logging proposals; and the agency has done little, if anything, to demonstrate small-scale, sustainable forest management.

What if the agency's industrial scale,

money-losing attempts to "get the cut out" were replaced with a program aimed primarily at demonstrating sustainable forestry to small private landowners? In other words, what would happen if the spirit of the current plan was adhered to?

Many conservationists believe that the agency would save money, cause less environmental disruption on the GMNF, promote better stewardship on private forestland, increase production of high quality wood on private forestland, and increase the number of forest-related jobs in Vermont.

Let's look at the numbers to understand the current situation and the need for change:

- According to the Forest Service, the GMNF lost \$438,000 from its Fiscal Year 1995 timber sale program. However, when the costs of road building and payments to towns are included in the calculation the GMNF's total financial loss from timber sales increases to \$1,053,396.
- The Green Mountain National Forest's annual timber sales, 7.9 million board feet in FY 1995, is about 1.3 percent of the total volume of wood cut in

Vermont annually. Even if the GMNF were to sell the "maximum" annual amount of timber allowed under its plan, 15.6 million board feet, it would amount to only 2.5 percent of Vermont's total annual timber harvest.

- In 1983, the most recent year for which statistics are available, the total net annual growth of wood on commercial timberland in Vermont was about 2.0 million cords. (Experts assume that net annual growth has increased slightly since then.) In 1995, the total volume of wood cut in Vermont amounted to 1.2 million cords—about 60 percent of projected net annual growth. The gap illustrates the tremendous potential that exists for increasing annual timber harvests in Vermont and/or making up for any reductions in National Forest timber harvests.

Focusing the GMNF's timber program on demonstration of small-scale, sustainable forest management would save taxpayers' dollars and would make good ecological and economic sense. It is time to make the change.

POLICY CHANGES PROTECT VERMONT FORESTS

But What's Next after the NFLC?

BY CHRISTOPHER MCGRORY KLYZA

Forest policy has topped the policy agenda in Vermont and in the other three Northern Forest states—Maine, New Hampshire, and New York—since the Northern Forest Lands Council (NFLC) issued its final recommendations and dissolved in 1994. After a tentative start, Vermont has made the most progress in moving forward on forest policy in an open, positive, and democratic manner.

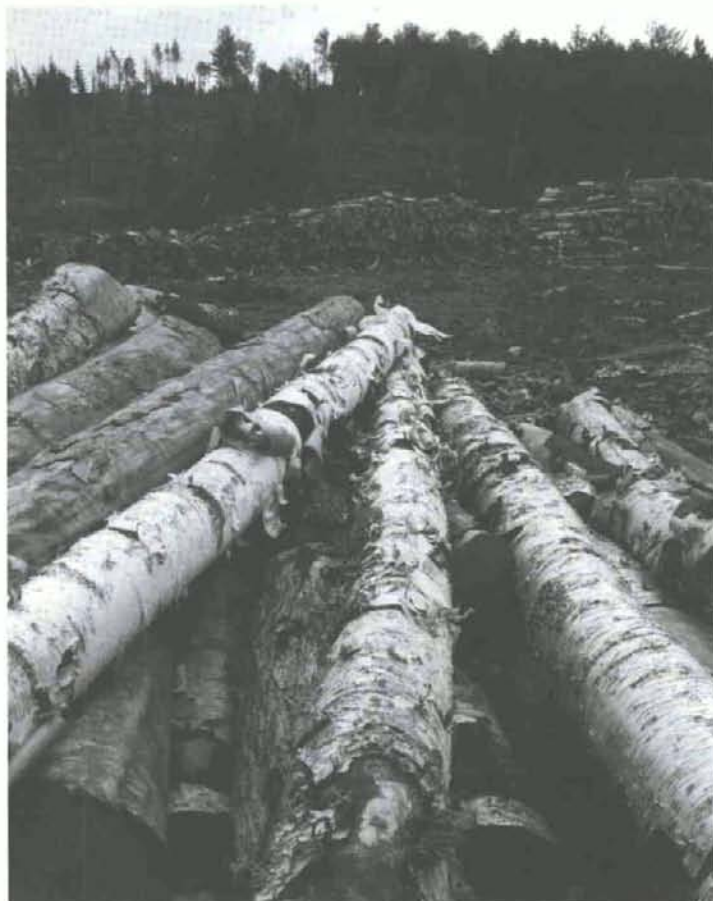
Vermont's efforts began when Governor Dean resurrected the Forest Resource Advisory Council (FRAC) to respond to the NFLC recommendations. Many Vermonters thought that FRAC was a relic of the "old boys network" of forestry policy and sought to expand its membership to reflect broader public interests. A compromise was struck, and membership was broadened. Some activists were not satisfied, however, and formed the Vermont Citizens' Forest Roundtable as an alternative forum to FRAC.

MAJOR POLICY CHANGES ADOPTED IN VERMONT

With FRAC coming to the end of its three year term, the legislature took up several of FRAC's recommendations in 1997, passing two major laws dealing with forest management. Both of these laws sought to control the spread of

large-scale industrial forestry in the state, and both spurred considerable debate.

The first law, S.28, placed a moratorium on ground and aerial spraying of herbicides on forests. After studying the issue, FRAC recommended a moratorium on aerial spraying, which was expanded by the legislature to include ground spraying. The second law, H.36, regulates "heavy" cuts of over 40 acres, though property rights groups sought to block the law and to increase the threshold to 75 acres.



Meantime, the state has been working in cooperation with the federal government to conserve forest land. The most acreage had been conserved through the Forest Legacy Program of the U.S. Forest Service. The largest project, completed last year, placed a conservation easement on over 31,000 acres owned by the Hancock Timber Resources Group in five Vermont towns in the Northeast Kingdom. The easement allows continued timber cutting, but limits clearcuts to 25 acres and maintains public access for hiking and hunting. This is believed to be the second largest conservation easement in the nation.

The state and federal governments, though, need to do more to set aside significant parts of Vermont's landscape as ecological reserves (*see page 11 for more information on ecological reserves*). The most logical place to start this is on the public land managed by state and federal governments.

IT'S NOT JUST IN YOUR BACKYARD

Arguably, the great shame since the NFLC sunset in September 1994 has been the loss of a regional focus on the forests of northern New England and New York.

From the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s, the Northern Forest had meaning. People from Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont came together to think about and discuss a common set of problems in the human and natural communities throughout these areas.

This regionalism is slipping away.

Even though the NFLC — and the Governors' Task Force before it — had no powers, these bodies were of great importance in forging a regional approach to forest policy. With these government bodies gone, there has been little regional coordination. The few remaining active displays of regionalism include: The Northern Forest Forum, which reports on environmental issues throughout the region; the Northern Forest Alliance, a coalition of local, regional, and national environmental groups; and the Northern Forest Stewardship



Act being considered in the U.S. congress.

But official state government efforts have each gone their separate ways.

New York has returned to working within the existing legal and regulatory framework for the Adirondack Park. In Maine, where issues have been the most contentious, forest issues have been dealt with through referendums, special commis-

sions, and the legislature. New Hampshire has been successful in some initiatives (e.g., the New Hampshire Forest Resources Plan), less so in others (e.g., the New Hampshire Forest Advisory Board).

SEATS AT THE TABLE

As FRAC comes to an end, perhaps the most important recommendation of the NFLC remains to be implemented: The creation of forest roundtables — regional and state.

Forest roundtables would help create a shared vision. They need to be permanent institutions and open to as many citizens and interests as possible. As we continue to develop policy designed to achieve good forests, further conflict is inevitable due to different visions of just what constitutes a good forest. The way to keep such conflicts from fully erupting—as they have in the northwest, the southwest, and, closer to home, Maine—is to bring as many people into the forest policy process as early and as often as possible.

It is crucial for Vermonters and the

state's forests that such a roundtable be created and that we can continue to develop forest policy for the next century in a civil manner. Once such a Vermont roundtable has been created, we must work with fellow citizens concerned with the forests of New York, New Hampshire, and Maine to recreate some regional forest entity like the Governors' Task Force or the NFLC. As imperfect as these bodies were, they moved our thinking—at least to some degree—beyond political boundaries. Natural communities, and increasingly human communities as well, spill over political boundaries and are tremendously affected by actions beyond them. As such, a bioregional perspective of our landscape is a necessary development.

Chris McGrory Klyza, Associate Professor of Political Science at Middlebury College, just completed a three year term as Director of the Program in Environmental Studies. He is the co-editor of The Future of the Northern Forest (1994).

ECOLOGICAL RESERVES — AND WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?

Stephen Trombulak, Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at Middlebury College, recently satisfied our quest for more information on ecological reserves. After his quick acceptance of our invitation to prepare this information, he earnestly declared, "I'd love to see this in practice during my lifetime!"

At the core, all conservation strategies taken together are part of a grand, unifying strategy that seeks to achieve four basic goals in order to protect the diversity of life on Earth:

- Secure all ecosystem types and successional stages across their natural range;
- Secure viable populations of all native species in their natural patterns of abundance and distribution;
- Maintain ecological and evolutionary processes, such as disturbance, nutrient and water cycling, and predation; and,

- Ensure that the biological diversity of each region can respond naturally to change.

No single strategy alone can achieve all of these goals everywhere. This is why numerous approaches need to be taken, including conservation education, economic incentives to reduce impacts of human development, and enactment of laws.

One of the strategies necessary to achieve these goals is the existence of an integrated system of ecological reserves; this is because there are some species of plants and animals that simply cannot tolerate human disturbance, and without such a system these species will eventually be lost. Extinction is forever, and these potential losses have grave consequences for natural systems (including humans).

What are the aspects of an integrated reserve system that will allow it to make the greatest contribution to our conservation efforts? Scientists are still seeking to understand the full answer to this question,

but so far we know that such a system must:

- Include some large reserves to provide for species that require large home ranges or large population sizes, and to allow for ecological processes that take place over large areas;
- Have reserves located in such a way so that all natural community types are found in at least one, and preferably more than one, reserve;
- Be buffered to the greatest extent possible from outside disturbances such as roads, pollution, and development; and
- Allow for movement of plants and animals from one reserve to another.

Trombulak adds, "Such a reserve system alone will not achieve all of the four basic goals of conservation biology. But alternatively, we will never achieve our goals without such a system as part of the solution."

MANAGEMENT THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDS

Landowners Unite to Protect Ecosystems

BY LYNN LEVINE

*I*t was early April and a black bear had recently awakened from her winter sleep. She waddled over the corn snow and down the hill. She moved slowly through the forest until arriving at a stone wall. First she thrust her right leg over the wall, then placed her left paw on the rocks and finally gave a little jump over the obstacle. Heading down the hill, she reached the rusted barbed wire fence now lying near the ground. The black bear slowly moved toward the edge of a pond where she satisfied her hunger with the emerging skunk cabbage. She had no idea that she had just traveled across three properties to get her breakfast.

Almost certainly, the movement of this bear went undetected by the owners of these lands. But if Doug Murray, a landowner in Grafton, Vermont, had his way these landowners would be aware of this bear's annual pattern. Murray wants to inspire neighboring landowners to be more attentive to their land and understand the effect their actions might have on their broader locale. For example, if the landowner who owns the wetland decided to remove the beavers that created the pond, what effect might this have on the

bear's ability to live in this area.

Murray's dream is for landowners straddling two Vermont towns – Grafton and Chester – and two counties – Windham and Windsor – to form an informal community association where landowners can have neighborly chats about each other's woods. Murray became a neighborhood wildlife activist after attending a three day workshop on managing lands for wildlife. This workshop was conducted by Vermont Coverts, an organization devoted to educating landowners about wildlife-friendly management. Murray is planning to have fall and winter cross-boundary walks so interested landowners can actually see what their neighbor's land looks like, and try and puzzle out any joint projects.

David Clarkson, another Vermont Coverts volunteer, started talking to his neighbors in 1986 about creating the same kind of association. Now, after repeated knocking on doors, David has created an alliance of 42 landowners controlling 7,000 acres in Newfane and Wardsboro Vermont. Forester George Weir has drawn up a resource map showing critical wildlife habitat across boundaries. Using the Geographic Information System (GIS),



each landowner can now see how his or her property fits into the broader landscape.

In the late 1980s Noel Fritzing knocked on doors in his town of Weston hoping that contiguous landowners would begin managing their lands as interrelated pieces. As a result, the first harvest involved a coordinated thinning of sugar maple on one property with a low-value harvest for wildlife improvement on neighboring lands.

Consulting foresters Nina and Dan Huffer, have worked on all three projects. Nina Huffer believes neighborhood associations are as necessary as other neighborhood watch groups. "Neighbors share with each other when a window is broken and when the cows have gotten out," Nina remarked. "Now, neighbors can begin to communicate about taking care of the wildlife that moves through their community."

She hopes that neighborhood associations will help. "Landowners need to ask better questions of themselves such as: Do I need a harvest to develop early successional species if my neighbor is about to do the same thing?" According to Nina, "When we manage our land by thinking outside property lines, we begin to think about the ecosystem."

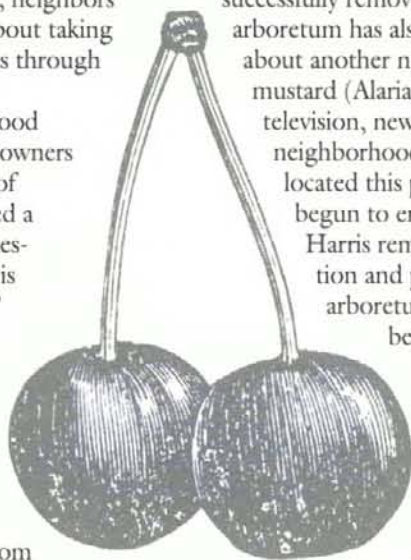
The Orton Foundation, based in Weston, Vermont, believes strongly in the "bottom up" approach to formation of neighborhood woodland management associations. Starting in the fall of 1997 they will offer modest financial assistance, through Vermont Coverts, to landowners who are interested in initiating a woodland alliance. Noel Fritzing, CEO for the foundation, hopes that the statewide experimentation will answer the question: How can we help someone bond not only to their own land, but to the system of lands of which theirs is a part?

It was August and the swampy meadows were carpeted with magenta petals. Tiny seeds had formed on the purple loosestrife. The roots had grown profusely and were spreading the plants in all directions. A muskrat swam by, knocked down some stalks and the seeds floated in the water further down the watershed. One seed traveled down the two bends in the brook until it established itself in the muddy bank.

Flora move freely across our boundaries too. Preventing the spread of non-native species — whether it be purple loosestrife or European buckthorn — has been another approach to neighborhood associations. At the University of Wisconsin Arboretum — which is a 1,280 acre island in a sea of urban development — loosestrife was found upstream and across their boundary. According to Steve Harris, operations manager, the arboretum staff realized they could not protect their land from the noxious plant unless they asked for the help of their neighbors.

The neighbors became "pest plant scouts" and located the purple loosestrife in an upstream college pond. For the last two years the community volunteers have successfully removed the weed. The arboretum has also educated neighbors about another non-native plant, garlic mustard (*Alaria petulata*). Through television, newspapers, and a neighborhood search, they have located this plant, mapped it and begun to eradicate it. Steve Harris remarked, "The restoration and protection of the arboretum must expand

beyond its borders into the watershed, the county and the region."



fiery red. All along the cove were beautiful specimens of black cherry trees. Many of the trees had burls somewhere along the main trunk. On the other side of town there were additional scattered black cherry trees. A local craftsman needed burls for carving bowls and was willing to pay good money for them.

Dave Brynn, the county forester in Addison County, is interested in helping landowners unite informally in an association called Vermont Family Forests (see page 16). The goal of this organization is to help landowners manage their forests in a sustainable fashion while improving the financial return from their forests.

Brynn would like to see landowners obtain a premium price for their "green certified" wood. He hopes to market to specialty wood product manufacturers such as local craftspeople. Green certification provides verification that sustainable

practices are being implemented. As more firms look for wood products that are from sustainable forestry operations, the value of timber from these lands should increase. According to Brynn, "This will give landowners another incentive to manage wisely."

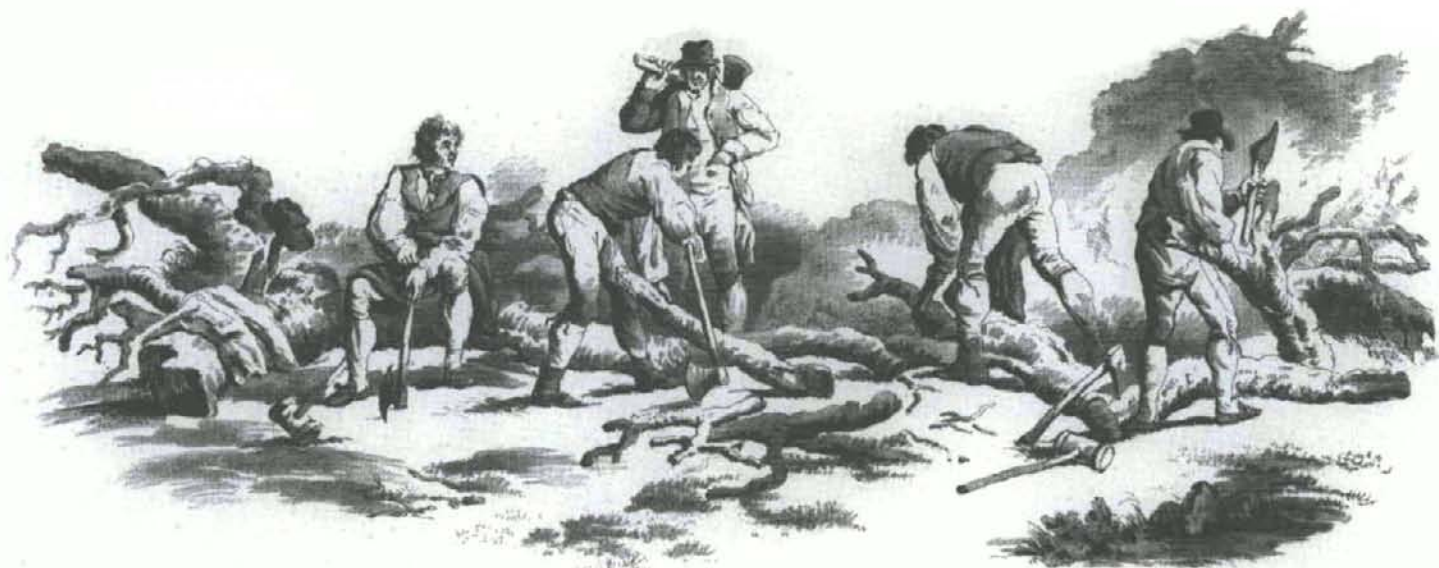
Will these landowner associations lead to the application of cross-boundary management in the long run? David Kittredge, the University of Massachusetts Extension Forester, is researching what motivates woodland owners to implement management practices that look beyond their boundaries. For example, one of his graduate students decided to find out how much interest existed for cross-boundary management.

Through a questionnaire to landowners in Franklin and Hampshire counties in Massachusetts, he found that they had little interest in rigid formal agreements between landowners. However, 60 to 70% of them said that they would be interested in managing jointly on a case-by-case basis. Only 10% of the landowners had "no interest" in cooperating with others. When Kittredge returns from studying 150 woodland owner cooperatives in northern Japan, he is planning to find out what motivation is necessary for landowners to help pay for improvements such as a bridge or apple tree release (to provide for wildlife) on another's land.

Landowner associations have had a rocky history in New England. Sometimes it is because the association has depended too heavily upon one landowner who suffered from "burn out" — other times, it is because of the lack of availability of professional help. Kim Royer, a wildlife biologist in southern Vermont, has been crucial in the ongoing education of association members. She cautions that, "Links with natural resource professionals can help groups of landowners to stay on the right track."

Cross-boundary management carries with it the air of experimentation. But the trial and error approach, along with some new research, will lead to a multitude of workable models. As each new model is crafted to meet the needs of the landowners in each situation, Vermont will be one step closer to sustaining its natural resources and human communities.

*Lynn Levine is self-employed as a consulting forester and a naturalist for Forest*Care in Dummerston Vermont.*



GROWING JOBS BY GROWING TREES

Vermont Forests are More Than Fiber

By ERIC PALOLA

At the final meeting of the Vermont Forest Resources Advisory Council (FRAC) in June, 1997, a subtle bomb was dropped: The number of forest products jobs increased slightly and, for the first time in recent memory, the value of wages in forest products had eclipsed all other Vermont manufacturing sectors according to the Vermont Department of Economic Development's labor statistics.

The new data suggest that Vermont may be bucking national trends — despite industry fears of new regulation to limit clearcuts, industry concern over new public land acquisitions as well as threats of forest fragmentation from subdivision or excessive taxes, and the increased substitution of machinery for workers in many Vermont mills.

If so, is this trend merely a glitch in our economic reporting? Where are the opportunities for Vermont forest products? Is growth in this sector sustainable? And, more importantly, what does it imply for the health of Vermont's forests?

In its final report to the Legislature before disbanding this summer — and culminating almost two years of work on forest policy issues — FRAC attempted to answer these types of questions. Foremost, FRAC found that continued forest products

development and forest conservation are not incompatible goals.

FRAC noted that investment in forest products "...complements a proven rural development strategy: *The engine of job growth in rural areas is in small to medium size businesses who add jobs incrementally and are less affected by external economic shocks.*"

MAJOR TRENDS IN VERMONT SAWMILLING

- 40% increase in mill demand since 1990 to current consumption of 270 million board feet per year.
- 1% increase in employment since 1990. Wages average just under \$10.00 per hour.
- Average 30% increase in volume of logs exported since 1990, with a doubling of hardwood log exports since 1993.
- Higher utilization of logs through efficiency improvements; several mills are realizing productivity gains *without increasing their demand* for logs.
- Increasing concern by mills over quality and quantity of timber supply.

Information from Vermont Forest Resources Advisory Council, Final Report on Rural Economic Development, August, 1997

MORE JOBS AND BETTER FORESTS

Perhaps even more important than this, however, was the FRAC recommendation that economic policy towards sustaining forest products jobs cannot be separated from the objective of managing and restoring healthy woods.

This connection is most vivid around issues such as: The declining availability of sawlog and veneer grade wood; the corresponding exodus of high-value logs to export markets; the narrowing of growth-to-removal ratios for key Vermont species such as pine and maple; the effect of stand damage from poor logging practices on future log values; and increased mill consumption fueled by imports and rising in-state harvest levels, and the encroachment of clearcuts and high-grading across Vermont woodlands.

FRAC emphasized that sustainability in our forest products economy will result from improving the forest landowner's ability to profitably grow better wood over longer periods (through tax policies such as Current Use) *and* a more focused market development effort; one that will move Vermont away from commodity selling to primarily product marketing. Such a strategy can keep more dollars circulating in the state; this multiplies the value of wood harvested as many as 20 times over.

FRAC called for renewed political

leadership in recognizing the role of a sustainable forest products economy to Vermont's future. Although it is loggers and sawmill workers that we tend to associate with the Vermont forest products sector, these workers account for just one quarter of the estimated 8,000 total jobs in wood processing.

The rest of the jobs are found in the myriad manufacturers and woodworkers distributed throughout Vermont. It is these jobs where the much-vaunted economic value-adding is already occurring. But relatively little public investment is being directed at these local businesses compared to other Vermont industries: The state of Vermont barely supports one wood products marketing position. The state, by comparison, has a half-dozen people working on agricultural marketing.

All of this suggests that Vermont's long-term forest products economy should be pegged as something more than the commodity-oriented view, which grows logs merely big enough to be sliced as 2 x 4s, or chipped for pulp.

Yet these are the terms in which the global market will view our forest ... once the higher

value sawlog resource is diminished, and absent a commitment from Vermont policy makers to support efforts to move the industry in more sustainable directions.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

FRAC recommends in its final report a variety of responses to the issues facing forest products development. Some of these responses are at the legislative level and others are among state and private organizations.

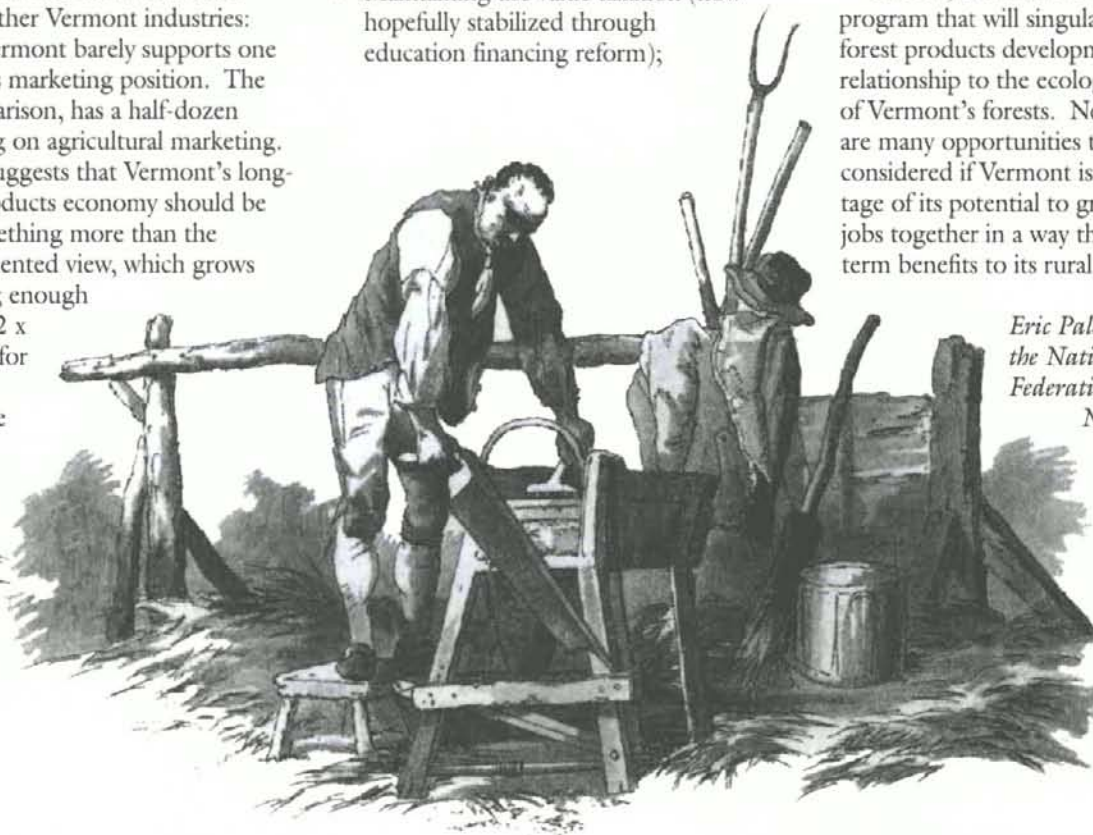
Recommendations include:

- Maintaining use value taxation (now hopefully stabilized through education financing reform);

- Developing a manufacturing extension center that assists in design marketing and testing for small wood products businesses;
- Improving vocational training programs to meet new skill levels required;
- Expanding support for state forest products marketing initiatives;
- Limiting raw log exports from state lands; and
- Creating state support for private efforts to lower insurance premiums for loggers.

Overall, there is no one issue, law, or program that will singularly improve forest products development or its relationship to the ecological well-being of Vermont's forests. Nevertheless, there are many opportunities that must be considered if Vermont is to take advantage of its potential to grow trees and jobs together in a way that provides long-term benefits to its rural communities.

Eric Palola is Director of the National Wildlife Federation's Northeast Natural Resource Center and co-chaired FRAC's Rural Development subcommittee.



ECONOMIC VALUE-ADDED: OPPORTUNITY CALLING?

Local value-added manufacturing is increasingly regarded as one key to more sustainable use of natural resources. Analysis of wood products especially led to the conclusion that if more final product value can be captured closer to the source, harvest pressures driven by local needs may lessen.

This is due to the remarkable increase in economic value that is gained as wood proceeds "downstream" from a raw material (e.g., standing trees), through primary manufacturing (e.g., milling), to secondary manufacturing (e.g., consumer products), and beyond to its final use (e.g., home building). Typical estimates find the value of wood is multiplied by more than twenty times from stumpage to final use!

To increase local value-added, strengthened market links

between existing wood harvesters, producers, distributors, and retailers in a region may be more productive than efforts to attract new manufacturers. As demonstrated by the success of certain specialty food products, public-private partnerships and industry associations can help forge local value-added market linkages through referral services, marketing and promotional assistance, technology transfer, and by establishing specialized industrial parks. Local value-added manufacturing networks can help promote a stewardship ethic by elevating the value of maintaining high quality natural resources.

Provided by Mark Lorenzo, National Wildlife Federation

VERMONT FAMILY FORESTS

*New Group Uses Nature
as Its Model*

BY DAVID BRYNN

Vermont is blanketed by forests—roughly 80% of the state's 6 million acres. Almost the same proportion—80%—of Vermont forests are nonindustrial and privately owned. That is why the management of these family forests is of critical importance to Vermont's economy, ecology, and way of life.

Vermont's diverse forests range from black gum swamps to rich northern hardwoods to subalpine heath. They are home to a wide variety of plants and animals. They also produce some of the highest quality water, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities found anywhere. In addition, Vermont's forests provide the raw materials for an industry that contributes more than \$1.2 billion annually to the state's economy through value-added enterprises (see page 15 for more information).

Wendell Berry once wrote that "the two great ruiners of privately-owned lands are ignorance and economic constraint." For the past two years, a loose confederation of organizations has joined forces to respond to some of the constraints facing private forest landowners. This multi-organization, educational effort has become known as Vermont Family Forests. It focuses on a three-watershed area with the notion that "smaller is better than big."

Among the activities first tackled by Vermont Family Forests are workshops on sustainable forestry. Sponsoring have been the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the Lewis Creek Association, The Watershed Center, the Otter Creek Audubon Society, and The Vermont Woodlands Association.



Forest enthusiasts of all ages turned out to learn about ways to protect amphibian and reptile habitat at a recent Vermont Family Forests workshop.

David Brynn

The sustainable forestry workshops are grounded in the basic premise of the group: *To cultivate local family forests for economic and social benefits while protecting the ecological integrity of the forest community as a whole.* Workshops have covered riparian zone restoration, the use of portable sawmills, water quality protection, and the identification and enhancement of reptile, amphibian, and bird habitats. In

addition, a pamphlet entitled, "A Voluntary Timber Management Checklist" has been developed.

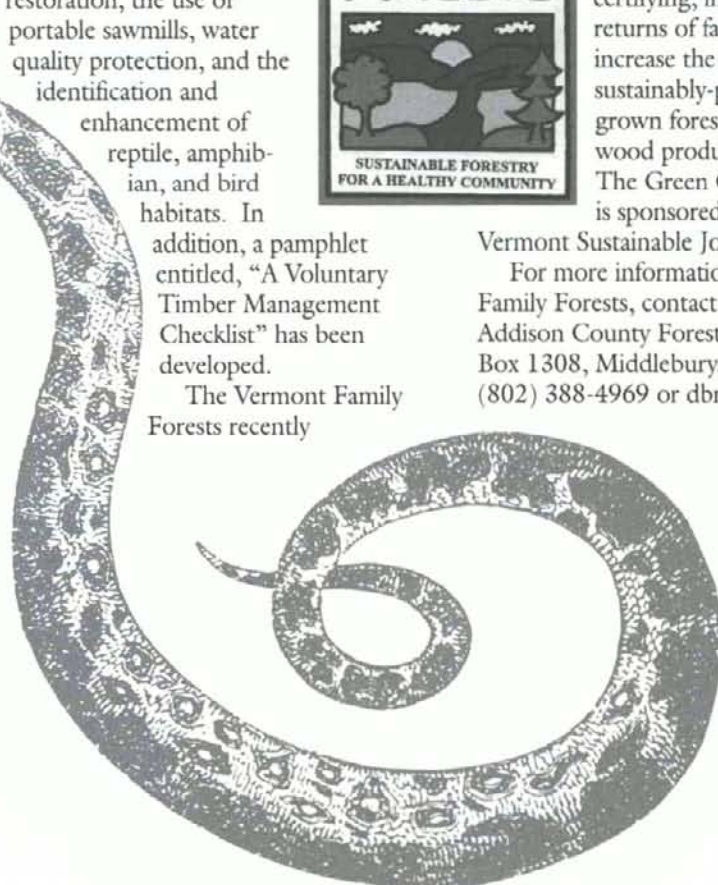
The Vermont Family Forests recently

began a Green Certification project, which is a cooperative effort between Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation and the

National Wildlife Federation's Northeast Natural Resource Center. The project's objectives are to promote the use of sustainable forestry practices by certifying, improve the financial returns of family forests, and increase the availability of sustainably-produced, locally grown forest products to local wood product manufacturers.

The Green Certification project is sponsored by a grant from the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

For more information on Vermont Family Forests, contact David Brynn, Addison County Forester, at RR 4, Box 1308, Middlebury, VT 05753; (802) 388-4969 or dbrynn@sover.net.



EXPERIENCING THE NORTHERN FOREST

Trek Features its Many Treasures

For Lisa Magnant, the Northern Forest is no longer just the name of a big chunk of land (26 million acres) somewhere north of here. It is home to the fluffy bear cub she met while running the first part of the Multi-Modal Traverse, an event of the Northern Forest Heritage Trek.

Hundreds of residents and visitors experienced the Northern Forest in July by participating in the twenty-five Heritage Trek events throughout northern Vermont, which were organized by the Northern Forest Alliance (NFA). For Lisa, that meant running nearly seven miles through the woods near the Craftsbury Outdoor Center to complete the first leg of the only point-to-point triathlon in the region and meeting one of the area's four-legged residents.

VNRC and members of the Vermont State Caucus of the NFA sponsored two Wildland Forums as part of the Heritage Trek. A panel representing the forest



No. Forest Alliance

Lisa Smith (on left) and Kim Kendall of VNRC prepare to start the final leg of the Multi-Modal Traverse by canoe. Lisa authored this article; Kim is the 1997 Mollie Beattie Intern at VNRC.

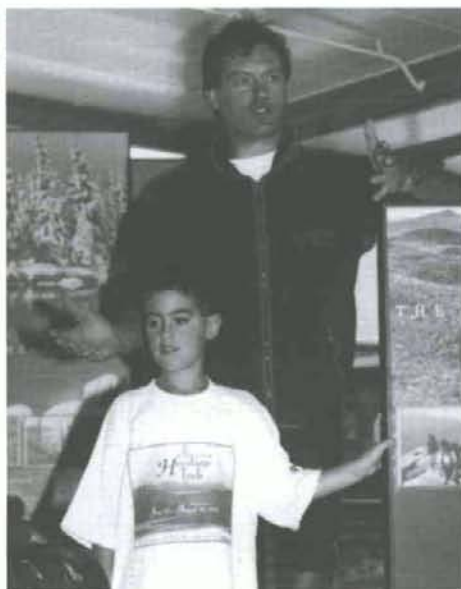
industry, property rights, ecological protection, and recreation presented its reactions to the NFA Wildlands Proposal (see page 18) and responded to questions from the audience.

Almost 80 local residents turned out to learn more about the Wildlands Proposal at the VNRC/NFA Wildland Forums, hear a wide variety of opinions, and voice their views. Many people left the forums feeling that they could be part of the process to create wildlands and maintain the current

landscape. The NFA plans to host more forums to help people understand the full scope of the Wildlands Proposal.

The Heritage Trek and its exhibit traveled through four states this summer, reaching thousands of people and helping to increase awareness about the Northern Forest. The message was clear: The Northern Forest is a treasured area that deserves wise stewardship so that future generations may experience and enjoy it—as Lisa did.

John McKeith



Laura Tam



At far left, Bob Perschel, NFA Chair, and his son Jordan describe the Heritage Trek at the Multi-Modal Traverse Awards Ceremony.

At left, youngsters learn about how forests are important resources at the Forest to Furniture Family Program at Shelburne Farms.

ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES WILDLANDS PROPOSAL

A Safety Net for the Northern Forest

The 26-million acre Northern Forest supports a way of life cherished by generations of northern New England and New York residents. The beauty of its mountains, woodlands, rivers, and lakes sets this region apart, and draws loyal visitors year after year. Its mixed forests support a broad forest-products industry and a growing tourism industry. But a global economy and regional development pressure threaten to change the Northern Forest forever.

The Northern Forest Alliance (NFA) proposes creating a system of Wildlands across the Northern Forest to maintain ecological balance, provide remote and wilderness recreation opportunities, provide solitude to rekindle the spirit, and strengthen the forest-based economy of the region.

Wildlands protection can come in many forms—landowner initiatives, public and private purchase, management plans, local regulation, easements, and other methods.

The proposed system of wildlands would:

- Continue to provide access for traditional recreation such as hunting, hiking, fishing, canoeing, camping, and other activities.
- Include permanent protection for ecologically and recreationally important areas for future generations.
- Support timber harvesting that sustains the

forest's overall ecological integrity, minimize new road building, and provide opportunities for value-added manufacturing.

- Remain essentially undeveloped in order to maintain the area's wild qualities, ecological integrity, and productive forests.

The NFA is committed to using the type of open public process the Northern Forest Lands Council recommended each state use to set conservation priorities. Each state may choose different conservation mechanisms to conserve its wildlands. This flexibility is one of the strengths of the NFA's Wildlands Proposal. It allows the landowners and the people of each state to create long-term conservation strategies that are appropriate for each wildland, and allows them to benefit from the experiences of the others.

According to Andrea Colnes, Director of the NFA, "It may take years for the public to determine exactly which areas should become Wildlands and how they should be protected, yet it is important to begin now, before the opportunity to conserve the qualities of these remote, undeveloped forests is lost forever."

For more information or a copy of the Wildlands Proposal, call the NFA. The Alliance will be publishing its position on sustainable forestry practices; a report will be available spring, 1998. You can reach the NFA at: (802) 223-5256 or E-mail at nfa@igc.apc.org

Uprooted Tree: photo by Daniel A. Neary, Jr.

NEW FORESTRY GROUP EMERGES

Forest Stewards Guild Established

A new organization took wing early in the afternoon of May 17, 1997, in Asheville, North Carolina: A professional organization of North American forest managers, the Forest Stewards Guild, was voted into existence. Symbolically, the fifty or so founding members took the historic vote on the birth of the Guild in one of the buildings of the Biltmore Estate—from the days when estate owner George Vanderbilt first hired the young forester Gifford Pinchot in 1892, the site has been known as “the birthplace of American forestry.”

The Forest Stewards Guild grows from more than three years preparation by The Forest Trust, a non-profit forestry and community self-help organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. At the Trust's invitation, a group of foresters from around North America began meeting to discuss their deep professional and personal dedication to the art and science of forestry, and their common disappointment at the direction the forestry profession has been taking increasingly in the 1980s and 90s.

Most of these initial participants are on-the-ground practicing foresters who have brought their experiences as successful managers—in many instances long-term (some almost five decades)—of uneven-age, varied forests, from the Pacific Coast, the Northwest, Southeast, Lake States, and Northeast.

A common thread that emerged was a sense of alienation from modern forestry practices (mainly either with the U.S. Forest

Service on federal holdings, or with the so-called “industrial forestry” practices by many corporations), professional loneliness in what they had been trying to do on their own lands or with that of their clients or employers, and huge delight in discovering other land managers from different areas who shared a common vision of sustainable forestry. Better yet, these foresters have actually been doing something about it

over the years with success.

Inevitably, the creation of the Guild by professional land managers from such a background of discontent with the forestry status quo, and the desire for a better way for forestry raises questions about the new entity's relationship with the nearly century-old Society of American Foresters (SAF). Reactions have varied.

Bren Whittaker, forester and former Northern Forest Project Director at VNRC (currently a VNRC Board Nominee), asserted, “Some, including myself, have long since dropped membership in the SAF, seeing it as an organization that has little to offer those dissatisfied with current forestry practices.” He added that other members of the Guild are loyal SAF members—some very long-term—who declare they will remain so, seeking to work from within for the changes they desire in that group.

At the meeting in May, a Trustees Board for the Guild was voted in, and it will begin framing details of the new organization. In addition, the group adopted a mission statement and six guiding principles (*see inset*). The Forest Stewards Guild is now ready to go forward.

The Guild's guiding principle four asserts a

FOREST STEWARDS GUILD

MISSION

The mission of the guild is to promote ecologically responsible resource management that sustains the whole forest. The Guild provides a forum and support system for practicing foresters seeking to advance this vision.

PRINCIPLES

1. Responsible forest management places the highest priority on the maintenance and enhancement of the entire forest ecosystem while recognizing its dynamic nature.
2. The natural forest provides a model for management; responsible forest management imitates nature's processes and minimizes impacts when extracting products from the forest.
3. The forest has value in its own right; independent of human intentions and needs.
4. Human knowledge of forest ecosystems is limited. Responsible forest management imitates nature's processes and minimizes impacts when extracting products from the forest.
5. The practice of forestry must be grounded in field observation and experience as well as in biological sciences.
6. The forester's first duty is to the forest and its future. When landowner direction conflicts with the principles above and cannot be modified through dialogue and education, the forester must disassociate.

humble approach and continuous learning—implying that professional foresters do not necessarily know all there is to know about forests. Consequently, Guild membership will welcome other professions, such as soil science, wildlife management, botany, climatology, and other disciplines related to the growth and maintenance of the forest. The Guild's newsletter, named *Distant Thunder* was issued prior to the May meeting under the sponsorship of the Forest Trust; this will continue.

On a final note, Bren Whittaker remarked, "Having been involved in various forest policy issues since 1956, I have never been so enthusiastic and hopeful as I was meeting with this group of practicing, practical foresters—these founders of the Forest Steward's Guild."

MORE INFORMATION ON THE FOREST STEWARDS GUILD

Board members from the Northern Forest region are:

Ross Morgan, c/o Morgan Forestry Box 32, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827;
Barrie Brusilla c/o Mid-Maine Forestry, 1320 Western Road, Warren, ME 04864;
Charlie Moreno, P.O. Box 60, Center Stafford, NH 03815; and
Dan Stepanauskas, c/o Northern Forest Resources, HCR 62, Box 42,
Silver Lake, NH 03875.

At present, the Forest Stewards Guild may be reached c/o The Forest Trust,
P.O. Box 519, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0519, Phone: (505) 983-8992;
Fax: (505) 986-0798.

VNRC readers are welcome to contact these persons for further information and their individual reactions to the new group; however, please keep in mind that this is a new group and some issues are still in progress.

FORESTRY LEAPS FORWARD

Loggers' Education to Advance Professionalism

BY FARLEY BROWN

What does a logger need to know to be safe, efficient, and environmentally sensitive while harvesting timber in Vermont? One answer in Vermont is a 64 hour curriculum that covers topics in five subjects: Ecology and Silviculture; Safety and First Aid; Business Management; Forest Operations; and Professionalism.

This curriculum has come to be known as LEAP, which stands for Loggers Education to Advance Professionalism. The LEAP curriculum is an effort to establish guidelines for logger education in Vermont and to encourage learning among loggers.

The overall purpose of the LEAP curriculum is to help loggers be better at what they do and to show the public that loggers are as committed as foresters and woodland owners in maintaining our

woodlands as "working forests" and managing them for wood, water, wildlife, and recreation.

LEAP actually started as a national pilot program of the USDA Extension Service. Since 1990, 15 states have developed LEAP programs for loggers. Modeled after Vermont's highly successful "Silviculture Education for Loggers Project" in the spring of 1993, LEAP is a cooperative venture of public and private agencies that have a stake in good logging practices. In the fall of 1996, the Vermont Woodlands Association adopted the administration of the LEAP program in Vermont.

Loggers need to demonstrate that they have completed at least 64 hours of training in the five subjects to complete the curriculum. The LEAP committee has agreed to accept training experiences going back to 1987 that meet the guidelines. Workshops offered through LEAP are organized so that a logger can complete the

program in two years. More than 210 loggers graduated from the LEAP Institute between 1996 and 1997.

The American Forest and Paper Association's Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) has logger education as one of its principles. As such, many members of the Association will be requiring logger education as they try to uphold SFI. LEAP was the first logger education program in Vermont to receive approval by the Vermont SFI Consortium, and LEAP was recognized as meeting and exceeding the requirements of SFI.

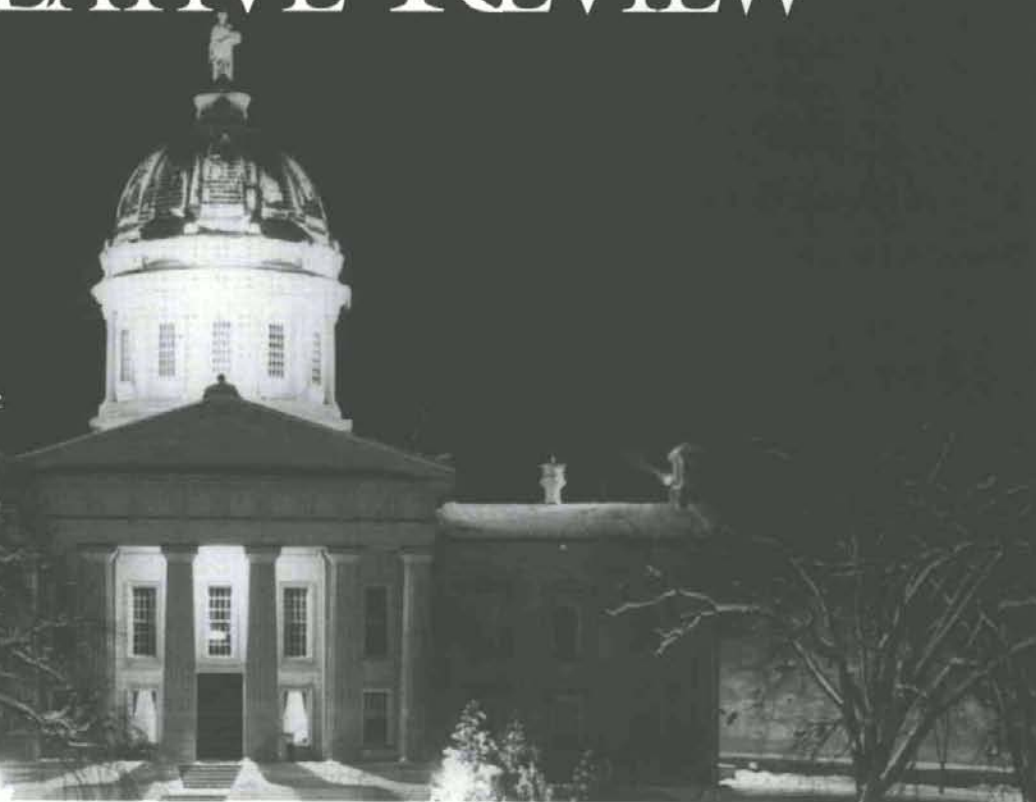
A recent graduate of LEAP said, "LEAP is our future. We can't afford to remain the same while the world continues to change around us. We must be proactive rather than reactive."

For more information on LEAP, contact Farley Brown, LEAP Coordinator, at (802) 586-9973.

1997 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

BY WILL LINDNER

After a run of four years when the Vermont Legislature responded to environmental causes either with disinterest or hostility, the 1997 legislative session was a breath of fresh air. Reconstituted by the voters in the November elections, and with an improved economy slightly easing the financial pressures on the state, the Legislature performed admirably on an array of environmental and conservation issues.



VNRC's legislative priorities were met, particularly in regard to forest protections. The Legislature imposed a five-year moratorium on the worst herbicide-application practices and instituted controls over heavy-cutting (think of it as clear-cutting) projects.

Even property tax reform, the big-ticket item for the Legislature in 1997, had positive implications for the environment. By adopting a new formula for generating taxes to pay for education, the Legislature removed pressure on the local property tax that had caused towns to welcome strip and sprawl development despite its deleterious effect on land conservation and other harmful environmental consequences.

For VNRC, the 1997 session was like emerging from banishment. The challenge now will be to maintain the momentum (which was buoyed by a recent Vermont Supreme Court ruling affirming denial of an Act 250 permit for Wal-Mart in St. Albans — see back cover), so that the Legislature, in the second term of its biennium, further advances environmental protections in the Green Mountain State.

PROPERTY TAX REFORM

The Legislature was compelled to revise Vermont's system of paying for education by a ruling, early in the session, by the state Supreme Court. The Court found Vermont's historic dependence upon the local property tax unconstitutional because it deprived children from property-poor towns of an equal chance to receive a decent education.

After years of failure in similar efforts, the Legislature responded with a statewide property tax, assessing property on each town's equalized grand list at \$1.10 and distributing from the fund thus generated a block grant of \$5,000 per pupil. The complex formula also permits towns to raise some moneys above that amount for certain educational purposes, but its thrust from a land-use perspective is that it relieves towns of the pressure to grow no matter what the environmental and aesthetic costs.

Environmental concerns were a quiet but important part of the tax-reform debate. Testimony to that fact is the inclusion of the Current Use program within the Equal Education Opportunity

Act package (known now as Act 60). The Act allows all enrolled land to be put on the grand list at its use value, with compensation—up to a point—provided by the state. The new law puts teeth in the continued protection of land in Current Use by increasing the penalties for withdrawing from the program to sell land at fair market value. The bill also makes Current Use protections available to lands owned by qualified conservation-oriented non-profits. Before 1997, the benefits of Current Use were extended only to private property owners.

Invariably, radical policy reform generates controversy—in Act 60's case, from property-advantaged towns that will experience significant tax increases. But as the formula settles over Vermont during the next four years, the collateral benefits for the land, hopefully, will become apparent.

HEAVY CUTTING

One of the most controversial laws passed last session was the "heavy cutting" law. Responding to growing concerns

about rapacious logging practices, the Legislature passed a law enabling the state to regulate cuts on 40 or more acres of land. The law provides, for the first time, a tool the state can use to control the kind of practices that have left great patches of Vermont's forest scarred, naked, and depleted.

The proposal eventually adopted by the Legislature was the result of a unique collaboration of VNRC and other environmental groups, forest industry representatives, foresters and landowners, and the Forest Resources Advisory Council (FRAC). The parties realized a common

agenda to conserve forest resources and developed a proposal advanced by FRAC that ultimately passed into law. It forthwith encountered the ire of property-rights activists and some loggers over the issues of state control and a fee levied on heavy-cutting applications by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

The law establishes review over all intensive cuts on parcels of more than 40 acres. It defines a heavy cut as any harvest that reduces the forest below "the c-line"—a forestry term that defines the stocking, or amount of trees, in a given forest area. Essentially, a cut that goes below the c-line removes so many trees that the forest must start all over.

There are exemptions for heavy cuts conducted under an approved forest management plan, projects related to chip harvesting for Vermont's two wood-burning electric generating plants, and approved projects that clear land for agricultural uses.

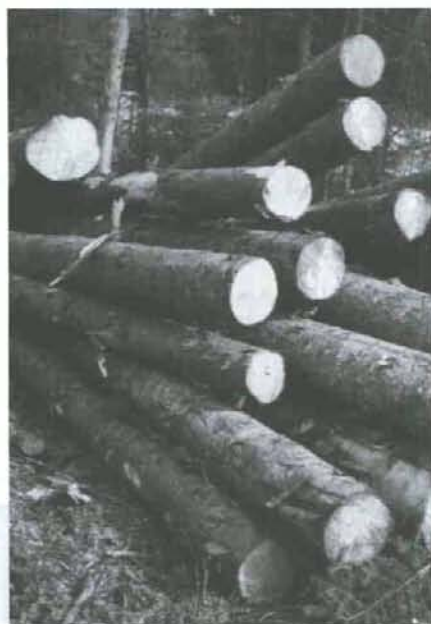
Rules are to be developed for reviewing the potential effect of heavy cutting projects on soil, water, habitat, and unique or fragile natural areas. The rules will also provide for salvage cuts to help forests recover from severe natural disturbances, such as storms or pest outbreaks.

HERBICIDES

Along with controls over heavy cutting, a restrictive herbicide policy for Vermont was VNRC's main forest objective during the 1997 session. The state had made policy on the fly, with the Department of Agriculture tacitly approving a major planned application in the Northeast Kingdom two years ago and the governor—then the Legislature—imposing a brief moratorium following public outcry.

The Legislature banned broadcast spraying, from the air or from truck-mounted tanks, at least for five years. In December, 1996, FRAC recommended a moratorium on aerial spraying of forests, but when the Senate Natural Resources Committee began taking testimony it became clear that industry proponents of herbicide use were planning to spray from vehicles if they were prohibited from using planes and helicopters. When the committee learned that such broadcast applications could be even more harmful than aerial spraying, it closed the loophole. Under the final bill, the only chemical application allowed on forests is manual spraying from canisters carried on a person's back.

FRAC is to return to the Legislature in five years with an up-to-date study about the impacts of herbicides on the environ-



ment (of chief concern are soil and groundwater).

FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION

Further evidence of a greater commitment in the Legislature to Vermont's forest resources—evidence also, perhaps, to a guarded relief of economic tensions—was the \$75,000 increase in funding for the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. In part, the allocation was a result of the heavy cutting bill, and will help implement the framework that supports that reform.

The appropriation is also intended to support two important planning processes: A new forest resources plan and a land conservation plan.

Though only in its earliest stages, the forest resources plan is expected to be a broad policy document that encompasses a vision for all of Vermont's forest lands, both private or publicly owned. VNRC would support the evolution of a policy that favors sustainably managed working woods, and keeps wild woods in their natural state.

The land conservation plan is expected to clarify the priorities employed by the state—for example, protecting habitat or providing recreation—as it acquires and conserves additional holdings.

VERMONT HOUSING AND CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

The Housing and Conservation Trust Fund helps preserve agricultural and forest land, and contributes to the creation of affordable housing for Vermonters by supplying grant money to state agencies and non-profits.

The Legislature allocated \$6.8 million to the fund in 1997, which is consistent with its funding level in recent years (\$7 million in 1995, and \$6 million in 1996). In past years, however, most of the allocation was in the form of bonded money; this time, that portion was reduced to about a third

of the allotment, with the rest (some \$4 million) built into the annual state budget.

Will the budget money be more vulnerable to reduction than bonded money? Neither source is absolutely safe, and the Housing and Conservation Trust Fund is a target for rescissions in the eyes of some legislators. A summer study panel appointed by the Legislature could address some of the uneasiness surrounding this and other contributions of public money for such purposes. The group is to make recommendations about ways that energy and pollution taxes could support the Trust Fund and other environmental and community programs.

age of "green" power—generated with minimal environmental effect—in their supply portfolios. The bill would forbid selling power to Vermont consumers from sources that do not meet certain performance standards (for air pollution, for example). Additionally, it mandates funding for intervenors, so that citizens or groups that qualify to participate in PSB cases to promote environmental protections can afford to do so to.

In order to preserve demand-side management programs (required of utilities under the present system, to help consumers reduce electricity consumption), the bill establishes a statewide utility specifically for



ENERGY

The biggest energy item on the Legislature's 1997 agenda was restructuring of the electric utility industry. Vermont, like other state and federal energy regulators, would introduce market competition to the sale of electricity, which traditionally has been a regulated monopoly with service territories assigned to utilities by the Public Service Board. Although restructuring is a priority of the Dean Administration, the House was too consumed by property tax reform to address this far-reaching issue.

The Senate did craft a restructuring bill, however, and VNRC, with other advocacy organizations, succeeded at having all of its priorities included.

Envisioning a time when power marketers from Vermont and elsewhere compete for customers, the Senate proposal requires such companies to have a certain percent-

energy efficiency. And it permits the PSB to exclude power from unlicensed hydroelectric dams in Vermont, also requiring those unlicensed dams to meet the state's water quality standards (and thus qualify for federal licensing under the Clean Water Act) within 10 years - a major step toward reclaiming all of Vermont's waterways.

Finally, the Senate bill promotes studies of wind power and biomass installations, to identify and quantify the environmental implications of those generating technologies. The bill is sure to be a priority item in the House next session.

ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL

A House committee crafted a bill overhauling Vermont's on-site sewage programs, which will be taken up by the full House in 1998. The bill would license sewage-system installers, and phase out the

"10-acre loophole" that currently allows development on more than 10 acres with no review of the sewage and septic systems.

As this subject airs in the Legislature, the Agency of Natural Resources is evaluating rules changes that would permit new waste-disposal technologies, which eventually could have the effect of inducing changes to lot-size requirements under municipal zoning regulations.

The House bill may not generate much attention in 1998, but the implications could soon become important for local boards of authority: Changes in law and technology could alter much of the traditional basis for planning, zoning and land use.

WATER RESOURCES

Remarkable in the 1997 session was an absence of hostile legislation aimed at compromising the state's waters. Indeed, the Senate's provision (*see "Energy," page 23*) requiring unregulated hydroelectric dams to come into compliance with Vermont's water quality standards within 10 years was a notable gain for conservationists.

And importantly, the Legislature earmarked \$500,000 in its capital bill for helping farmers build manure-storage systems to control non-point source water pollution. Agricultural runoff is believed to be the leading source of water pollution in Vermont, as well as the primary cause of

pollution in Lake Champlain.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For the first time since it was created and capitalized in 1995, the Sustainable Jobs Fund received an allocation (\$250,000) from the Vermont Legislature for fiscal year 1998. The purpose of the fund is to help build green industries and professional environmental services into the state's business and economic portfolio.

In another acknowledgment of the marriage of Vermont's environment and economy, the Legislature authorized a pilot project for "brown fields: reclamation—i.e., reclaiming contaminated industrial sites so they can be used again for (hopefully better-engineered) commercial projects.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Nationally, Vermont's bottle-recycling law was one of its most famous pieces of environmental legislation. Efforts last session to expand the deposit law to cover juice, iced tea, water, and other newly popular beverages, however, stalled in the Senate Natural Resources Committee. A compromise bill was passed, establishing a summer study to investigate a comprehensive container-recycling program.

LANDOWNER LIABILITY

Once again, efforts to reform liability laws to help maintain Vermont's tradition

of open access to private lands stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The future of such legislation is hard to gauge.

ACT 250

Notably, and welcomingly, absent in the Legislature in 1997 were attempts to weaken Act 250, Vermont's historic and effective development-control law. In prior years Act 250 was under sustained assault by its opponents, who introduced and sometimes passed bills designed to exempt certain industries and activities from review by citizens under the Act's 10 criteria. In fact, for the first time in several years, Act 250's authority was expanded: It now includes jurisdiction over new construction of communications towers more than 20 feet high.

Preservation of the law, rather than diminishment of it, was a significant achievement for the Legislature in the eyes of VNRC. But to be effective in controlling destructive impacts on the environment posed by sprawl, mega-store development and rampant ski area expansion, Act 250 must be strengthened. Either through Environmental Board rules or in legislation, VNRC will continue to advocate for requiring ski area master plans for cumulative impact review, and additional measures to curb sprawl such as urban growth-area boundaries.

MAJOR SKI EXPANSION REVIEW

VNRC Pushes for Protections

Stratton Corporation is undergoing Act 250 review of its Master Plan in the wake of two separate investigations by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) for environmental violations of existing permits.

If Stratton Corporation gains approval, it plans to build 724 hotel units, 553 condo and townhouse units, 21 single family homes, another 30,000 square feet of commercial space, a new base lodge, a golf clubhouse, a skating rink, a swimming pool, additional parking, and a "people mover" system. Approximately 220 acres of new ski trails are proposed, as well as lifts and snowmaking capability. Most of the development would take place in the headwaters of the North Branch Brook, a stream that the ANR has already identified

as impaired by Stratton's development.

Hearings began in March, 1997, and are expected to continue through October. VNRC has been working with Darlene Palola, chair of the Stratton Area Citizens Committee, to ensure that all natural resource issues are addressed. Christopher Kilian, staff attorney and Director of VNRC's Water Program, is leading the effort by bringing expert testimony on growth and development effects, and water quality issues to the Act 250 hearings.

Stratton is under investigation by the ANR for building a bridge abutment in the North Branch without an Act 250 permit. The abutment will serve a high-priced condominium project called "The Bridges." James McMenemy, state fisheries biologist, wrote that, "about 75 feet of

stream has been extensively damaged by relocation of the low flow channel, placement of fill, and associated instream work."

The state would have opposed construction of the abutment if it had been submitted for approval. The resort is also under investigation for a recent release of sediment-laden water into the Winhall River from construction at its new, 16-acre snowmaking reservoir.

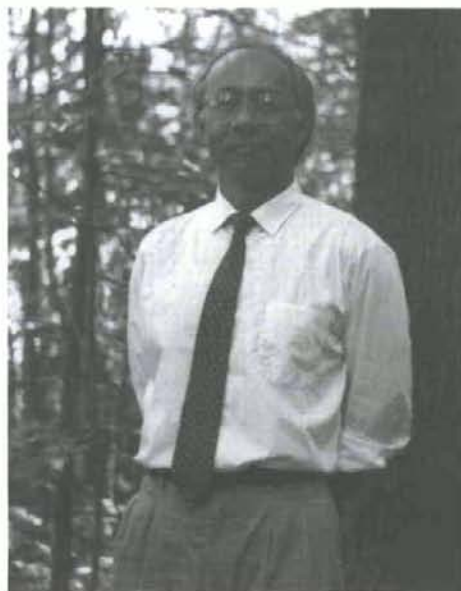
According to Steve Holmes, VNRC's Deputy Director for Policy, "This is just the tip of the iceberg for the industry in our state. This kind of massive, irretrievable buildup will damage the environment and our communities. VNRC will *not* allow thoughtless destruction."

JIM NORTHUP TO LEAD FORESTRY

We are pleased to announce our new forest program director, Jim Northup. Jim brings to VNRC more than 20 years of continuous work protecting Vermont's natural resources and connecting people to these resource protection actions.

Jim Northup was a principal in Ad Hoc Associates, a private firm that has specialized in environmental and fiscal analysis since 1987. Jim directed land and resource planning at the Green Mountain National Forest from 1979 to 1987, where he was primarily responsible for preparing a land and resource management plan for the 350,000 acre national forest. He administered an environmental education and employment program for teenagers in the USDA Forest Service from 1978 to 1979.

Jim Northup's educational background includes a Master of Environmental Management at Duke University. In addition, he has served as part-time instructor at Middlebury College, the University of Vermont's Graduate School of Natural Resources Planning, and the Antioch New England Graduate School. This fall he will be teaching at Middlebury College once again. He has designed a course that will enable students and citizens to learn about the ecological, economic, and social benefits of both *wild* woods and *working* woods.



Jim Northup

We are excited to have Jim at VNRC. He is a natural because he can help to shape science, policy, and management activities that enhance the way forests are protected around our state.

MAJOR WATER QUALITY GRANT AWARDED!

A major grant was awarded VNRC by the Ward M. and Mariam C. Canaday Educational and Charitable Trust. Along with the National Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Law Foundation, VNRC will carry on a partnership effort to protect water quality in Vermont for the next three years.

VNRC has identified two priority water quality problems facing Vermont watersheds: (1) protection of in-stream flows; and (2) addressing water pollution from wet weather run-off (non-point source pollution). With support from the Trust from 1994 to 1997, VNRC has achieved considerable success responding to water quality issues. We are grateful to the Trustees for their continuing support.

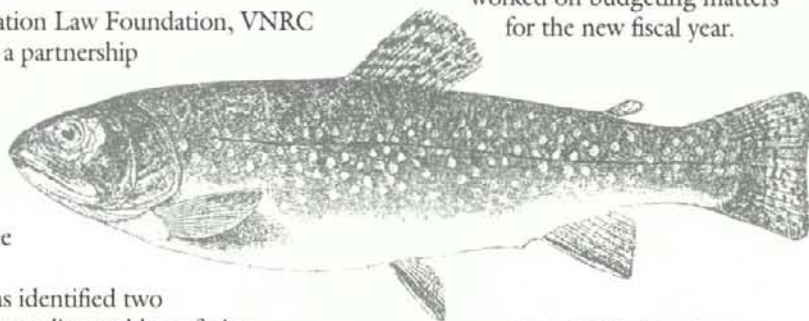
FIRST MOLLIE BEATTIE INTERN

Kim Kendall (pictured on page 17 in the Heritage Trek) is the first recipient of VNRC's prestigious Mollie Beattie Internship. Following an accounting career of seven years in Washington, D.C., Kim returned to school to pursue the environmental sciences. Kim attended the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at the State University of New York, where she completed her Master of Science in Forest Resources Management.

Over the summer, Kim has provided VNRC with immense help. She conducted research on the forestry practices of northeastern states, as well as scientific literature searches on clear-cutting. Kim has worked with foresters and ecologists to

pull together harvesting rules and guidelines from other states. These will be used to help develop rules to implement Vermont's heavy cutting law.

Kim represented VNRC at the Northern Forest Heritage Trek events, discussing forest issues with concerned citizens and providing them information on efforts to protect Vermont's Northern Forest. Kim is serving as an expert witness on water issues for VNRC in the Stratton Master Plan Act 250 Hearings in August and September. In addition, Kim's accounting expertise proved to be extremely helpful as we worked on budgeting matters for the new fiscal year.



This Mollie Beattie Internship was supported by the Vermont Conservation Fund with the Vermont Community Foundation.

If you are interested in receiving application materials for the 1998 Mollie Beattie Internship, please contact Steve Holmes at VNRC.

ALBRIGHT INTERNSHIP A SUCCESS

Anne Peracca has worked at VNRC as an intern in environmental communications, the first recipient of the Ivan L. and Josephine P. Albright Fund. Anne is concentrating on environmental education and communications in her masters program at the School of Natural Resources at UVM. Her work experience includes freelance writing for Fodor's Travel Publications, teaching SAT and GRE preparatory courses for *The Princeton Review*, and working as a field naturalist.

Anne was indispensable during the summer with her work on the 1997 annual report and on copy editing the telecommunications paper (*see next page*).

If you are interested in receiving application materials for the VNRC Internship in Environmental Communications



Anne Peracca

supported by the Ivan L. and Josephine P. Albright Fund, please contact Sue Higby at VNRC.

TOWERS PAPER Now Available

Lately, there has been a deluge of stories in Vermont news about telecommunications towers and how local community members are struggling to respond. The issues are complex and the *alphabet soup* cast of characters and terms—CTIA, FCC, NCRP, RFI, RFR, and TCA—leaves many wondering: How do we manage the new world of communications?

VNRC is pleased to announce that a major research paper is now available—*Telecommunications and Broadcasting Transmission Facilities in Vermont: Update on an Industry, for Citizens, Legislators and Municipal Officials*. Prepared by a frequently featured VNRC author, Will Lindner, with legal research by David Lashway, this paper goes a long way towards opening up dialogue on one of the most critical communications issues of our day. This research effort was supported by the Vermont Community Foundation.

To receive a copy, contact VNRC at (802) 223-2328. The cost for VNRC members is \$6.00; non-members will need to forward \$10 for the paper, postage, and handling.

DEVELOP AN ECO-WISE LIFESTYLE

The Vermont Population Alliance (formerly called Vermont Citizens for Sustainable Population) is convening a conference on *Sustainable Lifestyles* at the Vermont Law School on October 24th. The conference is cosponsored by VNRC and a variety of Vermont groups.

Ellen Furnari, of the Center for the New American Dream, will give the keynote address speaking about the connections between actions individuals can take in their own lives to reduce their consumption of natural resources, and actions they can take to effect larger systems such as businesses and government. Other speakers include David Gershon of the Global Action Plan and Lu Bauer of the New Road Map Foundation.

This conference is supported, in part, by a grant from the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund. The conference will take place from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and costs \$25 including lunch. For more information, call VPA at (802) 649-5168 or E-mail at bdpop@valley.net.



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smueller@together.net
jnorthup@together.net
lsmith@together.net

BECOME A BETTER STEWARD

The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions is holding three workshops to help citizens protect their towns' natural resources. Workshops will run from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM, and will cover river monitoring, wildlife track surveys, conservation commissions, funding opportunities, and much more.

October 30th—in Middlebury (Municipal Building, 94 Main Street)

For more information and to sign up, contact: Virginia Rasch, Executive Director, Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, (802) 223-5527 or E-mail: ilovermont@aol.com

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT VNRC

Put your skills and enthusiasm to good works! Call Lisa Smith, Outreach Coordinator, if you would like to get involved in VNRC's environmental protection activities or if you are interested in volunteering at VNRC's office. Thank you for working with us! You can reach Lisa at (802) 223-2328 or via E-mail: lsmith@together.net

WATERSHED FUND GRANTS AVAILABLE

License Plates Pay Conservation Dividends

The Agency of Natural Resources has announced a mini-grants program, which is supported by part of the proceeds from the sale of the state's new Conservation License Plates. Vermonters—including farmers, anglers, biologists, loggers, boaters, and many others—are invited to apply for support to protect water quality and promote fish and wildlife habitats. Applications for watershed protection grants are due on November 14, 1997, and are available by contacting Mike Kline or Susan Warren, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, at (802) 241-3770 or E-mail: mikek@waterq.anr.state.vt.us

GET SIMPLE— AND KNOW YOUR ECO-IMPACT

Sustainability: It is global, environmental, economic, and it is social. I do not recall when this word first crept into our vocabulary, but over the past five years it has become central to the debate of environmental protection and economic health.

Alan Durning's recent book — *This Place on Earth: Home and the Practice of Permanence* — brings the concept of sustainability to a place we can all understand. He welcomes us into his personal as well as professional life, and shares in a most engaging way a much-needed discussion of a world we must seek. The book jacket describes sustainability in a way that cuts to the core: "The defining struggle of our age, and its outcome will affect the long-term survival of our culture and our species."

Call it what you may, but this book is *must* reading for anyone serious about global survival. For activists, there are many fresh ways to approach time-worn issues. For those wanting simply to live more simply, with a lighter eco-impact, the book gives comfort, inspiration, and companionship. And for all of us, there are warnings that current public policies and private practices are on a collision course with the future.

Durning does not preach. He comes to his beliefs through years of careful research and interpretation. A former senior researcher at the Worldwatch Institute, Alan is the founder and executive director of the

Northwest Environment Watch. He writes with a blend of facts and advocacy that you will find refreshing as well as motivating.

While I set out only to review *This Place on Earth*, Durning has produced five books in the last five years that address in detail a range of sub-components of the sustainability dialogue. Readers may find it helpful to read all of the "Durning Series." All of these books have brought my beliefs into sharper focus, and have given me tools to argue my case in many eco-economic debates.

They are interesting to read and will not linger on your bedside table — I promise.

What effect does the car really have on land use decisions or global warming? What is the real story behind population growth in the U.S. and on a global scale? What is the total environmental effect of that coffee you drink or the bike you ride? And *How Much is Enough?* Consumption is one leg of a triangle of behaviors that must change.

This Place on Earth: Home and the Practice of Permanence. Alan Thein Durning. 1996. Sasquatch Books, Seattle. 326 pages.

If you want a fuller picture of where we are, and where we can be if we choose wisely — read them all. They are:

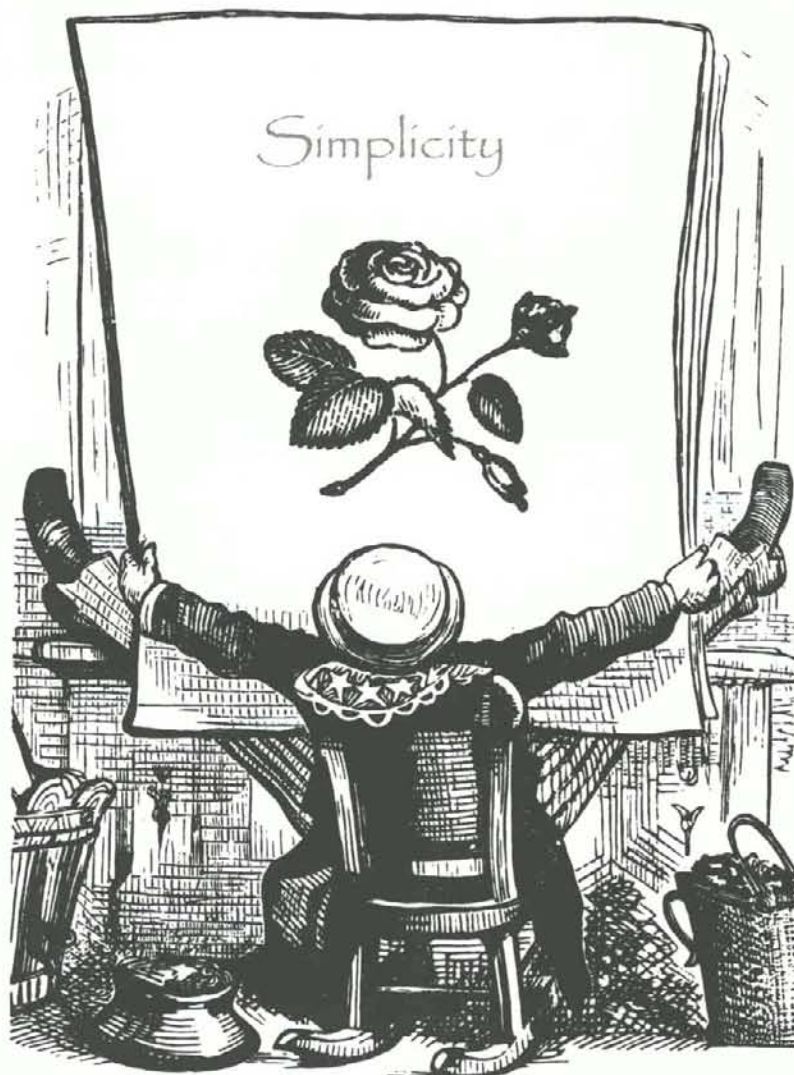
How Much is Enough?
Alan Durning (W.W. Norton & Company. New York. 1992)

The Car and the City.
Alan Thein Durning
(Northwest Environment Watch. Seattle, WA)

Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things.
John C. Ryan & Alan Thein Durning (Northwest Environment Watch. Seattle, WA)

Misplaced Blame: The Real Roots of Population Growth.
Alan Thein Durning & Christopher D. Crowther
(Northwest Environment Watch. Seattle, WA)

Cheryl K. Fischer lives in Montpelier and administers the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, a small grants program that makes \$500 to \$2,500 grants to local, grassroots groups across northern New England.





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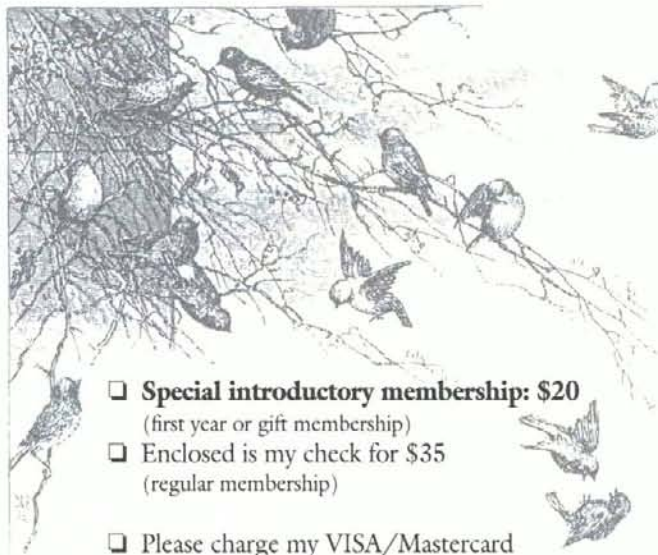
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WAL-MART PERMIT DENIED

Supreme Court Upholds E-Board Decision

On August 29, 1997, the Vermont Supreme Court handed down its long-awaited decision upholding the Vermont Environmental Board's 1995 denial of an Act 250 land use permit for a Wal-Mart in Saint Albans Town two miles outside the city of St. Albans.

In essence, the Court said that Act 250 decisions must consider the fiscal and economic effects of a development. The Environmental Board was correct to evaluate the "financial capacity" of communities in the region that are affected by the project.

In Wal-Mart's case, VNRC was able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Environmental Board and the Supreme Court that the 100,000 square foot giant would have an adverse effect on retail business in surrounding communities, which in turn would erode those communities' tax base.

VNRC was a party at the Environmental Board level, after having been denied party status by the District Environmental Commission, and was an amicus before the Supreme Court.

The case is also significant because the Court said that a secondary growth study—as required by the Board but which Wal-Mart did not do—was an appropriate request for the Board to make to determine if undue burden would be placed on local governments.

VNRC contended that "spin off" strip commercial, sprawl development such as fast-food places, gas stations and convenience stores induced by the presence of Wal-Mart would locate in the vicinity. This secondary growth would impose costs on the community to accommodate additional traffic and to provide infrastructure for water supply, sewage, and stormwater disposal.

Steve Holmes, VNRC's Deputy Director for Policy, and coordinator of VNRC's effort, said, "We're very happy with the Court's decision. This is an important case that should give a boost to efforts to revitalize Vermont's downtown areas and strengthen our communities."

Holmes had high praise for the dedicated team that worked on the case over the four years since Wal-Mart first applied for an Act 250 permit in the summer of

1993: Bill Roper, VNRC's outside counsel before the Board and the Court; Christopher Kilian, VNRC staff counsel; Mark Naud, VNRC Law Clerk; John Finn leader of Franklin/Grand Isle Citizens for

Downtown Preservation; the Citizens' attorney, Frank Murray; Beth Humstone and Tom Muller, key experts for VNRC and the Citizens on fiscal and economic impact; and Paul Bruhn, Preservation Trust of Vermont.

It is unclear at this point what Wal-Mart will do. Their options include appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, filing a new application, or abandoning the project. Stay tuned.

A SPECIAL GIFT—A GIFT TO VERMONT

Have you ever wanted to possess an original Garry Trudeau cartoon? Or, do you have someone special on your gift list who loves a good story, a good fight, and a great victory? Would you like to help VNRC continue to build its *Sustainable Communities Initiative* to fight short-sighted development in Vermont?

Garry Trudeau completed his "Doonesbury" series on Wal-Mart during the fall of 1994, with this cartoon panel. Trudeau graciously donated the original art to VNRC.

VNRC is holding a silent auction for the panel, with proceeds supporting VNRC's continuing campaign to protect Vermont downtowns. Submit your written bid (please, send no payment with your bid) to VNRC by close of business on **December 1, 1997**. The minimum bid is set at \$1,000, and the highest bidder wins the panel.

Contact Sue Higby at VNRC if you have any questions at (802) 223-2328.

Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



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