



Vermont Forest Products Association



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The Mission of the VFPA is to promote and defend the interests of our members. VFPA represents all aspects of the forestry community and the member businesses and individuals that are located throughout the State of Vermont. VFPA meets its mission through:

- Information and continuing education to its members
- Public outreach and education
- Working with other organizations through partnering and coalition building
- Networking with others within the forest products industry
- Lobbying state and federal government officials and lawmakers

Vermont Forest Products Association Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 27, 2021

The Vermont Forest Products Association held its Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 27, 2021 beginning at 3pm via "Zoom".

The business portion of the meeting included election of Directors and Officers. Leadership of VFPA is provided by volunteers from all sectors of the Forest Products Industry that are located throughout Vermont and surrounding communities.

Directors elected for the 2021-2023 term are Steve Hardy, Robbo Holleran, Bill Sayre, Chris Fife, Eric Parenti, David Grayck and Mike Molleur. Tyler Mousley was elected to serve as a Director for 2021-2022 to fill a one year term.

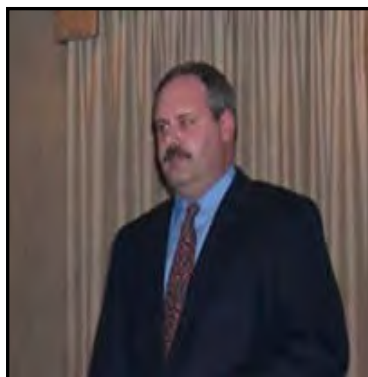
VFPA Officers elected for the 2021-2023 term are President: Steve Hardy, 1st Vice-President: Colleen Goodridge, 2nd Vice-President: Trevor Allard, Secretary/Treasurer: Bruce Shields and Assistant Treasurer: Brandy Inkel.

Commissioner Michael Snyder, VT Dept of FPR, and Ed Larson, VFPA Lobbyist, gave legislative updates. Issues at the forefront facing the industry include Act 250, Adding a new "Forever Wild" category in the Vermont Use Value Program (UVA), Renewal of Ryegate Power Station's purchase power agreement, Forest Fragmentation, Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI), Wetlands, Global Warming Solutions, Carbon Sequestration, Municipal Overweight Permits and Labor and Insurance issues.

The VFPA tradition of Awards for Excellence in the Forest Products Industry, recognizing the good work that is being done, was highlighted with the presentation of three VFPA Forest Products Awards.

VFPA "Outstanding Leadership in the Industry" Award:

Sean Barrows



In appreciation for his outstanding leadership, integrity, dedication, and contributions for the betterment of the forest products industry and his community – the beneficiaries of his many efforts. And for being a strong advocate, for over 30 years, for the people that dedicate their lives to the working forests.

VFPA “Outstanding Service to the Industry” Award:**Sam Lincoln**

In recognition of his leadership, integrity, dedication, and tremendous work as Deputy Commissioner of FPR benefitting Vermont’s forest economy – logger safety training, workers’ compensation insurance for employers, workshops for loggers to improve water quality, technology tools for the forest and other programs supporting the forest products industry. We are extremely grateful for his service as Deputy Commissioner and welcome him back as a valued member of our industry.

**VFPA “Outstanding Sawmill Operator” Award:****P&R Lumber**

For over 50 years, P & R Lumber has provided log markets for landowners, held strong relationships with loggers and truckers and has consistently maintained quality in their products for their customers. Their successful transition between generations and into new markets is an example of a business able to adapt and thrive – well into the future.



The meeting concluded with the raffle drawing for the Husqvarna 562G chainsaw. The lucky winner was Normand Inkel, L&N Inkel Logging.

Thank you to our members for their support of the Vermont Forest Products Association, “The Voice of the Forest Products Industry in Vermont since 1977.”

The meeting adjourned with the hope of better days ahead, when we can all meet in person again.

NVU Wins Grant to Promote Forest Industry in Vermont and New Hampshire

By Cat Viglienzoni

Published: Feb. 16, 2021

BURLINGTON, Vt. (WCAX) - Northern Vermont University is getting nearly \$1 million in grant money to expand the area’s forestry economy. The money comes from the Northern Border Regional Commission forest economy partnership. NVU is going to use it to create a wood product accelerator facility in a coworking space in Lyndon. They’re also going to help businesses in the forestry industry expand and create career pathways for students looking to enter that sector of the economy. “Forestry has played a longtime role in Vermont of helping the economy, first through lumber and timber, but now it’s grown to include mountain bike games like kingdom trails in Burke or ski areas that manage their forest to be able to have the right trails for themselves even maple sugaring,” said Ann Nygard of NVU. It’s a three-year grant and the programs start immediately.

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**VFPA Legislative Report**

By:

**Ed Larson, Lobbyist for
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The 2021 Legislative Session was done completely remotely. Using Zoom and YouTube platforms, all committees, caucuses, and main floor activities were conducted by most everyone in front of their computer in their home and the public can watch all the activities on YouTube. This followed the 2020 session in which the Legislature turned to remote work in late March about halfway through that session. Last year's session went exceptionally long finally adjourning at the end of September. This gave them little time for campaigns only to find themselves back in session a few short months later. When this session started, VFPA and many other trade associations sent a letter to the leadership asking them to stay focused on only public health and safety due to the pandemic and the state's economy. This remote format was not conducive to open spontaneous deliberations that can best occur in the Statehouse in person. We encouraged them to avoid controversial complex policy questions until we can all meet again in the Statehouse. Most of the committees did avoid more complex controversial issues, but not all of them. Bills not related to Covid-19, the economy or a state budget did get taken up and some passed.

In general, the Legislature did pass some meaningful legislation investing in more housing, economic development, expanding broadband and childcare. Funding to attract tourist to Vermont was increased \$1.4 million assuming more people will travel by auto to closer destinations as we come out of this pandemic. As for how the business community was helped to survive the Covid shut down, that did not go so well. Only \$30 million of a predicted \$500 million needed to shore up business losses were adopted. We had to fight to remove the income tax on the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans when they are forgiven, becoming a grant. Perhaps most impactful on employers is the \$100 million new tax on unemployment taxes for a \$25 per week additional benefit for an unemployed worker. This new tax is on top of an already steep increase we will see in that employer tax. (See UI section below)

Forestry and forest policy was debated in both House and Senate Committees however little was done in this area this year. We do anticipate that next year will be a remarkably busy year on forestry issues. We expect to see Act 250 on the front burner and forest fragmentation will be a major topic. The Use Value Appraisal Program may see some changes proposed in the area of a new "Forever Wild"

category. More pressure on lawmakers to address timber theft may also become a priority.

Successes**S.1 - Ryegate Power Station.**

New owners of the Ryegate Power Station, Stored Solar, LLC. are seeking to renew their purchase power agreement with the electric retail utilities. Their current Standard Order expires in November 2022. The Standard Order directs utilities to negotiate a favorable rate for another ten-year power purchase agreement. This bill as introduced is identical to the bill that passed the Senate last year but failed to get a hearing in the House because of the pandemic. Some Senators do not support this order for a couple reasons; 1) it subsidizes the selling price by about \$5 million over market rates and 2) Ryegate's biomass use is not efficient mainly because the heat created in generating electricity is not captured for any type of use and is simply wasted. The Ryegate Power Station purchases approximately 250 thousand tons of biomass annually, which is estimated to be about 13% of all raw material generated in Vermont each year. The Senate Finance Committee took a vastly different approach from last year perhaps making Ryegate a potential victim of the pandemic. Last year the bill passed the Senate exactly as introduced in this year's S.1. Unfortunately, it did not get through the House because of the Covid shutdown. It became apparent that the Senate Finance Committee did not have the votes to pass out a new ten-year standard order and the bill may die, but no one wanted to shut down the plant unnecessarily because of how that will hurt the forest products industry. The owners offered a compromise to a new standard order for five years and if by that time the plant has found and installed a use for the waste heat, another five years is automatically added to the order. The committee rejected that offer, instead finally came to a proposed amendment to extend the current contract another two years and if the owners of the plant can come with a rock-solid plan to use the waste heat, a new ten-year standard order may move forward. The committee then added contingency language that directs the Agency of Commerce and Commissioner of FPR to conduct a study and render a report a year from now on what is the impact of a Ryegate shutdown on the workforce, the forest industry and forest health and what could replace it.

The House made changes to the contingency language adding people and a public hearing in an area near Ryegate. Director of Stored Solar, LLC. of Ryegate, William Harrington agreed to the terms of the extension confident that they will find a use for the waste heat by the end of the extension. He also agreed to pay \$10,000 for the making of the contingency report. Governor Scott signed the bill on May 20. So Ryegate will get a two-year extension on its current Standard Order and will need to come back to the Legislature with a report on whether they have a way to utilize the waste heat to improve the efficiency rating of the plant. VFPA thanks all of you that took the time to send in letters and/or contact their Legislator to encourage their support.

National Forest Lands Board

An unexpected issue was contained in H.122, an act on Boards and Commissions. Each year a joint legislative administrative committee meets to review all state government boards and commissions for effectiveness and relevance. This joint committee makes recommendations on whether to make changes to the make-up or the charge of a board or commission or to abolish it. A bill is introduced and sent to the Committee on Government Operations to decide the fate of those boards and commissions. This year, the joint committee recommended abolishing the **National Forest Lands Board**. The NFLB is comprised of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The purpose of this board is to be a venue for communities impacted by land purchases by the federal government for national forests. This board has not met under the last two governors leading this joint committee to assume it's no longer a needed entity. Governor Douglas and Lt. Governor Dube actively used this committee and was effective in convincing the Forest Service to better manage their forestlands, especially new acquisitions. VFPA came to the committee to ask them to remove this section of the bill and keep the NFLB alive for future administrations. The committee was receptive and on an 11-0 vote, struck the section abolishing the NFLB and sent the bill to the floor. The bill eventually passed and was signed by the Governor. NFLB lives, a good win for VFPA.

Transportation

With a healthy fund, the transportation bill or T-Bill, H.433 passed with additional resources for local road improvements. More paving projects are slated as well as additional federal funds for water quality projects such as culverts and stone lined ditching. We should see lots of paving projects this season. This budget also puts lots of funds into climate friendly projects. Expect to see many more electric vehicles charging stations, more state-owned electric vehicles and busses and perhaps more electric bicycles as they added an incentive to buy those things. They created another incentive to replace your gas guzzler dubbed "Replace Your Ride Program".

Too Long in Woodstock? In Vermont, a trucker needs an over length permit if the truck and trailer combined are longer than 75 feet. There is a 27.1 mile stretch of Route 4 that runs from Hartford through Woodstock to Bridgewater in that any truck longer than 68 feet must have a special overlength permit or if stopped will receive a heavy fine. This is the only road segment in Vermont with this requirement. The permit is free, but if you are unaware of it, you are at risk, and it seems most of the fines from Woodstock law enforcement are to out of state truckers. The Legislature commissioned a study and a report to review the need for this permit and recommend whether this permit should remain or be repealed. The analysis from this study shows how truck traffic has changed since this law went into effect in the year 2000. Based on output from the Statewide Transportation Demand Model,

trucks diverted from US 4 will increase the length of their trip by an average of 5.4 miles. When applied to the observed decrease of 41 truck trips per day on US 4, the result is an annual increase of approximately 81,200 truck miles of travel on all highways. Based on pavement and bridge maintenance costs of \$0.39 per mile. This unit cost is based on the cost responsibility tables for trucks with total lengths between 68 feet and 75 feet from the Weight-Based Annual Registration Report, completed by VTrans in December 2019. The resulting net cost increase to the State is between \$27,381 and \$31,670 per year depending on how much of a truck's diesel fuel (and related diesel fuel tax) was purchased in Vermont. The study does recommend removing this permit siting the savings in the maintenance budget and less diesel emissions with the fewer miles driven. The Woodstock road commissioner and select board fought to keep this peculiar permit siting the safety concerns of big trucks passing through the narrow Route 4 in the village that includes a major sweeping turn at the north end of the village. The committee felt that if the intersection in question can be restructured to accept these long trucks more safely, then the permit will no longer be necessary. The Senate Committee on Transportation added construction plans and funding to change the intersection and language to repeal the permit once the construction project is completed. This was added to the T-Bill, H.433, as passed the House and the House agreed to keep it in the bill.

Unemployment Insurance (UI)

As we reported last year, we anticipated this issue to be a difficult one to solve. Not only was it difficult, it also became very contentious. **S.10** was one of the last bills to pass and this debate went to the very last minute before a compromise was agreed to. The bill started in the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs. Employers were facing extreme increases in the insurance tax to maintain the UI fund for future needs. Before the pandemic, we were expecting the tax for UI to be the lowest rate ever due to ten years of economic growth and low unemployment. Because of the pandemic, everything has changed. Unemployment went from 2.4% in February 2020 to 16.5% in April draining the fund faster than any time in history. If nothing changed, the tax was on course to go from the lowest to the highest tax ever paid. Because of the formula used to determine tax rates needed to maintain a certain fund level, the UI rate in 2020 would continue to force steep tax increases for the next ten years. The formula is also designed to raise the fund balance target based on a ten year look back. This bill eliminates the 2020 UI data in the formula. This will artificially lower the rates and fund balance need to some degree, but nowhere near a hold-harmless tax rate. Employers will see tax rates go up starting July 1. Approximately \$320 million was drawn from the fund to pay replacement wages to unemployed workers because of Covid-19. This left about \$180 million in the fund, which is not enough to withstand another recession. Before Covid-19, the fund balance was set at \$500 million, even by removing 2020 from the formula employers will be paying taxes to a new \$650 million fund level target. That means that over the next ten years, employers will pay at least another \$150 million in addition to the \$320 million that was drawn from the fund this past year. Removing 2020 from the formula does save employers approximately \$350 million over the next ten years. To add insult to injury, the Senate wanted to enhance benefits for unemployed workers. One proposal was to add \$25 per week to each payee and a \$50 per week benefit for anyone with at least one dependent child. The Senate dropped the \$25 adder but proposed to add the dependent child benefit. The House

this bill by the Senate caused a compromise to surface. The House and Senate added a \$25 per week added benefit for all unemployed workers which will cost about \$6-8 million more each year. This new benefit will last until \$100 million is spent on this new benefit which is expected to last the next ten to 15 years. Senators supporting this new benefit described this bill as balanced. We saved the employer money and gave a little something to the unemployed. It is hard to imagine that paying \$250 million new taxes over the next ten+ years as a balanced approach.

Senate and House Committees are Gearing Up for 2022

Act 250 reform continues in the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife. The committee did walk throughs of the various bills in the committee including the Governor's proposal (H.400) and spent a fair amount of time studying various aspects of a bill introduced by the committee chair, Rep. Amy Sheldon of Middlebury, H.120. H.120 is the same bill as was passed out of the House during the last session that was vastly shaved down in the Senate and eventually was awarded a very welcome VETO from Governor Scott. You may recall that the Act 250 bill last year, H.926 included a section on forest fragmentation as well as a section that directs District Commissions to relax certain conditions of a forest operation obtaining a permit. To avoid a repeat of the last biennium as described above, the House wanted to do as much as they can on getting a comprehensive bill done this year or very early next year in order to give the Senate the bulk of a full year to pass their own version. The committee did stop short of marking up the bill and no votes were cast this year. We expect to see something in January.

Use Value Appraisal (UVA) - Forever Wild

Early in the session, the **House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife** heard from wilderness advocates that wanted to be able to enroll forest land and not need to manage it for timber. This no-cut category also known as "open space" in other states is not a brand-new initiative, but it has gathered renewed life mostly due to heightened attention to climate change. Its popularity is boosted with the argument that old growth forests store and continue to sequester carbon and there are some landowners that just don't want to cut any trees on their property and want someone else to pay their taxes. We looked at two proposals so-far. It began with a draft that creates a separate forestland category in that a parcel that has a "Forever Wild" easement is eligible to enroll in a forever wild category in UVA and the appraisal will be equal to the managed forest category. Commissioner Snyder has been carefully trying to walk a fine line. He is exhibiting a fair amount of ambivalence towards this issue. He likes more old growth and more set asides in Vermont but is trying to convey to the committee that UVA should not be the answer. He reported that ANR is doing a deep dive analysis and inventory of ecological significant areas on state owned forestland, some committee members want them to do that on private land as well, Snyder balked at that. He also reported that his department is considering a new definition of "Old Growth" a category in the UVA ESTA category. This new definition is broader offering much more leeway for a landowner to be able to enroll forestland that would normally not appear as an old growth forest. Snyder convinced the committee to move away from this version and seek a more science-based path and explore other options. This caused them to miss the crossover deadline. In other words, anything they do pass out of committee after crossover will likely not move through the entire Legislative process and will be postponed until next year. The committee formed a small task force consisting of Committee Chair, Amy Sheldon, Committee member, Seth Bongartz and Commissioner

Snyder. They worked on a new proposal. Snyder and Private Lands Program Manager, Keith Thompson presented the proposal to the whole committee. It aims to expand "Old Growth" management opportunities into the Ecological Significant Treatment Areas (ESTAs). Snyder and Thompson presented a power point presentation titled "**Reserve Forestland Analysis**" detailing the proposal. In preparing this proposal FPR conducted a mapping project to try and determine how many acres currently have enough "Old Growth" characteristics that could be eligible for this new expanded category. Map layers make this determination which includes riparian buffers, steep slopes, mapped vernal pools, S1 and S2 natural communities and certain wetlands. The trigger for eligibility is that at least 30% of a parcel must contain these features. A management plan is needed to describe how to maintain and protect these things. This is similar to how all the other ESTA categories are enrolled. Snyder estimates based on the mapping exercise that there are up to 320,000 acres in Vermont that would qualify. We are concerned that it could be much larger than that and over time will be expanded. Enrollment is totally voluntary and the rate of appraisal for this category is the same as the managed forest category. On both occasions VFPA leaders testified with much concern about this total redirect of the purpose of UVA. The second proposal however received great praise from the environmental lobby. The committee only held one hearing on this proposal and plans to take it up early next year.

In the Senate: Commissioner Snyder delivered new refreshed documents on forest integrity to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy mid-April. This was a response to a committee interrogation earlier on the loss of forestland in Vermont. The two documents Revisiting Forest Health and Integrity and a corresponding Power Point were intended to give an update on all the work FPR did on these topics. Members of the Senate committee plans to spend a fair amount of time next year on what to do about the loss of forestland and asked the Commissioner for this information. We anticipate the debate they are teeing up will be regulation vs incentivization. Will there be efforts to strengthen the forest products industry so it can offer a reasonable return to landowners so they will want to stay in timber management or will they regulate the landowner's ability to make choices on how to use their land. Based on what this committee did to the comprehensive Act 250 bill indicates a strong lean toward regulation. Commissioner Snyder also spent some time in the **House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry** to talk about forestry issues. This committee has a more focused interest in forest operations and the need for more value-added processing in Vermont. They have taken much interest in understanding how Act 250 impacts investment and the ability for a permit holder to succeed. This committee demonstrates a clearer understanding that to keep our forests as forest means a vibrant forest economy. They have personally witnessed that a farmer with means, can do a lot better by the environment than a business that struggles.

As you can see, this was a busy session, but watch out....Next year could become unbearable. Again, it is a pleasure to serve and an honor to represent this very important signature industry in Vermont. Thank you!

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Kevin Braman: A Vermont Logger

By Eileen Townsend, The Northern Logger Magazine

Kevin Braman didn't grow up in the woods, but he always knew that he loved them. As a young man in the 1980s, he worked on his family farm in central Vermont and supplemented his income processing firewood. He liked farming, but when the time came to make a decision about what he really wanted to do with his life, Braman wanted to be in the woods day in and day out, and he chose the logging life. Today, Braman has 35 years of logging to his name, and his reputation as a careful worker and diligent steward of the forest precedes him.

Braman is still based in central Vermont, in Orange County near the New Hampshire border. Orange County presents some challenging terrain for a logger, and many of the steep and rocky parcels are best handled by partially mechanized loggers like Braman. The area is rich in hardwoods, especially high-quality maple. Braman sees his job not only as harvesting this top-quality timber, but as creating the conditions to grow it.



Braman works with a cable skidder and a chainsaw. He loves the hands-on aspect of the felling. "I'm just all about directional felling and doing real quality work," said Braman. He counts a job well done when he is able to return to a forest, years later, and log it again. "There's two or three pieces of property that I have logged for a third time and a fair number of properties I've logged twice," said Braman. "I love the fact that when I log a piece of property, whoever I want to see it can see how good it looks. You want a lot of trees growing for the next cut, and you also want to be thinking of that future cut, which is really, really important. You generate so much and cut so much now, but at the same time you're thinking of what you don't cut."

Braman works alone, and he likes it that way. "I've had people in the past who worked for me, but I really enjoy working alone. I cut the trees, hook them up, and then cut them up at the landing with my chainsaw," explained Braman. "I don't have a slasher or any automation or anything. It's pretty steep in central Vermont, so I run a few hundred feet of cable. You can definitely do better work here with a cable skidder than a grapple skidder."

Braman has worked with many foresters (he said he counted them once and realized he'd worked for 17), and he also has a wealth of silvicultural knowledge himself after 35 years on the job. While it can be challenging, Braman said he doesn't mind cutting jobs that aren't marked. "I tend to be more conservative.... It's just about coming up with that good balance, taking some trees and leaving some trees and generating the ballpark figure for what the landowner wants, while leaving the woods the way the landowner wants them left."

When asked whether he ever considered going fully mechanized and expanding his business, Braman said he never even came close. He doesn't regret staying small. "I really enjoy doing it the old-fashioned way," he said. "I move a fair amount of wood for a one-man operation. It works out financially right now, the way things are with the virus and the mill that went down in Maine. I'm just really glad I'm small, because I'm not nearly as vulnerable as if I were big."

Many changes have happened in the Vermont logging industry over the course of Braman's career. "We've lost a fair number of markets; mills have gone out; and a lot of people have the automation that you didn't have back in the early 1980s," said Braman. "I'm not into the chip market at all. I would rather leave the brush; it's an opportunity to fertilize the woods."

In 2020, Braman was able to shift his business to fit the market while still logging in the way he wants to log. "I'm putting a lot of focus on cutting ash because of the ash borer. I sell to a guy who processes firewood. Pulp is terrible right now, and the fact that I can sell firewood is really a big deal. I hope the cord market comes back because when you're cutting white birch or soft maple, it's going to go for bulk." As every logger knows, having low grade markets is essential to doing a good job in the forest, and Braman feels lucky to have a consistent firewood market.

An essential piece of wisdom Braman has picked up along the way: don't spread yourself too thin. Braman could do his own trucking and firewood processing, but he said if he focused on that he'd lose focus on the logging itself, and Braman prides himself on being an attentive and careful logger. He'd advise anyone getting into the industry today to start small, so that they have time to decide how much they want to invest in their business. He'd also advise them to build strong relationships with foresters and landowners, something he says is essential to success. Honesty is key, and to Braman, relationships are more important than making quick money. "I see that the people I deal with get paid properly. I'm really big into how much they make off their property," said Braman. "If it weren't for them, we'd all be out of business."

Steve Long, a former editor of *Northern Woodlands* magazine, has been a longtime friend of Braman and hired the logger to work in his woods several times. "We've got 140 acres," said Long. "I'm very interested in trying to grow really nice timber, and Kevin has been a part of that process. We've improved the value over the years while taking some off and getting some income along

the way, but all in the service of improving the residual stand.”

Long chose to work with Kevin Braman over the years because of the logger’s careful touch. “Kevin is good at not damaging what he’s leaving behind,” said Long. “He’s remarkably good at that, always felling trees really precisely and figuring out what is the best way to get them out of the woods without bringing up all the trees that he is skidding through. He’s an incredibly conscientious logger, and it is great to have someone like that work on my woods.”

Long also pointed out that part of the reason he likes to work with Braman is not just his diligence, but his personability and willingness to explain how he is working. “I’ll go down when I hear him come in with a hitch, or I’ll go up and visit him in the woods,” said Long. “He’s remarkably productive, but he’s not so obsessed with getting the work done that he can’t stop and chew the fat for 20 minutes. He’s always very welcoming and happy to show you what’s going on in the woods.... He could look at any log pile and tell you exactly where it came from and exactly what he had to do to get it out. He’s in his element.”

Braman works hard, in part, because he knows the market and weather can be unpredictable. “You have to get there in the morning and put a good eight- or eight-and-a-half-hour day in,” said Braman. “This summer was a really good summer for logging. We had very little rain, and right now it is terrible because of the mud season. You look back and say, ‘Wow, I’m really glad I worked hard this summer to get through the way things are now.’”

While Braman seems to have made a great career working in the woods, he credits his rural upbringing for teaching him respect for the land and a good work ethic. “Being raised on a farm definitely had a real positive influence. And I have an uncle, Fred, who is my role model and a logger, who had a big influence on me deciding to be a logger. He took on responsibility at a really young age.” His uncle’s hard work and commitment to the forest as a young man inspired Braman to take the same risks. “I took on responsibilities at the farm at a young age, and then when I got into logging, I definitely had responsibilities. It makes a really big difference in how successful you’re going to be.”

How is Kevin Braman feeling after 35 years of logging in central Vermont? In a word: grateful. He works hard and carefully and enjoys the job. “I don’t think things happen overnight,” said Braman. “You have to accept that things are going to happen over time and go along with that. It is great for your appreciation level too.”

Forest Landowners: What’s My Carbon Impact?

By: Eric Kingsley

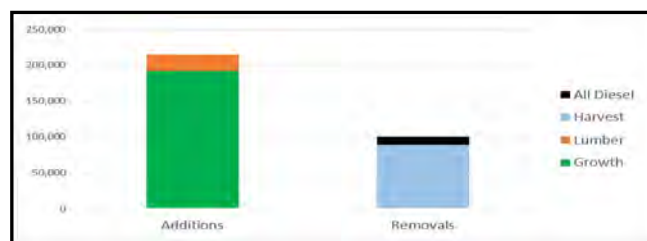
As carbon becomes a bigger part of the conversation for forest landowners, many are asking “what’s my land’s net carbon impact?” I was discussing this with a major landowner in the northeast a few weeks ago, and decided to work out an estimate for the lands he manages. *Now that I’ve created the spreadsheet, I am happy to do this for any landowners with 1,000 acres or more – for free.*

We all know that trees take up carbon dioxide when they grow, so

that’s a positive. Of course, some of those trees become long-lived wood products (think lumber) that continue to sequester carbon for decades or centuries. That’s the additions side of the equation. There are carbon removals or emissions as well – when timber is harvested, carbon leaves the forest. Additionally, harvesting equipment runs on diesel, as do the trucks that take wood from the forest to the mill.

Using some basic assumptions, I developed a tool to estimate the forest’s net carbon impact for a particular timberland holding – the carbon additions from growth and lumber, and the carbon losses from harvests and emissions.

One large landowner with over 300,000 forested acres in the Northeast, based upon information they shared with me, has a net positive annual contribution of 113,214 tons of carbon. The timberland grows 192,198 tons of carbon (CO₂ equivalent or CO₂e), and 89,375 tons are harvested. Of this harvest, about 22,201 tons become lumber, a long-lived product that sequesters carbon. Diesel associated with the felling, skidding, yarding and trucking of the entire harvest is estimated at 11,809 tons. *It is important to note that all of these are estimates, meant to provide a landowner with an idea of their net carbon impact.*



If you are a landowner with 1,000 acres or more and would like to know about your estimated net carbon impact, I am happy to provide a similar estimate based upon your particular situation. Just send an email to me at kingsley@inrslc.com with the following:

- State(s) the land in in
- Forested acreage
- Average stocking per acre (please let me know units for this and other data)
- Annual harvest volume
- Percent of harvest that is sawlogs
- Average trucking distance from woods to mill
- You can send separate numbers for sawlogs and pulpwood, or a combined estimate
- If you consider your carbon responsibility to end when the wood leaves the landing, just say so and I will only count emissions associated with harvesting operations.
- If you have something you call this timberland holding, let me know and I will reference that in my summary back to you (I expect some folks will have more than one holding they are interested in).

It is clear that the carbon benefits of forests are becoming more important to policy discussions at the state and federal level, and I am happy to provide these estimates to landowners and land managers so that they have a good, data-based estimate of the role individual holdings play in the carbon cycle.

I will keep your information confidential, and if you want to send me a (basic, reasonable and easy to understand) confidentiality agreement I’m happy to sign it.

Combined Heat and Power at Allard Lumber Saves Money, Jobs, and Environment

By Christine McGowan, Forest Products Program Director at Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

When the water pump on Allard Lumber's boiler went a few years back, Trevor Allard finally had the excuse he needed to begin building the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system that he had been considering for years. "I couldn't justify throwing out a good boiler," said Allard, "but the CHP system promised efficiency, and therefore savings, that I wanted to invest in other parts of the mill."



One of Vermont's oldest and largest family-owned sawmills, [Allard Lumber in Brattleboro](#) was founded by Cliff Allard, Trevor's father, in 1974. In addition to owning several log yards, Allard kiln dries and mills lumber on site, an energy intensive operation requiring about \$250,000 worth of electricity annually. Fueled with wood waste from the mill, the CHP system generates about half of the mill's energy needs, saving the company about \$160,000 annually. "Ultimately, it has made us stronger as a company," said Allard. "Every bit of savings counts in this business, so when we save on energy costs, it means we are supporting jobs and the people who work here at the mill."

"Allard offers a great example of how Vermont can transition to cleaner energy sources, including the efficient and sustainable use of wood, as fossil-fuel dependent equipment reaches the end of its useful life," said Jared Duval, executive director of the [Energy Action Network](#). "This approach can save money and reduce emissions while supporting our local economy."

According to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), CHP is an "energy efficient technology that generates electricity and captures heat that would otherwise be wasted." Also known as cogeneration, CHP systems produce electricity and thermal energy concurrently, requiring less fuel than systems that produce power and heat separately. According to the EPA, conventional electricity generation wastes nearly two-thirds of the energy produced when heat is discharged into the atmosphere. A CHP system captures that heat and converts it to steam or hot water for additional energy generation. By capturing that heat, CHP systems can achieve efficiencies of up to 80 percent, compared to 50 percent for conventional technology.

Consuming energy at the point of generation also means that less energy is lost during transmission, further improving efficiency. For Allard—and for many in the lumber industry—the fuel needed to run the CHP system is already on site in the form of wood scraps produced during normal mill operations. While it's not "free"—Allard has to factor in the loss of revenue from selling scraps to paper mills or wood pellet manufacturers—there are no trucking expenses.

Allard's high pressure system sends 250 pounds of steam into a turbine, which exhausts at 15 pounds. Electricity is produced from the pressure differential, leaving most of the heat in the steam. To complete the cycle, the low pressure steam is condensed back to water and pumped into the boiler, but rather than "dumping" the heat into the air as is common practice, Allard sends that heat to the kiln where lumber is dried 365 days a year at temperatures ranging from 80 to 170 degrees. That year-round demand for thermal is key to making the system efficient.

During the day, mill operations draw down more energy than Allard can produce, about 750 kilowatts an hour verses the 125 kilowatts they are able to produce, requiring them to purchase energy from the grid, but after the mill closes down at 4:00, surplus energy is sold back to Green Mountain Power and returned to the grid.

More than a monetary decision.

While capturing wasted energy yields savings that, in turn, supports the overall health of the mill, Allard also points to less tangible benefits, such as decreasing reliance on fossil fuels and supporting Vermont's forest economy.

The main environmental benefit of combined heat and power is the reduction of greenhouse gasses that result from using less fuel. Because less fuel is burned for each unit of energy output, the process generates fewer greenhouse gasses and other pollutants.

In the context of statewide reliance on renewable energy sources, the bulk of energy demand at the mill is during daylight hours, when Green Mountain Power is able to source energy from solar. In the



evenings, when demand is lower, Allard is able to generate enough power to avoid drawing down power from the grid during time periods that

are often reliant on non-renewable sources of energy, such as oil, thereby helping Vermont move towards its goal of meeting 90% of total energy needs from renewables by 2050.

That's one reason that [Vermont's Clean Energy Development](#)



[Fund](#) gave Allard a grant for the project. Fund director Andy Perchlik is hopeful that Allard's story will help inspire new projects elsewhere. *"Every time we get a CHP up and running, we learn something about where this technology can be used successfully," said Perchlik. "We want to move away from fossil fuels and Vermont has all this low-grade wood, so it can really be a win-win, especially for organizations that see themselves as part of Vermont's working landscape."*

Supporting healthy forests, local economy.

That last point is particularly close to Trevor's heart. Biomass-fueled CHP systems support Vermont's forest economy by providing a market for low-grade wood. Finding markets for low-grade wood as paper mills have closed in recent years has posed a serious challenge to the industry, both in terms of revenue generation and forest management. *"In order to manage a forest properly—for species diversity, wildlife, clean water, timber harvests, and overall health—loggers need a market for low-grade wood," said Allard. "Pulling out low-grade wood so that a stand can remain healthy for decades is the right thing to do ecologically and silviculturally, but loggers aren't making any money on those trees."*

According to Emma Hanson, Wood Heat Coordinator for the Vermont's Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Vermont is currently 74 percent forested and harvesting less

than half the net growth in the forest, so there is ample opportunity to source energy from wood in a way that supports a healthy forest. “It is absolutely essential to have healthy markets for both high and low grade wood,” she said. “Without the pair it is impossible to carry out a sustainable forest management plan.”

Heating with wood also keeps money in-state. A [2016 study on heating with wood](#) found that 80 cents of every dollar spent on wood heat stays in state, versus only 22 cents of every dollar spent on oil. In 2016, that translated into an estimated \$70 million retained in the Vermont economy. *“A lot of people think Vermont’s forests are being managed by big, outside corporations, but most, if not all, of the mills are locally owned,” said Allard. “We live right here and we want to do things the right way.”*

About the Vermont Forest Industry Network

Vermont’s forest products industry generates an annual economic output of \$1.4 billion and supports 10,500 jobs in forestry, logging, processing, specialty woodworking, construction and wood heating. Forest-based recreation adds an additional \$1.9 billion and 10,000 jobs to Vermont’s economy. The Vermont Forest Industry Network creates the space for industry professionals from across the entire supply chain and trade association partners throughout the state to build stronger relationships and collaboration throughout the industry, including helping to promote new and existing markets for Vermont wood products, from high-quality furniture to construction material to thermal biomass products such as chips and pellets.

Learn more or join at www.vsjf.org.



Advising Available for Forest Products Businesses!

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program is a resource that provides forest products businesses with one-on-one advising and technical assistance to help achieve long-term success.

The Viability Program helps Vermont business owners work smarter, not harder.

If you are considering:

- Expanding or diversifying your business;
- Improving financial record-keeping;
- Determining cost of production and increasing profitability;
- Preparing a business plan to access capital or apply for grants;
- Honing your marketing and sales strategy;

Or other business developments

We can connect you with a professional advisor to help you build business skills, meet your goals, and plan for the future. Whether times are tough or you need help managing growth, we’re here to help!

The Viability Program is also offering advising services to businesses navigating impacts of the pandemic.

Our advisors can provide support with navigating relief programs, seeking new markets, financial planning, and more.

Get Started: Contact Mariah Noth (mariah@vhcb.org ; 802-828-1098) or find our application online

www.vhcb.org/viability

The Viability Program is a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.



Celebrating a New Forest Products Business: Kirby Mulch Company, LLC

The business, owned by Heath Bunnell, the 2018 New Hampshire Timber Owners Association Logger of the Year, had a grand opening celebration on Saturday, April 24, 2021, located at 576 US Route 2 in Kirby, Vermont.

Kirby Mulch Company, LLC aims to provide a viable new local market for low-grade wood, wood by-products, and disposal waste options in the rural Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

They offer residential, commercial and retail bulk consumers sales of mulch, compost, and kiln-dried firewood from White River Junction to Belvidere and along the Green Mountains then eastward to the Vermont boarder and into Northern New Hampshire.

Through a diverse offering of low-grade wood and wood by-product solutions, Kirby Mulch Company LLC supports a sustainable forest economy in the Northeast Kingdom by connecting a variety of forestry related stakeholders. In addition, they have a large focus on helping stimulate the local economy through much needed job creation.

Kirby Mulch Company, LLC offers a wide array of mulch products for everything from growing plants such as apple trees and blueberry bushes, to landscaping, and even offering playground wood chip products.

With a commitment to using natural ingredients in the products that honor the earth and environment, mulch is produced on-site using 100% natural forest materials, with no fillers such as wood pallets, and is blended and run through tub grinders. Mulch instantly adds rich color and a finished look along the foundation of your home or business, around trees and shrubs, as well as between and in your garden beds. When you use mulch you can spend less time watering your garden beds and plants. Mulch helps to slow moisture evaporation so more water remains in the soil and available to the plant roots. Wood mulches, like those available from Kirby Mulch Company, LLC are made from organic materials that help improve the soil as they break down. By adding a 2-3 inch layer of mulch it naturally helps to prevent weed from sprouting and taking over your landscape and garden as it limits their access to sunlight which helps to block their ability for growth. Mulch acts as an insulator which helps to regulate soil temperature to keep plant roots cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Mulch is available by the yard; both on-site pick-up and scheduled delivery of large and small-sized orders.

Kirby Mulch Company, LLC also offers compost and firewood products. There are several ways in which gardening with compost is valuable. Simply put, the advantages of using compost are to help improve your soil quality which enables it to better retain air, nutrients and moisture. This results in healthier, thriving plants. They offer kiln-dried firewood, which is a cleaner alternative to traditional firewood. The benefits of using dried firewood include the ability to burn immediately, a cleaner burn because it produces less creosote and produces less smoke while burning. Green firewood and tree length firewood are also available for purchase.

Heath Bunnell brings over 20 years of experience in the logging and forestry industry to his new business, Kirby Mulch Company LLC. As the owner of HB Logging LLC, Heath employs a crew of 13, provides woodlot management and timber harvesting services including selective timber harvesting, sustainable forest management, land clearing, and lump sum timber purchases for residential and commercial developers and state and municipal agencies in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Heath is certified as a Master Logger through the NH Timberland Owners Association Professional Loggers Program. The Master Logger certification recognizes logging individuals and companies that meet responsible forest management standards. The certification programs teach silviculture, wildlife management, and improving forest aesthetics along with focusing on the laws and regulations that govern the logging industry. In 2018, Heath received the prestigious New Hampshire Logger of the Year award.

Kirby Mulch Company, LLC is now open 7 days a week during the spring and summer months. On Sundays, Heath is joined by his wife and two daughters (ages 9 and 12), who enjoy taking orders and helping their father in the yard.

Longtime community member, Denis Girouard, is the new yard manager and he is available to greet customers and take orders daily. Customers can find additional information at www.kirbymulchcompany.com.

For loggers who like to receive the current spec sheet and price list, please contact Heath at 802-274-6239 or by emailing info@kirbymulchcompany.com.



Planting Trees and Learning About Forest Products at the Albany Community School

May 27, 2021

On a warm spring day in early May, students from the Albany Community School (ACS) in Albany, Vermont celebrated the end of a challenging school year by planting trees for the future generations of students. Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade, along with ACS faculty and staff planted sixty northern white cedar trees on the school property, enough for each student in the school to plant at least one tree. This project is the result of an initiative begun by ACS principal Stephen Owens, who contacted the Orleans County Forester several years prior with the idea of planting trees on the school grounds.

When selecting which species to plant, northern white cedar was identified in part as a native species that is found in abundance throughout the town of Albany, but also due to the economic importance of this tree for the community. Goodridge Lumber, the largest cedar mill in the state, is just a mile down the road from the school, and many of the students involved in the projects have parents, grandparents, and great grandparents who help provide the million board feet of wood processed by the mill annually.



The project was originally planned for the spring of 2020, however with the school closings forced by the pandemic, the project was postponed. Despite the challenges of operating an elementary school amid a global pandemic, school staff saw the project as a positive way to culminate a historic year, and work was planned for the spring of 2021. Trees were purchased through the Orleans County Natural Resource Conservation District, using a grant from The City Market in Burlington. Site preparation and logistics for the project was managed by Hannah Dreissigacker (ACS Farm to School Coordinator).

It was clear during the day that students enjoyed not only the chance to be outside, but also to be a part of something that will outlast their tenure at the school. To further enrich the experience for the students, three generations of the Goodridge family (Colleen, Brian, Logan and Dylan Goodridge) joined the students in planting the trees, and shared stories and information on the importance of cedar in our local economy. Students also learned about the silvics of cedar and the importance of these trees in our forests.

At the end of the day, sixty cedar seedlings waved gently in the wind, in the shade of excited students towering overhead. In time, these trees will provide shade and protection from the wind for future generations of students in Albany. This summer, if you are passing through Albany on Route 14, be sure to look for the recently planted cedar trees and appreciate the results of this community-led project. The trees are freshly mulched with woodchips donated by Goodridge Lumber, so they are easy to spot.

Jared Nunery, Orleans County Forester, Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Photo Credit: Photo by Colleen Goodridge

TECH CENTER NEWS



Stafford Tech Center, Natural Resources & Forestry Improves Playground for Preschoolers

We've just finished up a big project here on the Stafford Campus. The preschool program in the school was in need of some new playground components, so we did some landscaping and built this tiny cabin. The frame and siding were milled by us last year. The preschoolers are so excited for some new toys!

Mark Raishart
Natural Resources and Forestry Instructor
Stafford Technical Center
8 Stratton Rd
Rutland, Vermont 05701





SFI Annual Meeting 2021

The 2021 SFI Annual Conference took place May 12-14 on Zoom. More than 600 people attended to learn from a diverse, dynamic group of speakers about critical global issues facing the forestry sector, including:

- How sustainably managed forests and forest products can help meet the climate challenge, utilizing tools like SFI standard requirements for climate smart forestry and fire resiliency and awareness.
- The increasing influence of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors and how SFI's work aligns with helping companies meet new reporting structures, and also how we need to help elevate understanding of the role of the forest sector among these audiences.
- Collaborations to achieve species recovery and other conservation outcomes on SFI-certified lands in the U.S. and Canada.
- Why building a diverse and resilient workforce for the future is so important, and how we can overcome challenges in reaching young, diverse audiences.
- How urban and community forests are central to addressing so many issues from climate to equity in our communities.

SFI Standards – SFI Board of Directors Approve Moving Forward

The SFI Inc. Board of Directors voted to approve the proposed revised standards and move forward to its implementation beginning January 2022.

This was a fairly comprehensive rewrite of the standards adding several new components including climate smart forestry and a more rigorous set of protocols to verify sustainability of managed forests. Moving from “*knowledge to practice*” is the general theme motivating these new more stringent standards. The last revision was 2014. Some changes are also made to logger training programs to recognize changing priorities on the landscape including rare and threatened species and invasive species.

“SFI has the scale to make a difference with more than 375 million acres/152 million hectares certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard, and tens of millions more certified to the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard,” says Kathy Abusow, SFI's President and CEO. “Because the standards require independent, third-party audits, organizations that use them are responding to the ESG expectations of investors, customers, and communities.”

SFI revises and updates the SFI standards to incorporate the latest scientific information, respond to emerging issues, and ensure continual improvement. This open and transparent process began in 2019 and included engagement with the conservation community, Indigenous communities, the forest products sector, brand owners, private forest landowners and public forest managers, government agencies, trade associations, landowner associations, academia, and the public. The SFI Board of Directors approved the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules at their April 2021 meeting.

During Spring and Summer of 2020, the SFI staff provided nine webinars that were specific topic focused and were of very high

quality. They can be viewed on their website at <https://www.sfi-program.org/sfi-standard-revision-process/>.

Project Learning Tree

New Explore Your Environment: K-8 Activity Guide for Elementary and Middle School Educators

This April, Project Learning Tree® (PLT) released a new curriculum guide to engage kindergarten through grade 8 students in exploring their environment. Project Learning Tree is a long-established, award-winning environmental education program that uses trees and forests as windows on the world to advance environmental literacy, stewardship, and pathways to green careers. The guide includes fifty field-tested, hands-on activities that integrate investigations of nature with science, math, English language arts, and social studies. It incorporates outdoor education and connects youth to nature which has many proven benefits.

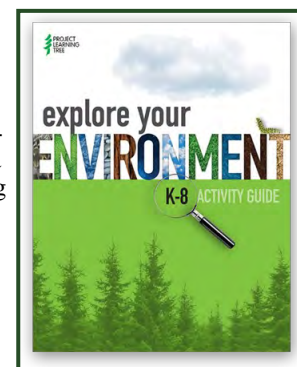
This user-friendly guide can work indoors or outdoors, in a classroom or outdoor forest setting. Educators can obtain a copy of PLT's *Explore Your Environment: K-8 Activity Guide* directly from PLT's Shop at www.plt.org or by attending a local PLT professional development workshop conducted by PLT's 50-state network. Vermont's PLT Coordinator, Rebecca Roy has not yet announced a workshop for this new streamlined program guide but plans for something late summer or fall.

This new, cutting-edge resource for educators offers robust, real-world learning experiences for students designed to bolster STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning, promote civic engagement, and help young people acquire the skills they'll need to be creative problem solvers. To further support educators, each PLT activity displays explicit connections to practices and concepts mandated by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Mathematics, and College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies (C3). The activities develop students' critical thinking skills as they participate in hands-on learning, debate real-life environmental decisions, and engage with their community in action projects.

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

Ed Larson SFI VT Coordinator
Bill Sayre, Chair SFI VT

<http://www.aivt.org/sfvt.html>

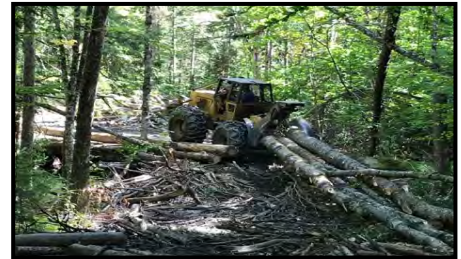




FPR Portable Bridge Rentals

Dave Wilcox, Watershed Forester
david.wilcox@vermont.gov, 802-793-0265

Wood-over-steel skidder bridges: FPR has three, 25' long, two-section steel I-beam bridges with wooden decks for rent. These bridges have engineer ratings and will hold a 30,000 lb. skidder and a 40,000 lb. forwarder over a 21-foot span. These bridges have also been used for log trucks with additional support under the bridge. They are heavy and take larger equipment to move but work very well. The bridges are located in Barre, Springfield, and Rutland. These bridges were funded through a grant from the US Forest Service.



Steel truck bridges: FPR has two temporary truck bridges for rent (a 30' and a 40') that are designed for log trucks and are rated for 99,000 lbs. These are engineered bridges purchased from ADM Fabricating in Pennsylvania. They weigh between 25,000 and 30,000 lbs. and are one piece that folds during transport. These are substantial bridges and require at least one, and sometimes two medium to large excavators to load, unload, and set in place. They also require a solid abutment to be set on, so they don't twist. The monthly rental for these bridges is \$100 per month. When not in use, these bridges are located in Northfield. The purchase of these bridges was funded through an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



The monthly rental for these bridges is \$100 per month.

Rental for the bridges is administered by

Dave Wilcox, Watershed Forester - (802) 793-0265, david.wilcox@vermont.gov

For more information, visit our website at- <https://fpr.vermont.gov/forests>

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"A lawyer who knows a little silviculture"

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Vermont Housing &
 Conservation Board
 VERMONT FARM & FOREST
 VIABILITY PROGRAM



Regional Forest Economy Market Assessment April 2021

Pulp & Paper:

- COVID-19 related school and office closings have created further declines in an already weakened market for writing and printing papers. This has resulted in some mills shifting production from coated papers to packaging papers, which use much less hardwood fiber and more softwood fiber content.
- The digester explosion at the Pixelle plant in Jay, ME continues to have repercussions. The loss of roughly 2 million tons of pulping capacity in the region has resulted in a severe reduction in overall fiber demand.
- Sawmill residues which were going to Jay are now making-up a majority of the softwood feedstock for the remaining mills, having a negative effect on the demand for softwood pulp.
- Mills in the region have ample inventories of hardwood pulp resulting in less demand for that product as well.
- There is hope that as schools return to in-person learning and work-at-home orders are rescinded that demand for coated writing and printing papers will improve.

Biomass:

- Closure of the NH biomass plants as well as the Pixelle plant explosion and subsequent decision not to rebuild the pulp mill have also contributed to an oversupply of biomass fuel across the region.
- VT Senate Bill, S.1 [*An act relating to extending the baseload renewable power portfolio requirement*](#), was voted out of the Senate and is now in the House's Energy and Technology Committee. The current version of the bill extends the company's power contract through 2024 and requires the owners to explore opportunities for capturing and using the waste heat the plant produces. Additional modifications are under consideration in the Energy and Technology Committee.
- The Burlington Electric McNeil Station continues to investigate utilizing a portion of the heat generated by the plant to provide heat to the UVM Medical Center. A district energy system of this type would reportedly reduce fossil fuel use in the city and improve the efficiency of the plant. The project partners are moving to the second phase of the project which will involve detailed engineering and economic analysis.

Firewood:

- Firewood dealers report strong sales. In some cases, demand through the winter and spring has been strong enough to keep dealers from building inventory for late summer and fall deliveries.
- Anecdotally, it appears that demand has increased as a result of stay-at-home orders and migration of people from urban to rural areas like Vermont. One producer also noted that there appears to be new demand due to significant growth in the use of backyard firepits in some parts of the region.

Softwood Logs & Lumber:

- Softwood lumber markets and prices remain very strong. [Paul Jannke of Forest Economic Advisors](#) is reporting that softwood structural lumber prices have reached record highs and are not likely to drop significantly until the last half of 2021 or early 2022. Further, he expects that 2022 prices will be lower but still above historical averages.
- It appears a lot of loggers, foresters, and landowners concentrated their efforts over the winter on harvesting softwood, at least in part, due to the lack of demand for hardwood pulp. Most spruce/fir mills throughout the region reportedly have adequate log inventory to carry through mud season.

A combination of factors has led to increased demand for softwood structural lumber including housing starts and renovation activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with low mortgage interest rates and available cash from stimulus payments. Lumber has also been in short supply across North America, primarily because of mill curtailments and shutdowns, combined with reduced orders by wholesalers and retailers, early in 2020. The combination of supply factors resulted in reduced inventory throughout the supply chain creating a void which the mills have yet to be able to fill.

- Trucking capacity and availability are delaying shipments and increasing cost across all industry segments

Hardwood Logs & Lumber:

- Lumber demand and prices were low during the early days of the pandemic, in part due to shutdowns by secondary manufacturers, especially in Canada. As a result, mills cut back on production reducing the inventory in the supply chain. When pandemic spending and home renovations kicked-in, lumber was in short supply and prices rose.
- Lack of hardwood log supply further constrained lumber supply early in the winter. Weather conditions were less than ideal until after the first of the year and the difficulty in moving hardwood pulp may have kept some crews on softwood jobs.
- Log and lumber export markets have come back following early pandemic shutdowns in China. Domestic markets have also been strong, especially those tied to construction, such as flooring, cabinets and millwork.
- Lumber prices have been good and increasing across all species. Mills are anticipating strong lumber markets through at least mid-summer.
- Hardwood logs are still in short supply in many areas across New England and Quebec.

VT Logger Safety & Workers' Compensation Insurance Program (LSWC) Update

2020 saw a delay in providing LSWC safety workshops and job site evaluations as a result of COVID-19 related cancellations and travel restrictions. Work was able to continue on development of Vermont specific materials for several safety training workshops under contract with the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands and the Master Logger Program. Materials have now been finalized and the revised curriculum will be presented during future workshops.

In the fall, two in-person *Forest Operations Supervisor: Supervising for Safety* workshops were held, following all COVID-19 guidance which significantly restricted attendance. A total of 18 individuals from 14 companies completed the training. In addition, job site safety evaluations were conducted for 7 companies (21 individuals) that met training requirements in 2019 before tightened travel restrictions halted the visits. Final certifications are pending but it is anticipated that final "Safety Certified" status will be confirmed early in 2021 for those that were successfully evaluated.

Tentative planning is underway to hold Introduction to Mechanized Logger Safety, Advanced Logger Safety and Game of Logging classes during 2021; COVID Guidelines permitting. Watch for updates.

Information and resources related to the LSWC Program, and Workers' Compensation Insurance in general, geared to loggers, foresters and landowners can be found at:

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/vermont-logger-safety-and-workers-compensation-insurance-program>

or by calling or emailing Paul Frederick, Forest Economy Program, at (802) 777-5247 or paul.frederick@vermont.gov.



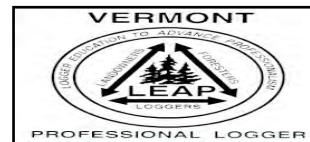
AMERICAN
LOGGERS
COUNCIL

American Loggers Council Logger Relief Update

“3/29 LOGGER RELIEF UPDATE: The CFAP 2 Application that will begin on April 5, 2021 will be for existing programs only. The funds for Timber Harvesters and Haulers will not be available until the USDA sets up a program that could be subject to a rulemaking process that could take up to an additional 120 days to complete. We are doing everything possible to expedite the creation of the program, but are being throttles back by Federal Law....Stay Tuned!”

Vermont Forestry Foundation

*The official education and outreach arm of
The Vermont Forest Products Association*



The Mission of VFF is to educate the people within the forest products industry to improve efficiency, safety, professionalism, to increase profitability and build a positive image for the industry. In addition, VFF is engaged in outreach efforts to educate the general public about the importance of a vibrant working forest and forest products industry in Vermont.

VFF is a non-profit 501 © (3) organization that accepts grants and donations to meet its mission. Donations are tax exempt. VFF is run by a Board of Trustees that are elected for four year terms at the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Forest Products Association.

Current Officers:

President: Robbo Holleran, Chester, Consulting Forester (802) 875-3021

Vice President: Steve Hardy, Chesterfield, NH, Forester (603) 254-1644

Secretary: Bruce Shields, Eden, VT, Landowner, Sugarmaker (802) 888-5165

Treasurer: Brandy Inkel, Albany, VT, Sugarmaker (802) 755-9250

Current Trustees:

Dennis Allard, Springfield, VT, Logger ~ Bill Sayre, Bristol, Sawmill ~ Chris Fife, Fairfield, ME, Landowner ~ Sean Barrows, West Rutland, Sawmill ~ Bruce Shields, -Eden, VT. Landowner/Sugarmaker ~ David Grayck, Montpelier, VT. Attorney ~ Everett Thurston, N. Clarendon, VT, Logger

Please contact the VFF if there are specific courses, workshops or training that will help you in your business.

LEAP~Logger Education to Advance Professionalism Submitted by David Birdsall



How it works! Vermont LEAP New Requirements

For Mechanized Logging Operators

LEAP Certification Requirements – New to LEAP: Completing the following requirements within two years, meets minimum certification requirements for the VT LEAP Program and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). These are also the requirements for the employee training requirements for the Vermont Logger Safety and Workers' Compensation Insurance Program. (Additional steps are required for full safety certification with your insurance carrier.)

- Professionalism (1 day – 8 credits)
- Managing and Using Forest Ecosystems (1 day – 8 credits)
- Introduction to Mechanized Logger Safety (1 day – 8 credits)
- Advanced Logger Rescue/First Aid & CPR (1 day – 8 credits)

Already LEAP Certified

For Loggers who have previously completed the LEAP program, the following workshops need to be completed to meet the new Curriculum requirements:

- Introduction to Mechanized Logger Safety (1 day – 8 credits)
- Advanced Logger Rescue/First Aid & CPR (1 day – 8 credits)

For Non-Mechanized Logging Operators

LEAP Certification Requirements – New to LEAP: Completing the following requirements within two years, meets minimum certification requirements for the VT LEAP Program and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). These are also the requirements for the employee training requirements for the Vermont Logger Safety and Workers' Compensation Insurance Program. (Additional steps are required for full safety certification with your insurance carrier.)

- Professionalism (1 day – 8 credits)
- Managing and Using Forest Ecosystems (1 day – 8 credits)
- *Game of Logging (Levels 1 through 4 – 32 credits)
- Advanced Logger Rescue/First Aid & CPR (1 day – 8 credits)

Already LEAP certified

For Loggers who have previously completed the LEAP program, the following workshops need to be completed to meet the new Curriculum requirements:

- *Game of Logging (Levels 1 through 4 – 32 credits)
- Advanced Logger Rescue/First Aid & CPR (1 day – 8 credits)

**If completed GOL more than five years ago, must take Level 5 GOL (Refresher)*

Continuing Education Requirements

For both Mechanized and Non-Mechanized Logging Operators- Continuing education is required to maintain LEAP/SFI certification. Within every two years, except as otherwise noted, and after completing LEAP requirements, the following is required to maintain LEAP/SFI certification:

- Safety Workshop (8 hours annually – 8 credits)
- *LEAP elective (1 day – 8 credits)
- Maintain First Aid/CPR certification

Contact David Birdsall for more information:

logger@vtleap.com or visit Website: www.vtleap.com

LEAP 2021 SPRING WORKSHOPS

PLEASE ~ MASKS ARE REQUIRED AT ALL WORKSHOPS



Managing and Using Forest Ecosystems (8 LEAP credits; 6 SAF CE credits)

This Workshop is mandatory for all LEAP Loggers who are new to LEAP or who have not yet taken this.

April 30, 2021 8am to 3:30pm Essex Grange, 118 Center Road, Essex Junction, VT

May 11, 2021 8am to 3:30pm Bethel Town Hall, 318 Main Street, Bethel, VT

May 12, 2021 8am to 3:30pm Allard's Office, 74 Glen Orne Drive, Brattleboro, VT

Cost: \$60

Instructors: Dave Wilcox, Watershed Forester, VT FPR; Rick Dyer, VT FPR; Andrea Shortsleeve, Wildlife Biologist, VT F&W

Advanced Logger Safety (8 LEAP credits; CFE credits pending)

This Workshop is mandatory for all LEAP Loggers

June 14, 2021 8am to 3pm Long View Forest Headquarters, 48 Picz Road, Westminster, VT

June 15, 2021 8am to 3pm Essex Grange, 118 Center Road, Essex Junction, VT

June 17, 2021 8am to 3pm GMTCC, 433 North Main Street, Hardwick, VT

Cost: \$60

Instructor: Tim Emperor, Northeast Timber Safety Services

This workshop will focus on responding to serious injuries on forest operations. It will demystify some rescue methods as well as reinforce the "Do's and Don'ts" to keep loggers healthier and alive longer! This workshop is absolutely applicable to any logger whether they are Mechanized or Conventional operators. It would be invaluable to truckers and foresters, who are often the first on the scene of a logging accident. This is also a required course for employees of mechanized logging operations participating in the Vermont Logger Safety and Workers' Compensation Insurance Program. This workshop also satisfies LEAP's First Aid and CPR requirements.

Introduction to Mechanized Logging Safety (8LEAP credits)

This Workshop is mandatory for all Mechanized LEAP Loggers

June 2, 2021 8am to 3pm Long View Forest Headquarters, 48 Picz Road, Westminster, VT

June 3, 2021 8am to 3pm Brian Lafoe, 151 Tarbox Hill Road, Orleans, VT

Cost: \$75

Instructors: Northeast Woodland Training; John Adler, Caleb Currie, David Birdsall

Increase awareness of the many dangers associated with mechanized logging, to improve safety procedures and to change work habits so that safety is a primary concern to the crew. (This class is also required for all LEAP loggers and employees on mechanized logging operations participating in the Vermont Logger Safety and Workers' Compensation Insurance Program.

Game Of Logging (8LEAP credits per level)

Levels 1-4 are mandatory for all Non-Mechanized LEAP Loggers. It it's been over 5 years since taking all four levels then taking a L5 (Refresher) is mandatory. Levels 1&2 are being offered this year. If you would like Levels 3&4 this year as well, let me know.

Level 1: August 12, 2021 8am to 3:30pm Chester, VT, Specific directions to come

August 26, 2021 8am to 3:30pm West Berlin, VT, Specific direction to come

Level 2: August 13, 2021 8am to 3:30pm Chester, VT, Specific directions to come

August 27, 2021 8am to 3:30pm West Berlin, VT, Specific directions to come

Level 5: August 6, 2021 8am to 3:30pm Chester, VT, Specific directions to come

August 20, 2021 8am to 3:30pm West Berlin, VT, Specific directions to come

Cost: \$100/per day The state of Vermont is subsidizing the cost of this training through a Grant, normal cost is \$150 for LEAP

Instructors: John Adler, Northeast Woodland Training

WHY BE A VFPA MEMBER?

The forest products industry is crucial to Vermont's economy and identity. The last few years have been a struggle for many in the forest products industry. Many are asking, "What can I do to bring about positive change?"

One of the most important things we can do is to support the organizations that support our industry. Our success depends on the strength of our organization, both in number of members and also in its financial health.

The mission of the Vermont Forest Products Association is to promote and defend the interests of our members.

VFPA represents all aspects of the forestry community and the member businesses and individuals that are located throughout the State of Vermont.

Your membership in VFPA is important. As a member of VFPA we can collectively seek ways to improve opportunities for our industry. Your membership gives you a place to learn more about improving your business, voice your concerns and share with others in helping Vermont remain a rural state that is proud to include a vibrant forest products industry.

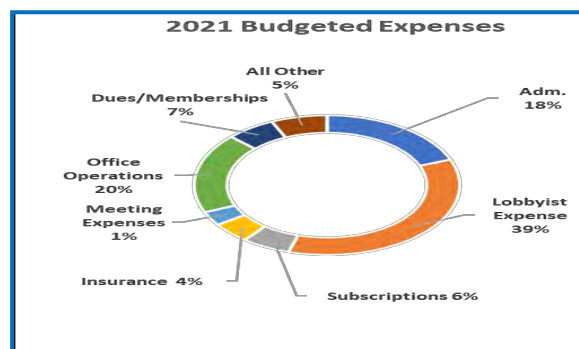
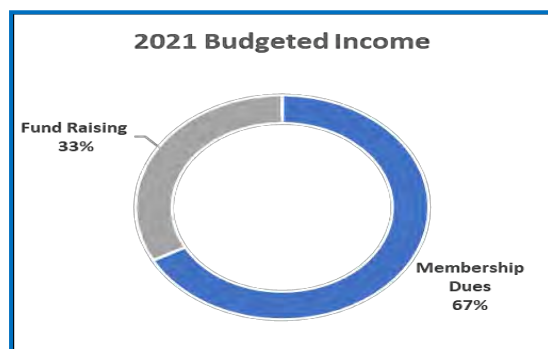
We would welcome your much needed support in the form of a membership to continue our commitment in promoting and defending our forest and wood industry.

For more information, or a membership application, please visit www.vtfpa.org or contact Brandy at vtfpa@hotmail.com



VFPA Operating Budget for 2021 is \$38,710.00

Please consider a contribution to the 2021 Annual Fund Drive or becoming a member of VFPA helping with operating costs and sharing in the important work of our industry organization.



Welcome to our New 2021 VFPA Members!



~John Barnes	~Doug Edwards
~Sean Barrows	~Thomas Garafano
~Denis Beloin	~Andy McGovern
~Jonathan Boozan	~Rodney Rainville
~Phil Brosseau	~Tyler Scelza
~Donn Downey	~Jonathan Wood

Thank you to all of you who have supported VFPA through memberships, monetary contributions and gifts of time and talents!

www.vtfpa.org

E-mail: vtfpa@hotmail.com

Phone: 802-461-5688

Coventry, Vermont 05825

P.O. Box 110

Vermont Forest Products Association



Dates and Events

June 17 - VFPA Directors Meeting,
Location to be determined, 4pm.

July 15 - VFPA Directors Meeting,
Location to be determined, 4pm

August 19 - VFPA Directors Meeting,
Location to be determined, 4pm

September 23 - NELA Loggers' Awards Banquet, Jeff's Catering, Brewer, Maine, For more information please call 315-369-3078

September 24-25 - NELA Loggers' Expo, Cross Insurance Center, Bangor, Maine

Directors' Meetings are open meetings and all forest industry folks are invited to attend.

** These meetings may be subject to change**

Do you recognize this ole' Lumberjack?

Ken Gagnon, Gagnon Lumber, along with the help of Grace Brigham of Shrewsbury, VT and a few art students, helped to bring an old VFPA Roundup sign back to life!

What an outstanding job done by all! If you have memories you would like to share with VFPA please send us an email!

vtfpa@hotmail.com

