

POSITION STATEMENT ON TIMBER HARVESTING

Issue

The Green Mountain Division of the Society of American Foresters endorses the position that timber harvesting, when using sound silvicultural techniques, is a critical and necessary resource management activity to conserve and enhance the values society demands from our natural resources.

Background

Vermont is 78% forested, making it the third most forested state. The special character of Vermont is, to a large extent, attributable to the rich diversity and health of its forest landscape. This diversity is the result of over 200 years of often-intensive land use. Vermont's first settlers cleared the woodlands to create room for agriculture and supply the lumber and fuel needed to build our developing nation. By the 1870's, Vermont was cleared of all but 25% of its original woodlands. As marginal agricultural land was abandoned it quickly reverted back to forestland and in most cases has been harvested several times as the trees matured. The resulting pattern of scattered periodic timber harvesting has created the rich forest mosaic that is today's Vermont forest. In addition to sustaining the diversity of our Forests and the landscape we regard as typically Vermont, timber harvesting activity may contribute significant benefits, such as:

- Sustained production of wood products needed by society
- Employment opportunities
- Stability of Vermont communities
- Fuels that can reduce our dependency on foreign energy
- Habitat needed by a wide variety of wildlife
- The access system needed to protect, manage, and enjoy our Forests
- Healthy forestland with a minimum of insect, disease, fire, and Weather caused catastrophes
- Outdoor recreation opportunities that rely on forested lands
- Carbon sequestration

SAF Green Mountain Division Position

Vermont's forests provide a variety of important benefits that, many people take for granted. These benefits contribute favorably to the sense of stewardship associated with our working landscape. This diverse forest mosaic was created primarily by agricultural abandonment followed by forest regeneration and periodic timber harvesting. Timber harvesting will continue to be the only practical mechanism foresters and landowners can use to maintain this forest diversity.

The Green Mountain Division of SAF therefore supports efforts which will insure a forester's options to apply appropriate silvicultural techniques and a landowner's ability and right to harvest timber in an economically, socially and environmentally sound manner, and opposes efforts that would unreasonably restrict this activity.

Expiration Date

This position will expire 10 September 2007. The position was re-adopted by the Division's Executive Committee on 28 November 2007 for a period of five years.