

Vermont Woodlands Association

ASSOCIATION

GWC

Ghostwriters Communications, Inc.
PO Box 6004
Rutland, VT 05702-6004
ph: 802.747.7900
fax: 802.747.7989
www.gwriters.com



The Vermont Woodlands Association (VWA) is a membership based organization with nearly 1,000 private woodland owner members. VWA's mission is to encourage sound forest use decisions, improve wildlife habitat, enhance clean air and water, communicate the benefits of working forests, recognize exemplary actions of woodland owners, provide educational opportunities, and represent members' interests before governmental bodies. GWC has furnished association management services to VWA since 2002, in coordination with a 16-member board of directors. We are responsible for all aspects of member and organizational services, including: event planning; grant writing; fund development; educational programming; marketing and communications such as newsletters, e-news, Facebook, website maintenance, and media outreach; building strategic partnerships with other organizations to enhance the value chain for forestry and wood products; and liaison with legislators at the state and federal level. VWA was the 2014 recipient of a Tom's of Maine, 50 States for Good award; holds a gubernatorial appointed seat on the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board; established a program for women woodland owners; and has launched a "Ties to the Land" Succession Planning program in collaboration with UVM Extension.



Vermont Woodlands Association
A VOICE FOR FORESTRY
Advancing management, sustainability, and enjoyment of forests.

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A Note from the President

Most of us want to have the world better than we found it. Forest landowners have a unique opportunity to make this positive impact by improving their woods - whether for wildlife habitat, recreation trails, or wood products.

Vermont's forest can rightfully be recognized as the foundation of the state's economy. The forest products industry is one of the largest segments of Vermont's manufacturing economy. We have a four-season outdoor recreation economy such as summer travel, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, fall foliage viewing, fishing, and hunting. All of these depend on the forested landscape - largely managed and maintained by private forest landowners.

A STRONG VOICE FOR FORESTRY is critical if we are to influence Vermont citizens, including government agencies, and elected officials about the importance of our forests and the contributions of private forest landowners in Vermont. The long-term health of the forest depends on management. Vermont Woodlands Association (VWA) is a leader in demonstrating responsible management through the work of its members. Members are the strength and foundation of VWA.

Add your voice to others who believe in the importance of well-managed forests. Become a member of Vermont Woodlands Association for good forestry on your lands and good forestry in Vermont.

Patricia Blodgett, President

VWA Brochure



Membership Newsletter

Vol. 11, No. 1 March 2015

News from VWA

The More Things Change...

By Kathleen Flinn, Executive Director

Part 1 of the news that may the most "My history with VWA spans about a decade and while we all like to think that we are breaking new ground, it's clear from my research that VWA has not varied from its mission to represent and serve the needs of woodland owners.

We pick up our story in December 1997 with the introduction of Harry Chandler as the new VWA executive director, taking the reins from outgoing Ed Daly. Before Harry is one of Vermont's long-time Executive Directors, he was the state's first National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. According to the Strategic Study Committee, the succession of new activities and membership recruitment and maintenance were key to VWA's success. These activities included VWA quarterly newsletters, workshops (year, annual meetings, recognition and awards), Year Farm demonstrations, communication with government departments and agencies, partnerships with other forestry/forest products associations, grant programs, website maintenance, and regular meetings of membership networks. From where we are, Harry's duties sound very familiar!

There were, however, issues and opportunities during this period that are worth mentioning. By now in 1998 that story will all sound like we are in the past. The fall to read in southern New England. SEI was a fledgling program for certification. Heavy cutting rates were being discussed. Forests and riparian forests had not yet been established but were still there so time was coming when, right to practice forestry was on everyone's radar. The Executive Guide was introduced by Northern Woodlands Magazine. Landowner liability was a concern, and landowner's land use issues were being the surface. VWA purchased "Access by Permission" and "Rights" made available to its members. In 1999, VWA found members' satisfaction to be a focus on "Working Woodlands."

Timber theft was a very serious topic with VWA encouraging landowners to get professional advice, use contracts, maintain boundaries, and know what you own - "wood landings!" Although it was not yet called Walk in the Woods, the Association hosted regular workshops and Forestry 101 for landowners. The year 2000 saw the launch of VWA's first annual fund drive to help empower the organization and recruitment in major areas of New and Old.

By 2001, VWA was elected president in February 2000 and has been exceeding the ship ever since. His immediate priority was to increase collaboration with all forestry-based organizations. Regular monthly board meetings were also initiated in December 2001.

In July 2002, VWA established the Woodship Committee (the pre-cursor to our current Education Committee) and determined that coordinating dates and locations as well as cross-marketing events with other associations would reduce or eliminate competition and conflicts. Fast-forward to 2014 with VWA engaged in the planning of a Forestry Education journal with multiple partners to accomplish our same goals.

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