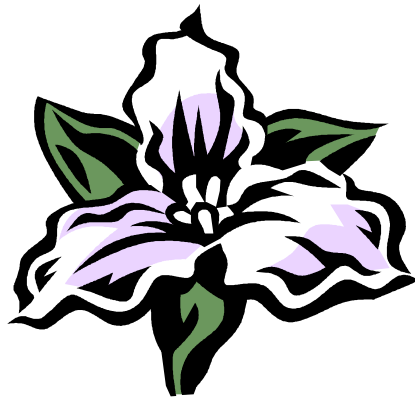




Association, Inc. 11 University Way, Suite 4, Brattleboro, VT 05301-3669  
802-257-7967 ext. 12

WOODLOT TIPS



MAY 2009

*Programs*

**Game of Logging (a MUST for anybody who owns a chain saw!) REGISTER NOW.**

Level I — Saturday June 6

Level II — Saturday June 20

Level III — Saturday July 11

Room for eight people: *Register by May 29. See form on last page.*

**Saturday, June 20, at 10 a.m. — Family Hike on Round Mountain**

Join us for a hike to the top of Round Mountain on Lilac Ridge Farm, the Thurber property in West Brattleboro. Earlier this Spring, the Career Center forestry class constructed a trail to the summit. The hike is easy and we can picnic and enjoy views from the top.

**Directions:** We will meet at 10 a.m. at the west end of Abbot Road, just before it joins Ames Hill Road. We will park in the field there. Bring your lunch.

If you have questions, call George Weir at 348-7264 or Stu Thurber at 254-8113.

## **Thursday, July 16, at 5:30 p.m. — Tour of Vernon's Unique Black Gum Swamps**

*(Sponsored by the Windham County Woodland Owners Association and the Vermont Woodlands Association.)*

Windham County Forester Bill Guenther will lead a walking tour of the famous black gum swamps located in the J. Maynard Miller Memorial Town Forest in Vernon.

This is a unique forest that supports a fairly extensive system of swamps that include black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*). This species is not rare 400 miles to the south, but in Vermont it is a fluke from the past when the climate was warmer. There are some trees here that are purported to be over 400 years old. We will walk a fairly easy loop trail around the main swamp and explore the unique ecology that this forest offers. The walk will be held rain or shine. (In fact, this one is almost better in the rain, as the forest has what Bill has always felt to be a medieval-like quality.)

Maynard Miller was a local dairy farmer who convinced the town back in the early 1970s of the importance of this tract, and he persuaded the town to buy it to ensure its permanent protection. Mr. Miller passed away in the late 1990s and we continue to miss his presence, as he usually accompanied groups out to his beloved forest.

Our co-sponsor, the Vermont Woodlands Association, has a Walk in the Woods program of outreach and education that invites Vermonters to explore the state's forests and learn about this precious resource. Other walks currently being planned include topics such as Indiana Bat habitat, animal tracking, winter camping, horse-drawn logging, management for birds, forest ecology, control of invasives/exotics, conservation forestry, and much more. Walks are scheduled in each month of the year and in different counties to showcase forests across the state. Visit [www.vermontwoodlands.org](http://www.vermontwoodlands.org) or call 802-747-7900 for the listing of scheduled walks.

**Directions:** We will depart at 5:45 sharp from the cul-de-sac parking at the Miller Forest. To get there, travel south on Rt. 142 from Brattleboro. After going a bit over a mile past Vernon Village, turn RIGHT onto Pond Road (under the train overpass). Continue on Pond Road to Huckle Hill Road (town swimming pool is on your left). Turn RIGHT onto Huckle Hill Rd. When you come to a fork, go RIGHT onto Basin Road and continue to its terminus at the paved parking lot, where you'll find the sign for the Miller Forest. While the trail is a fairly easy walk, we always encourage participants to wear sturdy walking shoes or boots. We will complete our walk around 7:30 p.m.

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## **President's Column**

*By Stu Thurber*

Woodland Owners Association has a web site: [www.woodlandownersassociation.org/](http://www.woodlandownersassociation.org/)  
Congratulations to Carol Morrison. This is a great project. As I look ahead we will be able to schedule programs and have the flexibility to change dates, venues without waiting three months for the newsletter. Speaking of the newsletter, we could send that through e-mail as

more members get on the Internet and have faster service. Do you still like hard copy? That could also be continued. Also Carol writes very good minutes of our quarterly meetings and if the board approved, they could be added. The scholarship committee has just received some applications. They will be evaluated and passed on to the executive committee for action.

This is a beautiful Spring. I have the privilege of driving my tractor, spreading compost over the hilly fields of Lilac Ridge surrounded by woodlands that are very diverse. Deep green stands of maple, ridges of pale, greenish brown oaks, lace-like hickory, cherry in blossom, budding locusts and ash interspersed with areas of pine and hemlock.

The Career Center forestry class has constructed a trail up Round Mountain. This is a unique trail because it combines a hike through a working farm and woodlands. (See the June 20 program description on page 1.)

Enjoy the season!

### ***Remembering Dick Kelly***

Dick Kelly, long time WOA member, passed away in February at his winter home in Arizona. Dick faithfully served several terms as a trustee from the mid-1980s up until 2006 and served as WOA president from 1992 to 1996. He later became a tireless and successful recruiter for WOA trustees as chair of the nominating committee.

Dick and his wife Lisa were the third generation of Kellys to live on and manage the family farm in Dummerston. Dick was an active and patient forest manager. He carried out thinnings of stands and pruning of crop trees to guide the forest's development, and he occasionally sold timber. WOA held its 2005 annual meeting on the property, and members were able to see the results of a recent harvest. A panel at that meeting emphasized the importance of cooperation among the landowner, forester and logger to ensure good forestry practices that add to the woodland's usefulness and the pleasure derived from it.

Dick said his family's goals were sustainable management, forest health-based logging, income, aesthetics, and wildlife habitat enhancement. But recreation had a part, too, as family members enjoyed riding and hiking.

When it came time to pass management of the land on to others, he ensured its future as a productive forest resource through a conservation easement with the Vermont Land Trust. We will remember Dick for his dedication to the Woodland Owners Association and his dedication to conservation and careful forest management.

A committal service will be held on Friday, July 3, at 2 p.m. at the Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery at the top of Orchard Street in West Brattleboro. After the brief graveside service, there will be a reception at All Souls Church on South Street. Dick's entire family will be in attendance.

## **House Bill on Deer Damage to Forest Regeneration**

*By George Weir, Consulting Forester*

H.16, "An Act Relating to Deer Doing Damage to Forest Resources," was introduced by Representatives David Deen and Michael Mrowicki in the Vermont House during the

recent session. The bill would allow the harvest of deer that are damaging forest regeneration. The bill passed the House and has moved to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and

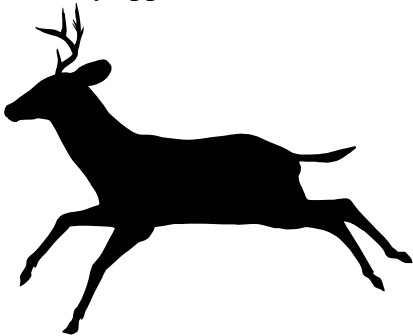
Energy. The Senate did not act on the bill or take testimony during the 2009 session but will consider it in 2010.

The main points in the bill are as follows:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife could approve a landowner taking as many as 10 deer per year doing damage to forest regeneration. The landowner could assign the right to take the deer to family members, employees or agents.

The land could not be posted and would have to have a forest management plan, but it need not be enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal program.

The County Forester or Consulting Forester would inspect the land, determine the extent of the damage and submit a report to the Fish and Wildlife Commissioner. Within 30 days the Commissioner would issue approval or select another forester to conduct an inspection. In the event of the second inspection, the Commissioner could wait as long as 180 days to issue or deny approval.



The bill has strengths and shortcomings. On the strengths side, for the first time in Vermont deer permits would be directly related to forest condition as affected by deer browsing.

At present, annual antlerless permit allocations are based on hunter success rates, deer harvest data and population goals, and winter severity. Allowing permits based on forest condition would be a big step forward.

Deer tend to concentrate in areas of sapling and seedling forage. The proposed permitting system could alleviate the problems a landowner faces securing desirable regeneration.

On the weakness side, the bill does not address the problem of landscape-scale browsing. In the view of many foresters, deer populations at lower elevations in Windham County substantially exceed ecological carrying capacity. The bill does not address that.

Further, the harvest approval process is potentially cumbersome and drawn out. The process could be simplified by assigning the County Foresters responsibility for determining damage. They could work according to agreed upon standards and make unbiased final decisions. That would remove the waiting period. Fish and Wildlife would have to develop standards for how many permits individuals would receive based on forest condition, acreage or location.

So, we're making progress. . .



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## **Ice Storm Workshop Draws a Big Crowd**

*By Bill Guenther, Windham County Forester*

Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup> was a gorgeous sunny day with temps in the mid 60's out at Marlboro College, the site of our Ice Storm Recovery Workshop. Back in mid-winter, folks in Marlboro, the town hardest hit by the December

'08 ice storm, had held an informal town meeting after the storm and asked if we could put together a workshop on how to best manage their damaged forest and ornamental trees.

Town resident and Vermont Land Trust forester Pieter van Loon contacted me, and one conference call later, we had put together a plan for a half-day workshop that would start indoors and move outside for a field session.

The workshop was well attended, with some 75 people participating. Pieter began with introductory comments and then led an interesting discussion about the meteorological reasons for the ice storm's occurrence based on a discussion he had with Vermont's state climatologist.

Next, Vermont Forestry Division Forest Health Specialist Ron Kelly gave us valuable insight into how trees respond to ice storm damage. Ron is an excellent photographer and he had taken extensive pictures of varying damage levels after the 1998 ice storm. He then photographically followed a number of trees so you could see how they changed at two-year intervals. The main message he brought was that after '98, we learned that even very severely damaged trees could recover and go on to be pretty decent trees.

Scott Knapp, a certified arborist with Bartlett Tree Experts, then described how ornamental trees should be treated. He emphasized that homeowners should *never* do any pruning or cutting if it is above shoulder height and especially if they need to use a ladder.

I batted cleanup and discussed how to best deal with ice storm damage in the woodlot. It really requires a close look at each and every tree. A key consideration is how healthy a tree was before it was damaged. Based on some of Ron Kelly's work, as well as that of several U.S. Forest Service researchers, we learned that trees can be much more severely damaged than was previously thought and still recover quite well.

A key component to decision making on storm-damaged trees is to estimate what the

percentage of crown loss is. Under our old guidelines before the '98 ice storm, we had assumed that if any tree lost more than 50 percent of its living crown, that damage level would essentially doom the tree. But based on the research after that storm we found that certain species (especially sugar maple and white ash), if in good health, could actually sustain up to about 75 percent crown loss and still recover reasonably well so that the trees could be retained in the stand for future growth. If a tree is tipped over, however, it must be either salvaged or sacrificed.

In my remarks I emphasized the potential safety hazards that exist in ice damaged stands. There can be all kinds of compression and tension wood that could lead to fatal results for folks not familiar with working in that type of damage. So the bottom line is if you have any woods work done after ice storm damage, make sure that you retain the services of a qualified professional.

In the late morning we headed out to the field for two concurrent sessions. One group went with Pieter and focused on how to assess damage in the forest and what might be the next best steps. The other group was led by Scott Knapp and got to see him climb a tree and do some actual pruning. Again, that is work for a professional.

There were some excellent questions from the very interested audience, and the leaders all left feeling great about the workshop. And I think our participants also felt better that what had looked like horrific devastation in their woods might not be so bad after all.

If you have any questions about storm damage, we have some great handouts. We could also make a field visit to conduct an assessment. Just let us know.

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## “Responsibility Birds” and Responsible Forestry: How to Help

*Sam Schnesky, County Forester for parts of Windham and Windsor Counties, attended a recent Vermont Audubon workshop keyed especially to birds and Vermont forests. The following is excerpted from his report. For more information about the Audubon Forest Bird Initiative, its Fact Sheets and Bird Friendly Forest Management Practices, visit <http://vt.audubon.org/conservationNews.html>*

The emphasis was on what are called “responsibility birds” in Vermont, of which there are 40. A responsibility bird has a high percentage of its global population breeding in the region, known as the Atlantic Northern Forest, covering Vermont, New Hampshire, New York and Maine. Conservation efforts should be concentrated in those areas.

Two-thirds of the global population of the Canada warbler, for example, breeds in this region. The bird’s populations have declined at a rate of 1.9 percent per year throughout the four states. While part of the cause is the result of necessary breeding habitat maturing, a large part is from conversion of habitat to blacktop. In other cases the decline is due to conversion of their wintering areas, such as in South America, to non-forest land, agricultural fields, etc.

Breeding habitats vary among different species. The Canada warbler needs a habitat made up primarily of coniferous and mixed northern hardwood forests with dense undergrowth in wet areas. Other birds, like the early successional-loving chestnut-sided warbler, need a thick shrub/scrub layer for breeding.

While the responsibility birds need a variety of habitat types, this can be achieved through proper forest management and is not inconsistent with managing for high quality forest products as well. The attending foresters also discussed the importance of downed, coarse woody debris (CWD in management plan terminology) for insects and other things that migrating and breeding birds feed on. Standing snags also are important as insect hosts and often include the additional feature of nest cavities.

Vertical diversity is important to quite a few species and uneven aged management is key to getting this type of canopy height variation. For others, the forest composition is more important, but the overall mosaic of a woodland and the height and species mix in a given area can contribute to the needed variations in vertical strata.

The Audubon Forest Bird Initiative is a site assessment based program in which a naturalist can visit a landowner’s property with or without a county or consulting forester to do a habitat assessment. Bird and tree species are identified as well as the necessary habitat conditions to attract other types of neo-tropical migratory birds. The assessment includes discussion of specific forest management practices to maximize desirable bird habitat for the landowner’s region of Vermont.

A “Foresters’ Dozen” similar to the “Birders’ Dozen” is being developed as a pocket field guide that can be used by landowners and foresters alike in deciding management options for forestland. Among the birds currently described as in a declining trend in Vermont are the Veery and the Black-throated Green Warbler. Both the American Woodcock and the Wood Thrush also are National Audubon Society “WatchList Birds.” Other bird watcher favorites on the list also have declining populations in other parts of the region.

This initiative is a welcome addition to the forest management tools available to all woodland owners and foresters. We can help ensure the survival of these beautiful creatures by including breeding bird habitat in our deliberations about careful forest management.

# Capturing Carbon: A Primer For Vermont

*By Arthur H. Westing, former WOA trustee*

Clearly, one of the worst sins of our times has been the discharging into the environment of more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) than it can benignly accommodate, a level that was exceeded in about the late 1950s, and the excess has become increasingly flagrant ever since. The result of the ever greater overload of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has been the continuing warming of our planet through the so-called greenhouse effect, with the latter's multifarious deleterious effects. The major sources of this pernicious waste gas are the burning of coal, oil, and other fossil fuels, the automotive use of gasoline and diesel oil, the manufacture of cement, and the destruction of tropical and some other forests for conversion to agricultural or urban and industrial uses.

The best approach to dealing with this tragic dilemma of too much CO<sub>2</sub> is to curtail CO<sub>2</sub>-generating activities to the level of the 1950s. This could be accomplished both directly (especially through greater frugality) and indirectly (especially by curtailing human numbers, and also by substituting essentially non-CO<sub>2</sub>-generating power sources for the truly heinous coal burners). The second best approach is to capture by one means or another the excess CO<sub>2</sub> now being ever more disturbingly generated. Since trees take up and hold large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> via the photosynthesis of sugar, in turn converted to wood, one valuable approach is to protect existing woodlands, and another is to foster the development of new woodlands where they had previously existed. As a forest stand matures over the many decades, it takes up CO<sub>2</sub> ever more slowly, but through its increasing content of wood, it serves to sequester ever larger amounts for lengthy time periods. And even several hundred-year old forest stands generally continue to accumulate some carbon, barring significant damage from wildfires, hurricane windthrows, and insect and fungal depredations (those setbacks unfortunately exacerbated by the ongoing environmental warming).

Most of Vermont was forested in pre-colonial times, but perhaps 75 percent was cleared, primarily for agriculture, by the mid 19th century. However, the state has been slowly reverting back to woodland since at least early in the 20th century. Indeed, Vermont's forest cover has now been increasing by about 13 thousand acres per year for the past quarter century or more, and the state is at present at least 80 percent wooded. This is good news for all of us because the relatively fast-growing regeneration and slow maturation of our mid-successional woodlands over the past century have been sequestering ever larger amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>.

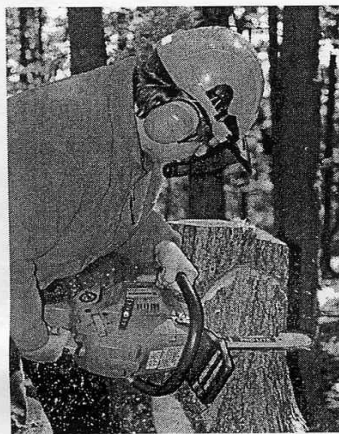
Finally, the question arises of sustained-yield forest utilization in Vermont's working forests, whether for timber or firewood. As to the timber, when that is used in construction, furniture, and other long-term uses, the CO<sub>2</sub> continues to be locked up, with the regenerating forest sequestering more CO<sub>2</sub>. However, when used as firewood, its CO<sub>2</sub> content is thereby released to the atmosphere. But the latter is an essentially CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral activity as long as the woodlands from which the firewood was extracted are permitted to regenerate and grow; and it is a most advantageous activity to the extent that it replaces the use of fossil fuels. It should be added here that a reduced deer herd, especially in southern Vermont, is in either case very important to permit the necessary adequate forest regeneration and growth. Further management practices that would enhance CO<sub>2</sub> uptake and retention are lengthening the period between intermediate cuts (thinnings), lengthening the rotation period (the time to primary timber harvest), minimizing soil disturbance (to slow down CO<sub>2</sub> loss from the litter layer and A horizon), and maintaining generous riparian buffer strips along streams, around water bodies, and surrounding vernal pools (this last suggestion also being of great benefit to all sorts of wildlife).

## GAME OF LOGGING TO BE OFFERED AGAIN

Once again The Woodland Owners Association will be offering the renowned chainsaw courses developed by Swedish logger Soren Eriksson. If you ever work with a chainsaw, this course is a *must* for you.

The course will consist of three all-day modules, spaced two or three weeks apart. This course will once again be given at the Franklin Farm on Weatherhead Hollow Road in Guilford.

The program breaks down chainsaw skills into steps that are practiced throughout the course. A fun scoring system helps focus participants' attention on the most important details and allows them to measure their progress each day. Here is what is taught in each of the Levels:



### LEVEL 1

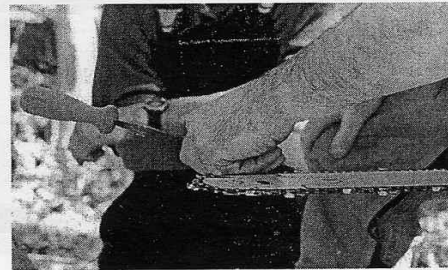
- Gear and personal protective equipment
- Notching and bore cutting techniques
- The Game of Logging Five-Point Felling Plan
- Body positioning for efficiency and safety
- Supervised felling practice

### LEVEL 2

- Routine chain saw maintenance and daily safety check
- Chain sharpening with a round file
- Dealing with spring poles and other hazards
- Supervised felling practice on a more difficult tree

### LEVEL 3

- Assessing side lean and back lean
- Using felling wedges
- Limbing and bucking techniques
- Felling practice on a back or side leaning tree



The cost for the three-module course is \$345. For non-members of WOA, this fee will include a one-year free membership to the association.

***You must take all 3 levels of the course.***

Course dates are:

Level I	Saturday June 6
Level II	Saturday June 20
Level III	Saturday July 11

The class will be limited to just eight participants to keep the learning experience as positive as possible. This course usually fills up very quickly, so please sign up as soon as possible.

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REGISTRATION is MAY 29**





# GAME OF LOGGING 2009 CHAINSAW FELLING AND SAFETY TRAINING

## Windham County, Vermont

- **LEVEL 1: Saturday June 6**                      **FRANKLIN FARM**
- **LEVEL 2: Saturday June 20**                    **(Guilford, Vermont)**
- **LEVEL 3: Saturday July 11**                    **8:00 to 4:30**
- Cost is \$345. (Non-members will receive a free one-year WOA membership)
- All participants are required to bring **Personal Protective Equipment:**
  - Saw-resistant pants or chaps
  - Hard hat w/ eye and ear protection
  - Sturdy boots
- ***Bring lunch and plenty of water***
- Participants are encouraged (but not required) to bring their own saw
- A confirmation letter and directions to the training site will be sent upon receipt of this form and payment
- **Questions? Call Bill Guenther, Windham Co. Forester (802) 257-7967**

} *If you have not as yet acquired these items, please call Bill for recommendations.*

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### Registration Form – Windham County, Vermont Game of Logging Chainsaw Training

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Local Saw Shop \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Woodland Owners Association**

**SEND PAYMENT TO: Bill Guenther  
Woodland Owners Association  
11 University Way, Suite 4  
Brattleboro, VT 05301**

**WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOC.**  
11 University Way, Suite 4  
Brattleboro, VT 05301-3669

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### ***Upcoming Programs***

(See inside for details.)

**Game of Logging (a MUST for anybody who owns a chain saw!) REGISTER NOW.**

**Level I — Saturday June 6**

**Level II — Saturday June 20**

**Level III — Saturday July 11**

**Room for eight people: *Register by May 29.* See form on last page.**

**Saturday, June 20, at 10 a.m. — Family Hike and Picnic on Round Mountain**

**Thursday, July 16, at 5:30 p.m. — Tour of Vernon's Unique Black Gum Swamps**

### ***Mission of Woodland Owners Association***

WOA is a non-profit association of woodland owners and managers, members of the wood products industry, and other interested parties in the Windham County Region who advocate both sustainable management practices and the enjoyment of forests and their ecosystems. In support of these ends, WOA offers educational opportunities for all age groups. Areas of interest include: biodiversity; clean air and water; cultural and historic resources; fair and equitable taxation of woodland; forest products; recreation; scenic beauty; and wildlife habitat. We recognize that these concepts are continually evolving and therefore will strive to consider the most current thinking and values regarding them.