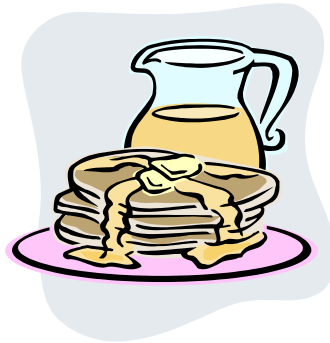




Association, Inc. 11 University Way, Suite 4, Brattleboro, VT 05301-3669  
802-257-7967 ext. 12

WOODLOT TIPS



February 2009

### ***Program Details***

#### **Saturday, March 21, at 1 p.m. — WOA Annual Sugar House Visit**

WOA president Stuart Thurber invites us to visit Lilac Ridge Farm sugarhouse in West Brattleboro. Weather cooperating, Stuart should be boiling sap in the early afternoon and we should plan to meet at 1 p.m.

**Directions:** The sugarhouse is on Covey Road. From Route 9 in west Brattleboro, take Greenleaf Street and Hinesburg Road for a little over a mile to Ames Hill Road. (Hinesburg Road is a continuation of Greenleaf Street.) Where Hinesburg Road turns south, Ames Hill Road continues straight on for about 3/4 mile to Covey Road. The sugarhouse is a few hundred yards up Covey Road on the left.

If you have questions call Stuart Thurber, 254-8113.

#### **Saturday, March 28 — *SAVE THE DATE* Ice Storm Workshop: Dealing with Damaged Trees**

State and local forestry experts are offering a half-day workshop for homeowners and woodlot owners whose trees, both ornamentals and those in the woodlot, suffered ice storm damage this winter. Indoor presentations and discussion will be followed by outdoor demonstrations of pruning and forest and shade tree evaluation. Time, location

and presenters will be announced in local media. After March 6, call Carol Morrison at 802-257-7967 Ext. 12, for information.

**Saturday, April 11, 2009 — Bucking for Bucks *Five openings still left for this workshop.***

WOA, Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation, and The Vermont Woodlands Association are sponsoring a **Hardwood Value Improvement Project (HVIP) bucking-training workshop**. It integrates field, classroom and computer simulation techniques to teach better decision making when bucking hardwood logs. The goal of HVIP is to increase the value and quality of hardwood logs by improving the log-bucking skills of landowners, loggers, and yard workers. **The workshop begins at 8:00 a.m. at Plumb Lumber in Andover, Vermont.**

Paul Frederick, Wood Utilization Forester for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, will lead the all-day training. Among the topics covered:

- Defect identification on hardwood stem surfaces and their internal problems
- Understanding of grading and scaling, including the importance of defects
- Strategies to improve profitability by making good bucking decisions

Participants work individually or in small groups, and it is helpful if at least one person in each group is somewhat comfortable with computers.

**Directions:** Follow VT Route 11 to the Weston-Andover Road. Continue for approximately 2 miles; turn right on Pettingill Rd. The mill is up the road on the left.

**To Register:** Call Sam Schneski, (802)-885-8823, or e-mail [sam.schneski@state.vt.us](mailto:sam.schneski@state.vt.us)

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## President's Column

*By Stu Thurber*

Presume is an old Vermont yankee state of mind that means to take for granted. This condition is comfortable but there is an opening for doubt.

A few weeks ago there was a knock on the door after dark, and a neighbor stated there were some cows in the yard. The cows were running all around the farm stand, including the dry cows and bred heifers. Somehow the milker presumed the gates were shut to the free stall. I presumed I had locked the gates in the dry cow and heifer area. After a chaotic hour the animals were back in the barn.

The next day a young man was sent out to the wood yard to cut up some cherry logs for firewood. However there was tree length select

pine also located in the wood yard. We presumed he knew his tree identity species. He spent an hour cutting those pine logs into three-foot lengths. That is a lot of sugar wood!!!

The next day we were logging with our four-wheel drive tractor which four months previous had an expensive repair to the drive train. I presumed the repair was lasting until it developed the same expensive symptoms. Action prevailed, and we traded tractors pronto, new color, nationality and language. Actually I have never enjoyed a tractor as much as this new purchase.

Worcester, Mass., presumed its trees were in safe hands with a city forester. A private citizen

looking at trees in her yard discovered a massive outbreak of Asian Longhorned Beetle. Within a day all the tree experts in the state had gathered in her yard to confirm her findings. No longer can our woodland owners presume that our friends and neighbors are forest literates. We must reach out with education and programs to promote and safeguard our woodlands. (See ALB story below.)

On March 21<sup>st</sup> you are invited to our sugarhouse to enjoy sugaring at Lilac Ridge Farm. Our sugarhouse has a wood fired 5' x 16' evaporator. We have 1,700 taps on pipeline and about 400 buckets. We have sugared since 1955 in the same location.

This May, the Brattleboro Career Center forestry class, with teacher Dennis Hamilton, will be constructing a public trail to the top of Round Mountain. Rick White of the Vermont Forests and Parks Dept. is helping with the design, and the Brattleboro Conservation Commission is also collaborating. Ten years ago, when we sold our development rights for the farm, we donated a trail easement over some of my favorite places. Next summer I hope to host a trip up this one-mile trail. We'll do some tree identification, get some exercise and look at some interesting features.

Our program committee will be announcing other programs. Stay tuned.

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**MEMBER ALERT MEMBER ALERT MEMBER ALERT MEMBER ALERT MEMBER ALERT**

## **Asian Longhorned Beetle infestation in Worcester, Mass., discovered by observant homeowner**

**WOA PRESIDENT STU THURBER AND TRUSTEE DAN CROCKER ATTENDED THE MAPLE Syrup Producers meeting in Bellows Falls where Robert D. Childs, a University of Massachusetts entomologist, spoke about the ten-year-old ALB infestation in Worcester, Mass. The area is now quarantined — no timber leaves it. Several WOA trustees are meeting to help develop collaborative plans with other woodland-oriented organizations in Vermont to increase public awareness of the ALB threat and to encourage vigilance in monitoring our local woodlands. John Evans, WOA member and Vermont Coverts Cooperator, prepared the following article from available materials and from conversations with Robert Childs.**

The Asian Longhorned Beetle infestation in Worcester, Mass., is proving to be far more extensive than earlier estimates indicated. Ice storm damage revealed that many trees that had been surveyed and judged to be free of infestation were hosts to this destructive beetle.

The current estimate is that perhaps 25,000 maples and other hardwoods are infested and will be cut down and chipped by April, said

Robert Childs, an entomologist at the University of Massachusetts.

Detection is a difficult assignment. About one-third of the infestations can be seen from the ground by using binoculars. Another one-third can be identified by climbing the tree. Even when climbers investigate a tree a substantial percentage of infestation sites remains undetected.

The beetle escaped detection in Worcester for perhaps a decade until its discovery last August. A local resident working in her yard spotted a large bug on a nearby tree and photographed the



insect with her cell phone. She then put her curiosity to work at her newly acquired computer to search the Internet. She correctly identified the Asian Longhorned Beetle.

“The message today is that everyone needs to be our eyes in the search for this beetle, and the public needs to know what to look for,” said Childs, who has spoken widely about the beetle over the past 10 years. Numerous Internet resources provide extensive information on identification.

The distinctive-looking beetle, with its shiny black body with white spots, is about one to one and one-half inches long with black and white striped antennae the same size, or longer, than the body. Adults start emerging from a tree in June after spending the winter as larvae in tunnels deep into the wood. Emerging beetles drill one-half to five-eighths inch holes. One maple tree in Worcester had more than 600 of these holes.

The Worcester infestation is the largest to date in the United States, with a current quarantine area of 64-square-miles. For perspective, an earlier infestation in New Jersey covered 25-square-miles. It took the USDA eight years to complete a survey of the trees inside the New Jersey quarantine. The Worcester area, if it is not expanded in size with the discovery of new infestations, includes about 650,000 trees.

Once a tree is infected it cannot be saved and must be cut down and chipped into pieces no larger than one inch. In Worcester, currently there are 20 crews working, using cranes, chippers and climbing ropes. About 300 trees are removed and chipped each day.

An inoculation program will start in the spring to treat potential host trees in the immediate area of infected trees. Treatment involves a soil injection of a pesticide, Imidacloprid, which must be repeated over a cycle of three years. The pesticide also can be injected directly into the root flare of a tree.

Because of its destructive potential, the beetle is known by some as “Darth Vader.” The beetle, a native of China that arrived in the United States in wood packing material, attacks both healthy and weakened trees. One or two years of infestation will kill a tree.

Adult beetles are weak fliers and do not fly far from an infected tree. The spread of infestation is primarily through the movement of wood products from an infected tree, such as firewood or packing and shipping crates. Removing wood from the quarantine area is prohibited by regulation, and violations are punishable by a \$25,000 civil fine.

Maple trees are the preferred host for the beetle, which also attacks birches, willows and other hardwoods. Worcester was a particularly vulnerable site for an infestation because its tree population is a monoculture. After a tornado in 1953, tree replanting with Norway and Red Maples resulted in 82 percent of the street trees being of a single species. The beetle prefers all types of maple.

To date, the beetle has not entered any forested area here in Vermont or in other parts of the United States. If it does, the result would be devastating, especially in maple sugar stands.

***THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES RELATE TO LAST DECEMBER'S DESTRUCTIVE ICE STORM*** that hit southeastern Vermont particularly hard. Two are personal ones by consulting foresters about the authors' own properties and that of some of their clients. George Weir also explores questions about the tax implications and the complex process of seeking a deduction for timber loss. Lessons from the 1998 storm are examined by Barbara Burns, and Bill Guenther advises on safety precautions before walking in ice-damaged woods. WOA members who are dealing with extensive damage will want to mark the date for the March 28 workshop on the subject (see program details on page one).

## **Ice Damage Recovery: Drawing on the Lessons from 1998**

*By Barbara Burns, Forest Health Specialist  
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation*

On the morning of December 12<sup>th</sup>, many Vermonters awoke to the sounds of branches snapping and trees crashing to the ground. Up to ¾" of ice had coated twigs and branches, taking out power to over 40,000 customers. This time, the southeastern corner of the state was hardest hit.

Ice storms are a fact of life in the north country, and a fact of life for trees that have to survive there, so they've developed a variety of survival strategies. Some aim to prevent ice damage from occurring in the first place. The architecture of fir and spruce branches sheds water before it freezes. Hardwoods shed their leaves so there's less surface area to hold ice. And white pines readily shed ice-laden branches to protect their trunks from life-threatening breakage.

Trees have also developed strategies to survive severe damage, should it occur. Hardwoods can generate new "epicormic" branches anywhere on the stem from buds already buried under the bark or from buds produced as a response to stress. If the top is broken from a softwood, an existing branch will often take over as the new leader so height growth can continue.

A long-term risk from ice damage is the stem decay that can develop from large, open wounds. Key to limiting decay is rapid growth

of new wood over the wound. (The fungi that cause wood stain and decay require oxygen, too.) The best wound closers are vigorous trees: trees that were healthy before the storm and damaged trees that regenerate branches quickly.

In addition, trees compartmentalize wounds internally, producing physical and chemical barriers that limit decay fungi. Some species are better at this than others. Short-lived trees like birch and aspen are generally poor compartmentalizers. On the other end of the spectrum, sugar maple is an excellent compartmentalizer (one reason it can withstand being tapped year after year). For all species, vigorous trees are also the best compartmentalizers.

We've learned a lot about tree recovery since the ice storm in 1998, when damage was extensive in northern New England, New York, and eastern Canada. Research programs were initiated, and the lessons from that storm are helpful to keep in mind when a well-managed woodlot is transferred overnight to a tangle of broken branches and damaged trees.

Most trees survive ice damage. With the exception of paper birch, trees with at least half their branches intact will bounce back quickly. The risk of mortality jumps for trees which have retained less than 75% of their branches. Paper

birch are at risk if over a quarter of the branches are broken. Survival is worse for any trees with pre-existing problems, like those still recovering from defoliation or with serious logging wounds.

White ash recuperation after the 1998 storm was remarkable. Ash, as well as sugar maple, frequently recovered from the loss of every branch. And yes, sugar maples with no branches did produce sap the following spring, although their yield was reduced to one-third of normal.

Wood stain and decay develop slowly, if at all. The exception, here, are conifers with broken trunks. Since they don't sprout new branches like hardwoods, they deteriorate quickly and they should be salvaged within a year.

Managing for future wood quality will require some cleaning. As you'd expect, trees with broken trunks or stem forks are most likely to be

degraded. Discoloration in these trees can spread several inches, to a foot or more, per year. Where large branches tore bark off the main stem as they broke, defects can also become serious. But if the trunk isn't wounded, as a rule, decay that happens in branches stays in branches.

As far as damage from this winter's storms, the good news is that trees in Vermont were generally healthy going into the winter. We've had good growing seasons back-to-back, and the caterpillar outbreak is fading into ancient history. Barring another disturbance, most hillsides now dotted with exposed white wood, will be fully green in a few years. There's time to evaluate, weigh options, and, above all, stay safe.

More storm damage resources are at: <http://www.vtfrp.org/protection/StormResources.cfm>

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## Ice Damage and Making Financial Decisions

*By George Weir, Consulting Forester*

Following the December ice storm that hit higher elevations of Windham County, I ventured down to West Halifax to assess the damage to the woodland that Joan and I own there. Heading south along Butterfield Road in Marlboro, I felt very discouraged; broken limbs hung over the road and, looking into the woods on the east slope, I could see numerous sugar maples uprooted or with tops snapped off.

On reaching our land, I put on my snowshoes and started in, first inspecting the west slope along Branch Brook Road. Covering about 75 acres there, I only came on two saw-timber-size red oaks uprooted on poorly drained soil and a few bent-over white birch. Things weren't looking too bad. I hiked nearly to the top of Ballou Mountain and from that vantage point, I saw very little damage on lands we own to the

west and south. I hiked to the south off the summit and confirmed negligible damage on the south-facing slope to Whitneyville Road. At this point I'd spent a couple of hours on my inspection tour. Although tiring, I was feeling confident that our forest had escaped the worst of the storm.

Swinging around to the 100 or so acres we own on the east slope of Ballou Mountain, I encountered an entirely different scene. The storm had heavily damaged white birch, oak and sugar maple. I was amazed to observe that even hearty red oaks had sustained heavy damage. Many appeared to have lost one-third to one-half of their branches, and a few had stems snapped in half. The hour was growing late; I was tired and faced a trudge of nearly a mile back to my car. I knew I needed to return with

more time on my hands and more forgiving snow conditions to better assess the damage and decide on steps we might take.

### ***Financial considerations***

Is the volume of timber damaged great enough to proceed with a salvage operation? The costs of moving equipment to and from the site will preclude a logger coming to cut a small amount of timber. We would have to provide someone at least a few weeks of work to get an operation off the ground. If salvaging will not require that much work, should we consider expanding the operation to include undamaged trees? Firewood markets are strong and maybe including firewood quality trees would create enough work.

Timber markets are weak at present and log prices are low. Although it makes perfect sense to salvage trees that have entirely lost their crowns, does it make sense to harvest trees that will recover, though slowly? Many stands I work in at higher elevations have suffered periodic ice damage, and broken tree crowns have recovered. If an oak or maple appears to

have the potential to rebuild its crown, we'll save the tree for another day.

Ash markets demand white wood. Victor Morse, who ran the Ash Mill on Williams Street in Brattleboro many years ago, pointed out to me that ashes that had sustained crown damage generally have large brown hearts. He wouldn't buy logs from those trees. It may make sense to harvest moderately damaged ash to prevent a decline in quality.

If the reduction in value caused by the storm is significant, we will take a casualty loss on our 2008 taxes, even if we are able to salvage some of the damaged trees. That would require appraising and documenting the damage. It would also require knowing or calculating the cost basis of all the timber on our property. Although the procedure for assessing damage is straightforward, it involves work. We'll have to consider whether the loss we can claim makes the effort worthwhile.

Whatever we decide, it will require spending time in our woods, and I always enjoy that.

**TIMBER DAMAGED OR DESTROYED BY** hurricane, fire, earthquake, ice, hail, tornado, high wind and other storms are "casualty losses" that may allow timberland owners to claim a deduction on their federal income tax returns. Yet the specific requirements on calculating the loss by the tax law and rules may result in low or no deductions being available in certain cases.

The cost of hiring professional forestry and/or appraisal services to establish the required tax data and records should be weighed with the potential tax savings before proceeding.

### ***Determining the Amount of Casualty Loss***

Deductible casualty loss for timber held for business or investment purpose is the smaller of *the adjusted basis of timber* and *the difference of the fair market value immediately before and after the casualty*. Salvage sale is reported separately.

### ***What You Need from Your Forester***

To establish timber basis and appraise the fair market value loss of timber immediately before and after the casualty, consult a professional forester if necessary to determine the proper *timber volume* in thousand board feet, cords or tons and *timber prices*, as suggested by the IRS Timber Casualty Loss Audit Technique Guide.

*Excerpted from: Income Tax Deduction for Timber Casualty Loss*, Dr. Linda Wang, Forest Taxation Specialist, USDA Forest Service. September 2008.

# Safety And The Ice Storm

By Bill Guenther, Windham County Forester

The December ice storm caused some major forest carnage in parts of Windham County, mostly in the southwestern sections. Trees were completely uprooted and toppled over, entire upper crowns of trees were snapped off leaving virtual “telephone poles” in the woods, and millions of smaller branches were broken. In some cases, the broken limbs fell to the ground, minimizing any overhead hazard, but in others, many of the braces that broke off entirely are still suspended by other branches in the upper tree crowns. There also are lots of branches that were broken or torn and are now literally hanging by a thread.

From past experience I can painfully attest that it does not take a very large piece of branch falling out of the sky to cause considerable damage to the human body. So the first order of business is — **Think safety!**

Since the storm, several big wind events have knocked many loose or hanging branches down, but the hazards are still very great. If you are going to walk in ice storm damaged woods I do suggest wearing a hard hat, not traveling alone. When in a group, try to stay a bit spread out so a single large limb doesn't hit everyone. Try to avoid real windy days that could cause more woody debris to rain down on you. Very sunny days can make it easier to determine where the overhead hazards are located.

If you have a lot of recreational, farm-use, or multi-use trails on your property that tend to

regularly carry traffic, it would be a good idea to identify trees with hanging hazards before spring leaf out, as many of those potential “widow makers” can be almost impossible to see once a tree's cloak of leaves arrives.

Much of the woody debris is under some extreme stresses of both compression and tension. Unless you are an expert, I suggest

leaving any chain saw work in these areas to the professionals, specifically those who have had the Swedish Game of Logging training. Tipped-over trees can spring back up and hit you with potentially fatal results. And limbs on the ground can be under a variety of stresses. Even trying what appears to be a simple act of cutting a small, bent-over tree can present forces that you could never have imagined.

So if in doubt, hire a pro, but if you feel you have the experience and training and all of the correct safety equipment, make sure you've got someone out in the woods with you, should an accident occur. Keep a careful eye on the saw blade, and know where it is at all times. Make sure that you are especially aware of the danger zone on the bar (if this sounds foreign to you, DON'T do your own saw work!!!) as the potential for extreme forces could make a violent kickback even worse than normal.

**Work safe, work smart, be alert, and knock off when you start to get fatigued.**



Photo by Diana Todd, WOA trustee



## **WOA Member Musings**

*By Lynn Levine, Consulting Forester, Dummerston*

Why travel to faraway places when you can have so much fun tracking in your own and other local woods? Below are some sightings from my winter nature journal.

January

4 — At my house to the north and west found many tracks. Although deep snow it was compacted. Fisher tracks went up tree. Deer tracks, two deer beds, deer scat (one pile). Squirrel tracks — many holes dug up. One of them I fit my hand up to my wrist in it and I couldn't go any further, but the hole did. Several turkey tracks. Fox track went straight down the hill towards Salmon Brook. Nest made out of grape vines nine inches in diameter, very round.

6 — At a Brattleboro property, fisher tracks all over. Foxes – at one point two were doing a mating ritual. Beaver eating at least 50 poles — tracks very wide to and from wetland. Weasel going into small wet area. Coyote tracks in area south of wetland. Bobcat tracks near wetland. Porcupine tracks going to a tree.

8 — After more snow there were fewer tracks at the Brattleboro property. The main tracks were fox, coyote, along with mouse trails going into trees and sometimes underground.

14 — In the valley east of my house I saw three turkey tracks. I passed some fisher tracks too. I saw a track where a squirrel jumped from the tree and then turned around. It looked like the tracks had ended in the middle of nowhere. Close to the top of the hill I picked up another track. First it was walking and then bounding. By the old beech tree, tracks circled it. Perhaps there were a hundred footsteps. They were browsing the shelf mushrooms – dark brown on top and beige underneath up to about six feet high. The teeth marks were about one-half-inch wide. It looked like one track went underneath

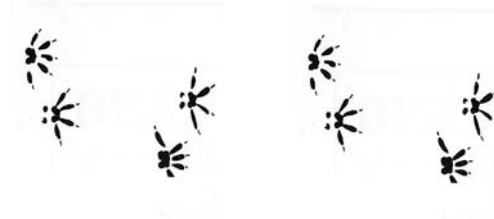
the fallen log, but when I looked closely I saw that only the fungus had been eaten.

15 — At a Newfane property, plenty of deer tracks and saw the area where the pine trees had been damaged in the ice storm. Then I saw what I now am sure was a bobcat bounding with about 15 feet between bounds. The cat's whole body was in the snow. I couldn't see the feet, but it was a large animal. (Today — the 16<sup>th</sup> — I saw what a deer looked like when it bounded in the same conditions.)

16 — At home I went west down the hill and followed fox, fisher and many deer. The fisher went underneath an old top of hemlock when it could have gone around it. I saw one deer bed with scat right next to it. Then I came across three deer beds right near each other in the hemlock. No more eating at the beech tree, but a fisher went next to it and didn't seem to eat. Perhaps there are two fishers, one bigger than the other, but I don't know for sure. People skiing.

17 — At home found the three deer beds again. A fox was slipping down the hill and it dug a hole about two feet deep where it rested. Deer tracks everywhere, but they became a trough when they got near the seep. This makes it clear to me how important seeps are. Found a shrew track, which entered a hole about one inch in diameter. They are subnivean animals (live under the snow) and there are many types

### **Shrew tracks**



All the deer crossed Salmon brook at the same point. Further upstream was a fisher that went under a log that was about six inches high. It preferred to go under again. There are four valleys before you get to Salmon Brook. The next to last one (just above the seep) is long. There was a stone wall that had an opening, which I walked through. It got dark and I went home.

23 — At my house there is a circle of many tracks that looks like a war zone, except it is just turkeys eating the remains from the bird feeder.

24 — I traveled to the west of the house. Some interesting finds. I found two fox tracks side by side, but they were going in different directions. It looked like there was a tussle at several places. For a while I thought I was following a gray fox but then I began to question that when I found urine that certainly was from a red fox. Could there have been a gray and red fox or did the red fox track have more snow and so it looked smaller.

27 — I went down the ravine area to the east of the house. Squirrel tracks and holes are everywhere. Some have acorns on top and

others just have detritus. Near a hemlock tree there was blood on the ground, and where there was a lightening kind of scar, the tree had been nibbled at. In one spot it really was a hole. Flying squirrel? Followed a fisher up along the swale. Old fisher tracks. They seem to like to travel right next to trees.

28 — Down in Mass. it had snowed the night before. The snow was up to my thighs in snowshoes.

29 — Checked a logging job in Halifax two days after the storm. Very deep here too. A few hundred yards up the logging road an otter had crossed. I spent time figuring out whether it was a fisher or otter. Put my closed fist fit into the print. The toes were so distinct. It was mainly walking in a 3 pattern. No time to follow it.

February 1 — Tracked behind my house and the only tracks were fisher and squirrel. There also were some very large mouse tracks.

*Lynn is the author of Mammal Tracks and Scat: Life-Size Tracking Guide, which is waterproof, and the tracks and scat are life sized. Her website is [www.Heartwoodpress.com](http://www.Heartwoodpress.com)*

### **Fisher tracks**



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## **WINTER: THE BEST SEASON IN VERMONT**

*by Bill Guenther, Windham County Forester*

The title of this article may have some folks already wondering if I am a bit loony, but yes, the season of short days has always been my favorite, and I'll try to give you some tips on how to really *enjoy* it and not just tolerate it or even hate it as many Vermonters do. One of the

key things you need to think about is your personal comfort.

Winter cannot be enjoyed if you're cold all the time. Here is where the right clothing comes into play. I recommend starting with a good

base layer of a synthetic material such as polypropylene or Capilene™ or something similar, but cotton is a no-no. Once damp from perspiration, it is worthless. I can't emphasize enough the need for layering. Use lighter layers rather than just one or two bulky layers. Fleece materials are great for the next outer layers, and some of the newer versions are a "windstopper" variety.

For really polar conditions, one of the middle layers could be a goose down jacket or vest. This material, harvested from the feathers of Canadian geese, is the warmest insulation per unit weight and volume. No synthetic has been developed that can beat it. BUT, never ever allow it to get wet, as it then becomes about the worst insulator.

Convective heat loss by even a five-mile per hour wind can be huge, so make sure that you have a good windproof layer or shell as your outer layer. A good quality Gore-Tex™ unlined shell is what I suggest. The key is to buy a range of sizes. The layer next to your skin should be the smallest, and as you move outward, the last layer should be the biggest. You want to make sure air is trapped in these layers that your body can warm, rather than having the layers tight to your body. I wear an XL silk-weight Capilene layer closest to my skin, then an XXL polypropylene base layer, and then XL fleece jackets. With two base layers, two fleece layers, a down jacket and a Gore-Tex shell, I am perfectly comfortable at a temperature of 30-degrees below zero! It's all in how you dress.

For those folks who tend to get real cold extremities, chemical heat packs are a nifty aid. You crack open the packets, expose them to air for about 10 minutes, and then put them into your gloves or boots or anywhere you tend to be cold. They will give off up to eight hours of warming heat. For a winter climb in the awesome Presidential Range of the White Mountains, even my warm-blooded girlfriend

was comfortable after I cracked a total of 10 heat packs to surround her petite 5'0" frame. It is truly amazing to stand on Mt. Washington in February with a sky so blue because the air quality is so much better than in the hazy days of summer.

I also could discuss frostbite and hypothermia, but I'll save that for a later article, as I want to stay positive.

Now that you've got the right clothing, we come to the most important part of enjoying winter — ATTITUDE. You've got to approach the season right. If you think something is bad, it surely will be, but if you say, I really want to see winter come on, and I am now ready for it, then you've crossed the biggest hurdle.

We often hear that folks get cabin fever from being cooped up all winter. As long as you don't have a major infirmity, anyone can get out and participate in at least some outdoor winter activities. Cross county skiing is an excellent aerobic activity, but if that's not your cup of tea, if you can walk, you can snowshoe. This sport has seen a huge increase in popularity, and breaking trail in new, deep snow is *very* aerobic. If you're not ready for that, seek out any of the multitude of snow-machine trails that exist throughout our County. These packed trails can make it very easy to get around.

If you really want a great experience, try winter camping. During our polar outbreak in mid-January, I found myself camped out in northern Maine on a night well below zero, with a 25-mph wind with chill factors of about 35 degrees below zero. Since I had the right gear, I slept warmer than I do in my own home in Newfane. I even had to shed a layer in the middle of the night when I got too warm!

With the right attitude, the right gear and some good prior planning, there's no reason not to enjoy the season of the white. Now you know why I get real excited every December 21<sup>st</sup>!

**WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOC.**

11 University Way, Suite 4  
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***Upcoming Programs***

(See inside for details.)

**Saturday, March 21, at 1 p.m. — WOA Annual Sugar House Visit**  
Lilac Ridge Farm, West Brattleboro.

**Saturday, March 28 —** ***SAVE THE DATE* Half-day Ice Storm Workshop:  
Dealing with Damaged Trees.** State and local forestry  
experts are offering a workshop for homeowners and  
woodlot owners.

**Saturday, April 11, 2009 —** **Bucking for Bucks *Five openings left***  
**8 a.m. at Plumb Lumber, Andover, Vermont.**

***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.