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WOODLOT TIPS



WINTER 2018

Programs

Saturday, March 24 at 1:00 p.m. — Tour at Matt's Maple, Dave Matt's sugarhouse in Marlboro.

Dave sent this information about his sugaring operation:

This season will be the 38th year that we've been sugaring on this farm and like most smaller operations, it's truly a family operation with my Dad, both my sons, and my grandkids all helping out. As far as I can determine, my sugarhouse is the third one to be built on this property, and over the years we've done three major rebuilds as our needs and equipment have changed. We currently set around 1,800 taps and make 450 to 500 gallons a year. About 1,200 taps run directly to the sugarhouse and are on vacuum. The other 600 taps are gravity lines that empty into three separate tanks and are gathered with a 500-gallon tank on a pick-up truck. We do not have a reverse osmosis machine, but we have a 5 x16 wood fired evaporator with a steam-away, so boiling gets done relatively quickly.

Wood is cut, split, and piled on racks and stored in a shed with greenhouse panels and solar powered fans to heat and move the air, so the wood we burn is very dry. The racks are brought to the sugarhouse with forks on a loader and set inside near the arch. We fire right from these racks, making handling as efficient as possible. I hope you can make it on March 24th; I'd love to show you around!



Directions: Dave Matt's Sugarhouse is in Marlboro less than a quarter mile off Route 9 and off Hall Farm Rd. The farm has been in his family since it was first settled in the 1770s. Dave has sugared there since 1980.

Thursday, March 29 — WRWA Members Only Field Trip — Somerset Old Growth Forest Tour

County Forester Bill Guenther will lead a tour to a Somerset woodlot in what we believe to be a stand of old growth, which consists mostly of yellow birch. This 60-acre property was a gift to Leland & Gray High School many years ago. About 12-15 acres of this property are stocked with the big birches, the remainder in spruce/fir and beaver flowage.

Bill went out last spring just before leaf-out and measured what he thought was the largest yellow birch. Since the State champion yellow birch died up in Victory few years ago, a new champ was crowned out here in Somerset.

We offer this trip only to WRWA members and the group size is limited to 12. **Bill will need to hear from you by March 25th** if you are interested in going. We need a minimum of five folks to sign up for the trip, so please contact Bill by phone or email to let him know you want to go.

We will meet in West Brattleboro at 9:30 a.m. to carpool (with a later stop in Wilmington) as parking can be very limited out there in the winter. We will travel 1.5 miles up the Old County Road to the western edge of the property, then bushwhack east out to the old growth. **We recommend that people bring a combination of skis and snowshoes: skis for the road and snowshoes for the bushwhack woods where brush complicates movement on skis. So take your pick, but Bill probably will bring both.**

At about lunchtime, we'll stop at the campsite and have a picnic lunch. It will be a nice warm-up if you also bring a thermos of your favorite hot beverage. After lunch we'll head out into the birch stand and look at these magnificent specimens; many are well over three feet in diameter.

We hope to conclude our day by about 3 p.m. Keep in mind that Somerset is the icebox of Windham County, and even though the trip will take place in March, we could easily have some pretty severe winter conditions, so dress warmly and in layers. We want to assure a safe and enjoyable day for everyone.

You need to call Bill Guenther at 257-7967 X 305 to reserve a spot, get the specific meeting place, and to make sure you've got the right gear. This trip is moderate to somewhat strenuous, and we'll be a long way from anywhere. Bill also needs to ensure that the private road up to the dam has been plowed. Adverse road conditions could cause us to cancel. Spring comes very late out there!

**Tuesday, April 10 at 7 p.m. — “Bobcats in Vermont,” Kim Royar, Dep’t. of Fish and Wildlife
Winston-Prouty Center, 130 Austine Dr., Holton Hall, 4th Floor, Brattleboro, Vt.**

Kim will review the life history of bobcats and the results of a study done in the Champlain Valley to learn more about the bobcat’s home range and habitat requirements. She will discuss how human changes to the landscape affected bobcat populations in Vermont from the time of Native Americans to today.

Kim has worked for the Department of Fish and Wildlife for 36 years. She began her career as a habitat biologist providing technical assistance to private landowners. She was the statewide furbearer project leader for over 20 years and moved to the Central office for several years to serve as Deputy Commissioner of the Dep’t. of Fish and Wildlife. Kim has returned to the field and currently works on both furbearer conservation and management and private lands conservation and management. Her passions include the conservation of land and species for future generations.

Sunday, May 20 — Gathering and processing local forest products to create natural skin and hair products. Winston-Prouty Center, 130 Austine Dr., Brattleboro, Vt.; Call 257-7967 for the time and/or check the WRWA website: <http://www.windhamwoodlands.org>

Join us this Spring as we delve into non-timber forest products with local producers Lena and Tom Groves of Heart Grown Wild, a Wardsboro-based business that creates organic plant-based skin and hair care products (www.heartgrownwild.squarespace.com). The day will include a foraging walk and a demonstration of how essential oils and hydrosols are made. Come prepared for a walk in the woods, time in the classroom and fun!

June: Summer Tree ID — Flowers, leaves, twigs, families — Date and Location TBA

July: Tour of Cersosimo Lumber Mill — Date TBA

Save the Date!

**Saturday August 25 — WRWA Annual Meeting! Celebrating the “Career in the Woods” of
Bill Guenther! In Newfane — Newfane Hill, Town Commons, and Bill’s place on
Bensch Mountain.**

This Annual Meeting will be a big one with optional events from 8:30 a.m. to late afternoon – evening. First, a tour of the Newfane Town Forest at Newfane Hill and the old townsite, accompanied by the Newfane Historic Society. A discussion of legacy tree maintenance at the Newfane Town Commons follows.

At 10:30 the annual business meeting will be at Bill’s place, followed by the traditional barbecue lunch and potluck. Bill will lead an afternoon workshop on small acreage management for sustainable home firewood production. The day will be capped by an appreciation of Bill Guenther’s years as Windham County Forester, aided by Munson Hick’s memories of his father, Halsey Hicks.

This will be the time for members also to share stories of Bill, and enjoy cake, libation and good company. All events are open to non-members.

President’s Message

By Marli Rabinowitz

You have probably heard that our mainstay and staff member, Carol Morrison, is retiring and moving with her husband up to the Norwich/Lebanon area. We will miss her steady and kind presence.

The WRWA board has an ever-changing group of characters, thanks to our by-laws that move us on after six years so new members can step up. It is Carol who keeps everything working smoothly. It

is wonderful to work with someone who knows the history and purpose of our group and all the people that we need to know. We wish Carol the best and hope she keeps in touch. We especially hope she will come to the Annual Meeting in August to give more of us a chance to say Happy Trails and good luck. If you would like to send her a card with memories and good wishes, send them to c/o WRWA, 130 Austine Drive, Ste. 300, Brattleboro, VT 05301. We will see that she gets them before she leaves at the end of March.

We are interviewing for a successor staff person, so stay tuned.

Here's another writing request for this newsletter, that is, for other members to read: Write a paragraph or two about yourself, as a member of WRWA. Pick a question to start your thought process or write anything you want:

Who taught or inspired you to be a steward of land, as an owner, forester, logger, or other? Is that the word you use for what you do?

What is one lesson you have learned about land management you would like to pass on to others?

How would you feel and what would you do if you didn't or don't own woodlands or work in them?

Are there any books, videos, or classes you would recommend to others?

What would you tell a young person entering your (forest) profession?

Would you cut lots off of your property for family? To pay taxes? What would lead you to?

Do you care what the next owner of your property does with it?

This is not a quiz or a survey or homework, but I learn the most from others and don't seem to get enough time to hear everyone's wisdom.

Thank you to Sylvia Cassano of Vermont Woodlands Association, for some of these questions.

I hope that the winter has been good to you. As I write this there is snow on the ground, the sun is shining, and bluebirds are flitting around my yard. My dogs were chewing on live twigs today on our walk, so sap must be flowing. Can't wait for the Sugarhouse Tour, and I hope to see you there or at another of our programs.

Marli's Book Recommendation

Hubbard Brook: The Story of a Forest Ecosystem

by Richard Holmes and Gene E. Likens, eds.

Yale University Press, 2016

This is an attractive, small-sized coffee table book. It is a summary of the insights into forest and watershed ecology gained from 55 years of research at the 8,000-acre Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in New Hampshire. It presents the information in as simple a form as possible, luring the reader with bright photographs of flowers, birds and landscapes, colored drawings of concepts, and poetic words, to consider water and nutrient cycles and their effect on species composition and larger global changes.

The writing style treads a narrow ridge between poetic and scientific. For example, "The brook is covered by ice and snow, but if you listen carefully, you will hear it whispering along under this insulating cover, providing habitat for aquatic invertebrates and transporting nutrients and other chemicals downstream."

Though an easy read for forestry professionals, it is a manageable introduction to a scientific way of seeing the forest, an overview of the results seen from the many experimental treatments at Hubbard Brook Forest. They demonstrate how they apply long-term data in the management of natural resources. Local harvesting considerations are becoming more clearly linked to intensified demands on resources as well as global "alteration of major biogeochemical cycles and fluxes" (e.g. Nitrogen). So the questions have become ever more complex and rapidly changing. The book gives strong tools for considering issues such as soil building and erosion, harvest methods, water quality, global bird decline, and recovery after extreme storms.

I am not donating my copy to the WRWA Library yet, but if anyone wants to borrow it, just email me: marli@sover.net.

*Bill Guenther, Windham County Forester, shares this bad news from the state. All foresters and woodlot owners have been wondering just when this bug, EAB (*Agrilus planipennis*), would reach Vermont, since it has been in all the surrounding states for several years. Bill wrote the following in the Summer 2013 issue of Woodlot Tips: It is so important that we now have as many sets of eyes watching our ash trees as possible. Many of the entomologists believe that the “blonding” ... may be one of the best detection techniques. This is where woodpeckers seeking out the little larvae, peck at the ash tree’s corky bark, exposing the lighter inner bark creating distinct patches of lighter colored bark....*

Emerald Ash Borer Found in Vermont

February 27, 2018 / Montpelier VT — The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (VTFPR) and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Foods & Markets (VAAFM) report that emerald ash borer (EAB), a destructive forest insect from Asia, has been detected in Vermont. Officials with the USDA Animal & Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS) have confirmed the identification of a beetle recently found in northern Orange County, Vermont. The insect was reported through the vtinvasives.org website.

EAB overwinter as larvae under the bark of ash trees where they feed on the inner bark tissue. Once infested, ash trees rapidly decline and are killed in 3-5 years. This pest is known to be established in 32 states and three Canadian provinces and is responsible for widespread decline and mortality of hundreds of millions of ash trees in North America.

Ash trees comprise approximately 5% of Vermont forests and are also a very common and important urban tree. EAB threatens white ash, green ash and black ash in Vermont and could have significant ecological and economic impacts. There are no proven means to control EAB in forested areas, though individual trees can sometimes be effectively treated.

State and federal forest health officials have convened and are preparing to implement an emergency action plan in response to the recent EAB detection in Vermont. A multi-agency delineation survey effort, including personnel from VAAFM, VTFPR, APHIS, US Forest Service and the University of Vermont Extension, will be launched in the upcoming days to determine the extent of the EAB infestation. Results of the survey will inform subsequent management recommendations and quarantine decisions and will be released to the public.

Slowing the spread of EAB is very important. While adult EAB are capable of flying short distances, humans have accelerated spread by moving infested material, particularly firewood, long distances. Residents and visitors are reminded to protect Vermont’s forests by buying and burning local firewood.

Landowners with questions are encouraged to contact their county forester. You can find county foresters on this website: http://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/your_woods/county_forest/who_where.

A public information meeting is being planned and details will be announced shortly.

For questions contact: Barbara Schultz, Forest Health Program Manager
VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
802-777-2082
barbara.schultz@vermont.gov

Emilie Inoue, State Pest Survey Coordinator
VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
802-505-0217
emilie.inoue@vermont.gov

More information is available at: <http://vtinvasives.org/>

Big Tree Tour 2017

by Margaret MacDonald

The biting cold on Veterans Day (despite the brilliant sunshine, the temperature was below 20° F) did not deter 27 hardy tree enthusiasts from showing up at the Brattleboro Common for the twenty-second biannual Big Tree Tour. Windham County Forester Bill Guenther welcomed us; handed out booklets about the tour, the trees, and driving directions; and gave a brief outline of the national Big Tree Registry.

We started off by walking to the first tree on our tour: the enormous Japanese maple in the back yard of The Inn on Putney Road (which fittingly has a Japanese maple on its logo) on Putney Road. Owners John and Cindy Becker told us that the tree was planted in 1930 on what at the time was riverfront land; the hotel was built later. Bill then pointed out that like so many open-grown trees, this maple has large limbs that grow out horizontally rather than vertically, and this leads to fractures: weak junctions between the limbs and the trunk that make the tree susceptible to damage. This tree has multiple leaders and a broad crown, and has been cabled in an attempt to prevent possible collapse.

Bill explained that arborists have changed their techniques since this tree (and others on our tour) had been cabled. They used to embed eye bolt screws into the branches to secure the cables, but these bolts can cause the wood around them to rot, and the bolts can pull out. Nowadays the preferred practice is to drill a hole all the way through the branches and secure eye bolts with large washers and nuts; this is more invasive but holds the branches together more effectively.

The tree had never been officially measured, so Bill enlisted tour members to witness and assist in taking the measurements. He explained that normally the circumference of a tree is measured at 4.5 feet from the ground, but if a tree has multiple leaders below that height (as this one does) the measurement is taken at the waist of the tree (the highest point below 4.5 feet where the tree has a single stem). In this case, the tree was measured at just above the root flare, nearly at ground level; the circumference turned out to be 10.75 feet. Bill then walked 100 feet away from the tree and then used a clinometer to triangulate the height of the tree at a point directly in the middle (above the

midpoint of the trunk), which came out to be 41 feet. The crown was measured and the minimum diameter was 57 feet and the maximum 64 feet. According to the rules of the Big Tree Registry, the average diameter of 60 feet (in this case) is divided by 4, and that quotient (15) is used. Thus, the tree scored 185 total points. For a Japanese maple, that is huge.

Japanese maples are not native to Vermont, and this will be the first Japanese maple ever listed in the Vermont Big Tree Registry. There is some debate as to whether the registry should include non-native species; humorously, a tour member asked if a gigantic buckthorn (an invasive species) could be included.

Bill also told the tour participants that if they suspect they may have a big tree candidate on their property they should notify him, but it would be helpful if they could include a circumference measurement (the easiest one to make). This will give Bill some idea of whether the tree is likely to be a contender for the registry and merits a visit for an official measurement.

See our website (<http://www.windhamwoodlands.com>) for a link to a Dep't. of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FP&R) site that provides more information about Vermont's Big Tree Registry and how measurements are taken.

During this first stop Bill mentioned the drawbacks of planting monocultures. This led him to provide a quick update about the role of invasive plants and insects.

We then drove to the state champion silver maple on the site of the Northeast Family Institute, a home for foster children (next to Aspen Dental and across from Hannaford). The history of this tree is unusually well documented; we know that the tree was planted as a seedling (probably 5 to 10 years old) in 1900, so it is approximately 125 years old — and maples tend to peak at 125. Jordan Fletcher, an arborist on the tour, commented that for its height this tree has a very large diameter. Like the Japanese maple, it has a wide branching habit; it, too has been cabled, and unfortunately some of the branches would damage the house if they came down. Bill pointed out that it is now known that

tree roots can extent two to three times beyond the dripline of a tree; thus, the roots of this tree are compressed given its proximity to Route 5. Digging and adding pavement for the renovation of the house also reduced the moisture absorption area for the tree's roots. Even so, the tree put on growth during the year, although given the long, cold, wet spring the buds may have come out at the wrong time for optimal growth. Tree roots need oxygen; the saturation from the exceptional rainfall was actually bad for trees.

Next we drove to the Putney boat landing, maintained by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department (FWD) to visit the state runner-up black cherry. Of all the trees on the tour, this one (in my opinion) was the least obviously impressive specimen; while it is very large for its species, it does not immediately catch the eye. However, it is also the only tree we visited that is surrounded by other trees. The tree is growing on a classic bottomland site; FWD is trying to control erosion around it. Bill noted that Windham County has a mix of southern and northern tree species, and this tree is almost at the end of its native range. It has several burls, and exhibits the rough bark characteristic of older black cherry trees (this one is probably 125–150 years old), which has been described as looking like “burnt potato chips.” This led a tour participant to mention and recommend a new book by Mark Mikolas, “A Beginner’s Guide to Recognizing Trees of the Northeast,” which helps readers to use visual clues such as this to recognize different tree species.

Like the other open-grown trees on our tour, the champion mulberry we visited in Putney is crown heavy and pulling apart. In fact, questions have been raised as to whether it is one or two trees, but landowner Louise Wood passed around a photograph showing her late husband Larry with the tree in 1935 when it had only one stem. Even so, the official measurement only reflects the left side of the tree. Some branches were cut to make room for the power line, but the center of the tree is so weak that Bill commented, “It’s amazing the tree is still standing.” The tree has many sprouts, and still attracts cedar waxwings.

Next, when we arrived to visit the state runner-up butternut, Karen Falk Sugden (daughter of the late, unforgettable, Esther Falk) and her husband Jack greeted us. The tree is about 70–75 years old — a

baby compared to the others we visited. It may owe some of its impressive characteristics to its location on a finger of the Waits River geologic formation, whose soils are very high in calcium. This may also contribute to its having resisted the butternut canker; while it does have the canker, it continues to thrive, and its genetic material is being studied to determine what makes it resistant. So far scientists do not know if the canker is native, and are studying this tree and another butternut in Halifax to try to determine why they can tolerate the canker. Although butternut roots contain an allelopathic substance that inhibits the growth of other species, proximity to the tree hasn’t harmed the Sugdens’ vegetable garden.

For a story about how our 2009 tour helped to “keep the tree together,” see the Winter 2014 issue of *Woodlot Tips*, posted on our website.



State Runner-up Butternut/Photo by Ellen Kriegel

After lunch at the Newfane Courthouse (while the weather had warmed up slightly, most of us stayed in our cars to eat), we traveled to Wardsboro to visit the state champion apple tree. Our hostess, Linda Gifkin, provided us with cookies and warm apple cider, very welcome on this sunny but cold day! The tree is probably about 150 years old, and even though the bark has an open seam the tree has a healthy crown. However, some cracking was noticed last year, and the tree has some cables as well as props below a few of the branches. The tree exhibits many peck marks made by yellow-bellied sapsuckers; Bill noted that the holes bleed sap, which attracts insects, and the birds then return to feed on the insects. He also commented that landowners should not fertilize trees that have apple scab.

We then made our longest drive of the day to visit the champion white pine in Londonderry. It is about 150–175 years old and a towering 144 feet tall, with three main leaders. White pine weevil caused the forks, and one of those is itself forked. Bill outlined the history of finding big white pines in Vermont; there was a three-way tie for the largest tree until this one was found. He also commented that bald eagles like to nest in tall pines. The tree has been hit by lightning (we could see the streak), but apparently was not hurt. Bill commented that white pines can survive lightning, whereas if lightning strikes a hemlock, the tree in essence explodes. We observed new woodpecker holes in the tree; this indicates it could have ants or other insects that attract the woodpeckers.

As we gazed at this giant pine, Bill reminded us that trees make use of energy in the following order: (1) food, (2) primary cell division — growing taller and longer, (3) reproduction, and (4) secondary cell division — growing in girth.

By the time we reached the last tree on our tour, the state champion sycamore next to the Harmonyville Store, 16 hardy souls remained in our tour group. The store has a sign over the door “Vermont’s Largest Sycamore” (you can see a short film clip showing the store and the tree at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deDNfD215zc>). This tree is right at the edge of its zone; the northernmost one in the West River Valley in Vermont is in Jamaica. Bill reported that at the end of May/beginning of June he noticed that the tree had no leaves; it had been hit by anthracnose (the same disease that caused many maples to drop their leaves this year. (See Bill’s article “Our Majestic Fall Foliage — What Happened This Year?” in the Fall 2017 issue of *Woodlot Tips*.) Fortunately, the tree had re-foliated by mid-July. Bill commented

that while defoliation is always harmful it causes the least damage if it occurs early in the growing season; that way, when the new leaves do come in, the tree has not lost too much time until it can carry out the photosynthesis it needs to make food. Late-season defoliation, for instance, by the fall webworm, also does relatively little damage because by then most of the growing season is over. The tree has a large amount of sprout tissue, and exhibits some cankering. It has not grown very tall, which led Bill to explain the “root-to-shoot” ratio, with 13–18 percent of a tree’s biomass underground. Trees must expand their root zone to increase their height, which in this case would be difficult given the sycamore’s proximity to Route 30. This tree suffered when the store installed a new septic system 7–8 years ago, and it could have been severely harmed had the Agency of Transportation (AOT; now VTrans) acted on its original plan to park its heavy vehicles next to it while working on the nearby bridge. Former storeowner Dale Thiel sued AOT, which agreed to park its vehicles on the other side of the brook and have an arborist on site during any activity that would expose the tree’s roots.

Bill’s immense knowledge about trees and his infectious enthusiasm kept all of the tour members interested, engaged, and entertained. We thanked Bill enthusiastically for such an enjoyable day, and several of the non-members expressed interest in joining WRWA. Bill says that this tour is his favorite activity for WRWA and considers it a labor of love. He deserves our gratitude for planning the itinerary, obtaining permission from all of the landowners, and providing us with so much information about these particular trees, and about big trees in general.

The Challenges of Mud Season and Its Impact to our Trail Systems

By Bill Guenther, Windham County Forester — with excerpts from Green Mountain Club (GMC) and Vermont Dep’t. of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FP&R) press releases

For the third year in a row, the WRWA had to cancel our scheduled Winter Tree Identification walk. Three years ago we had a huge snowstorm that made travel difficult, causing us to cancel. This was followed by the last two years giving us very early mud seasons in February. I am truly sorry that we could not pull off this year’s workshop, but our fear was

that folks would be caught in a quagmire as well as making a quagmire in our hosts’ doorway. Mud season can greatly impact travel on our roads, but there also are considerations out in the woods.

In Vermont, we love to recreate and be outdoors 12 months of the year, which is fine, but

*sometimes you need to carefully pick and choose when and where you go to enjoy your outdoor activities. FP&R and the GMC are close partners in managing not only the Long Trail, but a plethora of other trails in the state. **One of the things the partners stress is that people please stay off really muddy trails during mud season.** A trail that may absorb hundreds of hikers' boot steps in the summer could be badly damaged by just a few folks hiking at the height of mud season. Each year when things start to soften up, press releases and notices are posted at many trailheads asking the public to please hold off for now and let Mother Nature dry out a bit. Here was the Green Mountain Club's message in 2017:*

Spring has sprung, although it's not always easy to tell in Vermont. One day it dumps 6" of snow, the next it's 50° and sunny, and the back and forth wreaks havoc on our beloved trails. When the snow finally melts in town and at trailheads, it's tempting to hope that the entire trail will be just as clear and dry. But experience has taught us that snow and ice hang on late into May at higher elevations, and even into June on the highest peaks. And that middle ground between the trailhead and the summit? **It's a muddy mess.**

As the snow melts and the spring rains arrive, the ground can only hold so much water. Deep and wide mud puddles appear, sometimes taking up entire sections of trail. But we're not just trying to keep you from getting dirty. **Trails that are over-saturated are vulnerable to damage from soil compaction and erosion with every footstep.** Soil compaction degrades the quality of the trail by reducing its ability to absorb water, causing increased flooding later and making it harder for vegetation to grow. Erosion then carries the soil away, leaving rocks and roots exposed.

Think you can just walk around that mud puddle blocking the trail? Think again – while walking around muddy areas will keep you dry, walking on the edges of trails tramples vegetation, widens the trail, and causes more damage to both trail and environment.

Help us help you! Trail maintainers, many of whom are volunteers, work hard to keep Ver-

mont's trails in good shape. Let's not add to their work.

Believe us, we get it! Hiking is what we live for, and it's hard to beat that Spring fever. First, keep in mind that what the weather is like at the trailhead is not necessarily what it is like farther up the trail. You could still be walking into winter if you somehow made it past the mud. Second, maybe try some different activities for the next two months: Spring is a great time for other outdoor recreation like cycling, paddling, and even road walking. Check out our outings calendar to join a trip with a GMC section – we don't just hike! Spring is also a great time to plan out your summer hikes. Who doesn't love poring over maps and guidebooks? Or take a workshop and learn some new skills for later.

If you really can't resist the call of the trail, stick to low elevations and south facing slopes, which tend to dry out earlier in the season. But even in those places, be prepared to **turn around** if the trail is suddenly muddy. One of the seven principles of *Leave No Trace* outdoor ethics is to only travel on durable surfaces. Rock is durable. Hard, dry soil is durable. **Mud is not durable.** Help us protect the trail for use the rest of the year by **turning around** when you come upon a muddy section of trail. The trails will dry out and harden again soon enough and you'll be back out hiking before you know it.

Check out our list of suggested mud season hikes and even more from VT State Parks. Mud season has traditionally ended around Memorial Day, but climate change is making it harder to predict what the season will look like. If it's getting later in the season and you suspect the trail you want to hike might be dried out, it doesn't hurt to check! Call the park that the trail is in for a status update or call GMC's Visitor Center at 802-244-7037 (or email gmc@greenmountainclub.org). We do our best to keep abreast of conditions and we are happy to share any information we have.

Most of all, **thank you** for doing your part to keep our trails in great shape! Vermont's trails are some of its best features and we want everyone to enjoy them for a long time.

Windham Regional Woodlands Association
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Brattleboro, VT 05301-7040

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Programs *(See inside for details)*

Saturday, March 24 at 1:00 p.m.	Sugarhouse Tour at Dave Matt's sugarhouse in Marlboro
Thursday, March 29	<i>WRWA Members Only Field Trip</i>, Somerset Old Growth Forest
Tuesday, April 10 at 7 p.m.	"Bobcats in Vermont," Kim Royar, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Sunday, May 20	Gathering and processing local forest products for natural skin and hair products, by <i>Heart Grown Wild</i>
June: Date/time/location TBA	Summer Tree ID — Flowers, leaves, twigs, families
July: Date/time TBA	Tour of Cersosimo Lumber Mill
<i>Save the Date!</i> — August 25	WRWA Annual Meeting!

Mission of Windham Regional Woodlands Association

WRWA 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, WRWA 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.