



130 Austine Drive, Suite 300 Brattleboro, VT 05301 802-257-7967 windhamwoodlands.org windhamwoodlands@gmail.com

WOODLOT TRIPS

Winter 2021

Programs

The WRWA has cancelled most of its programs due to the Covid pandemic. Please check windhamwoodlands.org for information and updates.



"The Somerset Tour to visit the Old Growth Forest, scheduled for Friday March 26, 2021, will be postponed to next winter. Bill Guenther felt that with COVID cases spiking and the new variants on the scene that it would not be prudent at this time to host the tour. He sends his apologies and will gladly offer the tour next March when we will all hopefully be vaccinated!"

President's Message

by Munson Hicks

When I last wrote for the newsletter, the first snow of the season had just fallen. Well, yesterday I had the snow blower out cleaning my driveway again, so I guess winter is far from over.

The pause in our programming continues (see note from Bill Guenther) but we remain optimistic that we can revive our programming, perhaps before the summer is over.

Membership remains fairly consistent with a few people who have still not renewed for this year. While not uncommon, we hope that those few will return to the fold, support the Association, and continue to receive the newsletter.

With the retirement of Barbara Evans as our newsletter maven, we are having discussions about the newsletter in the future.

Anyone with thought or suggestions is welcome to email us with their thoughts.
(windhamwoodlands@gmail.com)

We continue to have strong support from within the board of trustees on our committees, but would welcome anyone who is not a committee member who would like to serve on the committees. A list of committees appeared in our last newsletter which can be found on our website.

On a sad note, my overwintered leeks succumbed to moles for the first time, so my plans for having them through the winter were thwarted.

However the three bears (mother and two cubs) that attempted to remove the bird feeder (set out too early on our kitchen porch) left with only dinner and the realization that they had scared the hell out of me.

WRWA received the following letter from our most recent scholarship recipient, Jessalyn Stockwell

Hello Windham Regional Woodlands Association,

I hope this email finds you well. I have just completed my last semester of my undergraduate degree in natural resource conservation from UMass Amherst. It was an interesting way to end my undergraduate studies as I worked full time until mid October and attended classes online. Despite missing out on many hands on activities and the in person experience, I gained knowledge on many topics. I really enjoyed my wildlife habitat management class that detailed how specific habitat elements can be improved for different species. Lots of forestry topics were explored, which made it all the more interesting! I also took two fish classes where frozen fish were sent to my house to identify, measure and dissect. Nothing like the in-home lab experience! In all, I am glad to have completed my degree and look forward to learning many more skills in the future.

I would like to thank you all with the Windham Regional Woodlands Association for giving me the opportunity to finish my degree. I truly could not have done it without the support of the WRWA. Over the past few years, the WRWA not only has given me scholarship funds towards my education, but many

resources in the newsletters and now a spot on the board. I cannot thank you all enough! I look forward to working with you all and accomplishing the goals of the WRWA. I am also excited to work towards giving out the wonderful scholarship to another student who will benefit like I did.

Thank you all again and I hope you are all well and staying warm!

Jessie Stockwell

We are pleased to say that Jessalyn has become one of our newest Trustees.

Forest Update

by **Sam Schneski**, Windham County Forester

Weather:

Extreme weather fluctuations seem to be the new “normal”. After a dry summer and a fall that seemed to have enough rain to catch up to the expected amount of precipitation, we had the snowstorm blast a week or two before Christmas bringing as much as 52” of snow to some parts of the state! All signs pointed to having a white Christmas. But wait! This awesome snow event was to be followed by massive amounts of rainfall which caused local flooding and ended up melting most if not all the snow. According to the Northeast Regional Climate Center, November was Vermont’s 13th warmest on record and many parts of the Northeast remained in varying degrees of drought conditions. Vermont experienced its 12th warmest December on record and the month was wetter than normal throughout the region.

What does this all mean for our forests? Extreme fluctuations in temperature and moisture are not a good thing for trees. Most of our tree species prefer certain growing conditions specific to soils, nutrients, elevation, aspect, rainfall, sunlight, and temperature. When temperature and moisture conditions fluctuate to extreme levels it can cause trees to shift some of their resource allocation and function away from the basics like photosynthesis, reproduction, and insect and disease defense mechanisms to more of a survival mode. This shift can be the difference between a tree’s ability to thrive or survive.

Emerald Ash Borer:

Please see the announcement included in this newsletter explaining the EAB quarantine deregulation.

EAB biological control agents were released in two locations this year. One release site was located on LR Jones State Forest in Plainfield, the first State Forest in Vermont, as well as the first State Forest to become infested with EAB. The second site was in the town of South Hero. The biocontrol agents, *Tetrastichus planipennisi*, are tiny stingless wasps that parasitize EAB by laying eggs in EAB larvae, where they eventually hatch and grow, and ultimately kill the EAB larvae. They are known to target EAB exclusively, and do not parasitize other insects or pose a human health risk. These biocontrol releases involve securing small pieces of ash logs that contain the parasitic wasps to visibly infested trees and allowing the insects to emerge for a minimum of two weeks before the pieces of

ash logs are removed. These parasitic wasps (or parasitoids) are effective on smaller trees and saplings and have been shown to reduce the number of EAB

larvae in young trees by as much as 50%. The goal of these releases is not to eradicate EAB (which is considered impossible in the US at this point), but to establish a self-sustaining population of the parasitic wasps that will improve ash regeneration and lessen the impact of EAB in infested areas in Vermont.

Fall Webworm:

This native defoliator of hardwoods was reported across the state at higher-than-normal levels. The nests are found in late summer/early fall and are found toward the tips of branches. Although their appearance lacks something to be desired, they don’t have a huge impact on tree health because the defoliation happens later in the growing season. Multiple years of heavy defoliation can lead to dieback.

Pests to keep an eye out for:

Beech leaf disease is of increasing concern in New England and has been found in New York, Connecticut, and eastern Massachusetts. Signs to look for include dark stripes and yellowing between the veins on leaves.

Vermont has participated in a regional oak wilt survey.

This year the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation investigated a suspect tree in Rutland and sent sample to a Cornell lab for identification. Fortunately, oak wilt was not detected. Symptoms to look out for in the red oak group are wilting occurring in the upper outermost parts of the canopy and working its way down the tree into the inner canopy, wilted leaves are discolored on the outer edges ranging from pale green to yellow, bronze, or brown. Wilting results in heavy leaf drop of both green and discolored leaves during the summer growing season. Infected trees in this group may die in as little as 1 to 2 months of infection and most die within a single year! It may take several years for trees in the white oak group to be killed by oak wilt, sometimes only losing a few branches a year.

Funds Report

As many of you know we have two funds that are supported by donations from our members.

The Scholarship Fund offers tuition help to undergraduates from Windham County in Forestry and related fields such as environmental studies.

The Halsey Hicks Fund income is used for education opportunities for our members, primarily with our lectures, tours, and seminars associated with the work of the Programming Committee.

Our donations are down a little this year (\$4234 vs \$4865 last year) with 80 donors this year, but we remain in okay shape and we thank all those who have donated

Last year we added a checkbox to the renewal envelope, asking permission to acknowledge donors in the newspaper. Below are the names of those gave us permission.

We hope in the future more of our members will allow us to acknowledge their generosity.

Robert W. Adams
Alan Binnick
Carl M. Boyd
David L. Deen
Bill and Denise Foery
Don and Linda
Fuhrman
Mike Goldberg
Joy Hayes

Nicholas and Bibliana
Heymann
Munson Hicks
Richard F. Jackson
Margaret McDonald
David Matt
Dennis McIntosh
Brian and Jennifer
McNeice

John Neuhauser
Judith Nuno
Barbara Pofcher
Steve and Barbara
Ritchie
Martha Rabinowitz
Bill and Mary Lou
Schmidt
Jeremy P. Schraub

Robert and Jennifer
Spenser
Byron Stookey
Lee and Diana Todd
John G. and Virginia
Whitman
Robert E. Zimmerman



THE BOOK NOOK

An occasional series where members can introduce others to books or articles they found interesting.

This is from **Martha Rabinowitz**, past president of WRWA

Book Review: The Big Herbs, The Use and Abuse, Natural History and Identification of Major Tree and Shrub Species in the Midwest and Eastern U.S., with Stories and Insights of a Life Married to Farm and Forest, by Paul Strauss. XOXOX Press, 2nd Edition 2020

Paul Strauss is a little-known national treasure. In 1970 he bought 80 acres of overworked land in Ohio. The creek was full of mining chemicals, neighboring "farms" were piles of strip-mine slag. Over the years he has brought back the trees, shrubs, and the medicinal herbs underneath them. He has inspired others to buy land nearby, and together they have restored an ecosystem while living and farming in it. Parts of the book are his personal stories. He was a young back-to-the-lander in 1970 when he met a farmer plowing with mules, and his life unfolded from there. The set of personal stories are funny, inspiring, nostalgic. They cover animals and people he has known, including riding in a wild burro race, an "interesting" experience with dolphins in Hawaii, but mostly about what he calls "the Green Spark", right livelihood on the land, and homage to his mentor, farmer Bill Clonch, who taught him how to live independently and interdependently. His life

work of restoring a mined-out landscape to a rich habitat for trees, herbs, wildlife, and people, could have happened in Vermont; many species are the same.

His land has become a botanical sanctuary and teaching center for medicinal herbs many of which only grow in healthy forest conditions. Most of these are familiar in Vermont -trillium, ginseng, leeks, trout lilies, blue cohosh, blood root, hepatica, maiden hair fern, and more. This collection of plants grow best in hardwood stands with closed canopy and deep shade with little underbrush; deep hardwood leaf duff; moisture and drainage in good balance.

The bulk of the book describes the trees, that he calls the Big Herbs, of these forests, about 40 woody species. For each one he covers identification, habitat, and uses, with comments about their current health status, pests, and mostly, a personal story or two with appreciation of their best qualities.

There are other books that are more factual about each of these topics, but this one will give you time with a great storyteller and a visionary who manifested his dream and wants to share the Green Spark and inspire the world to steward the forests of the future.

Riding the Winds

by **Daniel Dubie**

As the time of increasing darkness has given way to increasing daylight and stronger sun rays, Winter has settled in this year nicely with some decent snow and cold temperatures. As often is the case, we find these two major forces in our weather and climate engaged in their well-known February dance. It is an exciting time for even as the snowbanks get bigger and the wood supply gets smaller, we feel the warmer sunlight, we notice when things melt out that much quicker, and know there is nothing holding Spring back now. Groundhog Day has come and gone, marking another halfway point, this time of our journey between the Winter solstice and Spring Equinox. An important time for many including some of our fellow anxious mammals.

A walk, ski, or snowshoe in the woods now may still seem very quiet and cold but there are changes upon us. If you happen across one of the many forest songbird

flocks that are still established, you likely will be welcomed by a true sign of Spring, the black capped chickadee song "hey sweetie". There might still be some wandering flocks of finches and redpolls fluttering throughout the forests feeding on mature yellow birch seeds. If you come across red fox and eastern coyote tracks, they will be worth following. It is breeding season for both K-9 species and there may be blood in the urine, a sign of the female's annual time of fertility. Keep an eye out on warmer days for another sure sign of Spring, the return of springtails (snow fleas) to the surface of the snow. These are small abundant insect like creatures called hexapods which spend much of their lives in the leaf litter. During warm late winter days as the snow pack starts to melt, they make their journey from the leaf litter through the snow pack and can be seen sprinkled across the snow's surface, sometimes by the millions. A remarkable sight indeed.

As Winter's grip loosens and the warm rains come sometime in late March or early April, there will be an

amazing annual ritual that warms the hearts of anyone who loves the Northwoods. It is the age-old migration of our forest amphibians to ephemeral vernal pools to mate and lays eggs. The life cycle of these reclusive frogs, peepers, and salamanders bring them in high numbers to these amazing forested wetlands. For anyone who is fortunate to happen across an active vernal pool around the time of the first warm Spring rain will be welcomed by the chorus of wood frogs and possibly peepers. Further visiting of the pool through the Spring and into the Summer will find an amazing transformation. These places of so much activity and life during the spring will eventually dry up and may become nothing more than

leaf covered impressions in the forest floor until the next spring when the magic of the forest returns.

For those of us who look forward to all the seasons, this Winter has brought some special feathered friends from the North. It has brought its fair share of snow so far and I am sure some more before it is over. There is still time before those maple buds start to swell and there is still wood in the woodshed. Our eyes though have now shifted, turning South in preparation of the first glimpses of travelers returning from the South, yet again riding the winds of Spring.

“Slow the Spread” Efforts Ongoing in Vermont Despite End to Federal Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine

On January 14th, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) ended the [Federal Emerald Ash Borer \(EAB\) quarantine](#) to place more emphasis on management and biological controls to combat the pest. In Vermont, while we continue to find new areas of infestation, our forests support overwhelmingly healthy populations of ash to protect as long as possible. Bearing that in mind, we urge Vermonters to continue to follow the “[Slow the Spread](#)” [recommendations](#), which can be found on [VTinvasives.org](#).

Information regarding the Federal deregulation of EAB

- **Compliance Agreements to Move Ash Wood:** Compliance agreements will no longer be needed to move ash wood unless the receiving state quarantine requires them. As of now, in our area, Maine is the only state that has a state EAB quarantine. A compliance agreement is required to move any regulated ash material from any out-of-state location into non-quarantined portions of the State of Maine. These agreements will be handled by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (VAAFM). Learn more about [Maine’s quarantine](#). If you need an agreement or have questions, contact Judy Rosovsky with Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) at 802-279-2212 or judy.rosovsky@vermont.gov
- **Firewood Kiln Certification:** Kiln certifications will continue to be handled by the VAAFM. Certification is required every two years. If you need a kiln certification or have questions, contact [Judy Rosovsky](#) with VAAFM at 802-279-2212.

- **Ash Wood Exports:** The removal of the Federal EAB quarantine in the United States will only impact domestic activities. USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine will continue to issue Phytosanitary Certificates for plants and plant products to meet an importing country’s phytosanitary requirements. Contact the [Vermont Export Certification Specialist \(ECS\)](#) or ECS from the state of export for more information.

Resources

We have updated the following Vermont EAB resources on [VTinvasives.org](#) to reflect the federal deregulation of EAB:

- [Moving Ash from the Infested Area](#)
- [Ash Processing Options](#)
- [Transporting Ash Wood Products into Vermont Safely and Legally](#)
- [How to Legally Transport Wood Products from New Hampshire and Vermont to Maine](#)

The federal deregulation of EAB does not influence state regulations. **Transporting wood visibly infested with EAB and importing untreated firewood from outside Vermont is not allowed.**

Slowing the spread of EAB in Vermont will mean many more years of enjoying ash trees for their beauty, ecological, and commercial attributes. We thank you for your ongoing commitment to this effort.

Survey highlights importance of Vermont Family Woodland Owners

by Emma Sass and Brett Butler

Forests provide benefits at local, regional, and global scales. Families and individuals own more wooded land than any other group in the U.S., and their decisions about how to manage and care for their land have broad impacts. Understanding these woodland owners in Vermont, including what they do with their land and why, and what their challenges and needs are, is important to help support healthy forests and vibrant communities now and into the future.

Here, we use “woodland” as a broad term to include woods, woodlots, timberlands, and forests – any patch of trees that’s more than one acre in size. Families and individuals who own wooded land – collectively, “family woodland owners,” can be one person, a joint ownership of spouses or other individuals, family partnerships, family LLCs or LLPs, and family trusts or estates. We use “ownerships” to refer to all the owners of a piece of woodland.

To better understand family woodland owners, the USDA Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program conducts the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS). The survey asks landowners about who they are, why they own their wooded land, what they have done with it in the past, and what do they intend to do with it in the future. Below we present results from 115 randomly selected Vermont woodland ownerships with 1+ acres who responded to the survey in 2017 and 2018.

Family Woodland Owners Count!

An estimated 2.7 million acres of wooded land in Vermont are owned by an estimated 76,000 family ownerships. Family ownerships control 60% of Vermont’s wooded land, more than any other ownership group, including the state or federal government or forest industry.

Size of Holdings Makes a Big Difference

The average family woodland ownership in Vermont has 35 acres of wooded land. 47% percent of the ownerships have relatively small holdings between 1-9 acres, but 54% of the area of wooded land is owned by ownerships with 100 acres or more. This is important because size of holdings limits what an ownership can do with their land, such as timber harvesting, wildfire protection, or control of invasive species, and often impacts what programs they are eligible for. Because of the increased management options, program involvement, and other dynamics of larger ownerships, all following results are for family woodland owners with 10 or more acres.

Beauty, Wildlife, and Nature are What Matter

The most commonly cited reasons for owning woodland in Vermont are related to the wildlife, beauty, and privacy the wooded land provides. Recreation and passing land onto future generations is also important to many owners. Financial objectives, such as land investment and timber production, are important to some owners, but they are not as common as other objectives.

They Love Their Land

Most family woodland owners in Vermont have a deep love of their land. The vast majority of owners, 90%, agree or strongly agree with the statement “I want my wooded land to stay wooded.” 85% of owners agree or strongly that they have a strong emotional tie to their wooded land, and 80% say they know their wooded land well.

Management

In the past five years, one in three (33%) family woodland owners have cut or removed trees for sale, and two in three (65%) have cut trees for their own use. Around one in three (33%) have improved wildlife habitat, and 24% have reduced invasive plants. 41% have a written management plan and 31% have received woodland management advice in the previous five years.

They are Older

The average age of primary decision makers for family-owned woodland in Vermont is 65 years. 11% of acres are owned by people who plan to transfer some or all of their wooded land in the next five years, and a majority of ownerships (77%) are worried about keeping the land intact for future generations. 68% of primary decision makers are male.

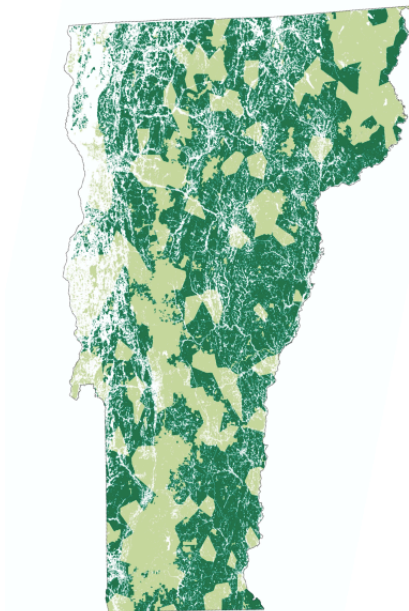
Conclusions

Woodland conservation and management depend on the people who own it – in Vermont, most of these acres are held by individuals and families. Understanding the threats to the land – including the loss of forest through development, parcelization, invasive plants, disease, and insects, and other issues – is critical for conservation efforts. Using a common language and designing policies and programs that meet the needs of landowners and professionals will have a major impact on the current and future owners and the vital lands that they own.

For more results, visit the USDA Forest Service's National Woodland Owner Survey website at www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos. To learn more about the services and resources available to woodland owners in your state, contact your local forestry agency or association.

Emma Sass is a Research Fellow with the Family Forest Research Center and University of Massachusetts Amherst. Brett Butler is a Research Forester with the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station and Family Forest Research Center.

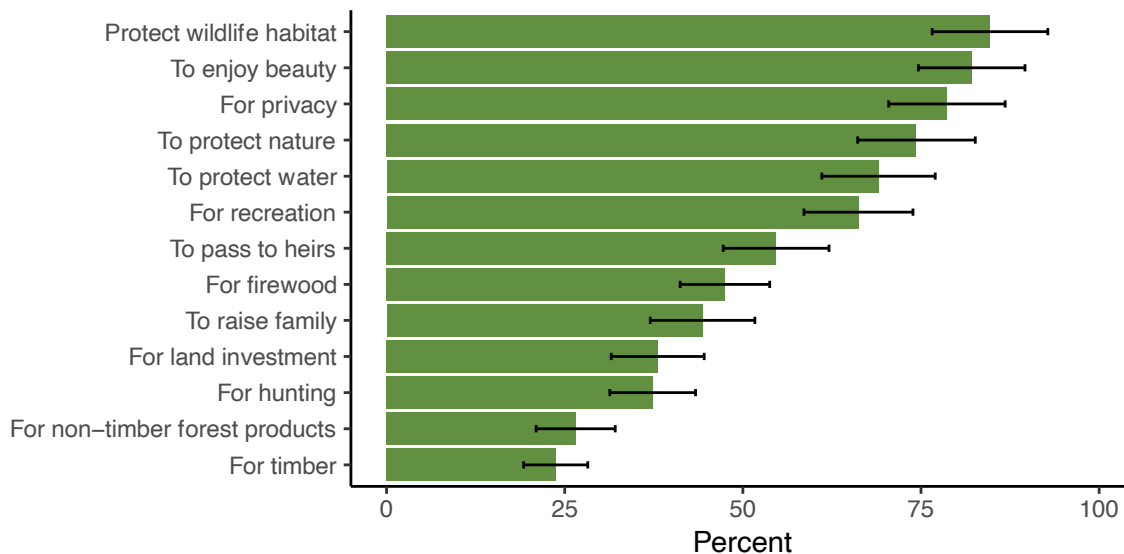
Map of woodland ownership



Family woodland (■), other woodland (■), and non-woodland (□) in Vermont.

Data source: [USDA Forest Service](http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos).

Reasons for owning wooded land



Percent of Vermont family woodland ownerships with 10+ acres who rate each objective as important or very important. Error bars represent 68% confidence interval.

Data source: [USDA Forest Service, National Woodland Owner Survey](#).

Sidebar with key facts

- Families and individuals own 60% of Vermont's wooded land
- Most own their wooded land for wildlife, beauty, and privacy
- 90% of family woodland owners want their wooded land to stay wooded
- Two thirds have cut trees for their own use, and a one third have cut trees for sale in the past five years
- 41% have a management plan and one third have received advice about their wooded land in the past five years

To all our members:

Please stay safe during this difficult time.

We look forward to when we can all meet together.

Best,

Munson Hicks, President WRWA

Windham Regional Woodlands Association
130 Austine Drive, Suite 300
Brattleboro, VT 05301-7040

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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.