

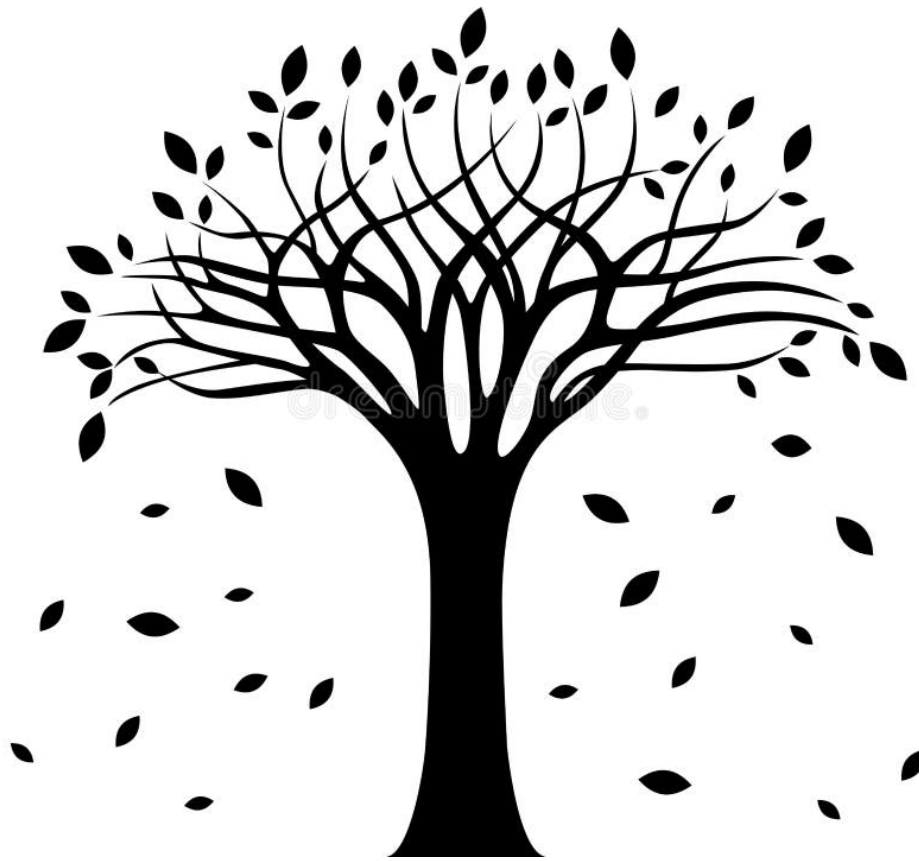
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# WOODLOT TIPS

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**Autumn 2023**

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## 2023 Annual Meeting

The WRWA held its annual meeting August 26th at The Molly Stark State Park Pavilion. Some twenty five members attended.

There was a walk led by Dam Schneski to look at the results of a previous cut that was designed to enhance wildlife habitat in the area, followed by a presentation by Sam about the changes in the use value appraisal program to allow for set asides for mature stand protections  
( See article on page six)

The meeting was then convened by outgoing President Munson Hicks. Following the Treasurer's and Secretary's reports, the new officers were introduced. Andrew Morrison volunteered to be the new President of the Board of Trustees and Jessalyn became the Vice President. Bob Zimmerman continues to be the Secretary and was elected once again to be the Clerk. Munson Hicks stays on as Treasurer after a deafening silence followed his offer to let someone else volunteer for the job.

Robert Spring stepped down from the board, citing time commitments he although promised to stay on in whatever capacities that might be useful.

Munson Hicks and Lee Todd stepped down as a result of term limits on board service.

There were four new Trustees announced- Allison Turner, Matt Stinchfield, Errold Nelson, and Diana Todd.

Here is who they are

### Allison Turner

Allison Turner has been an avid fan of forests since her early childhood with her father, forester Buck Turner. She has training as an herbalist, including degrees in Pharmacognosy (science of medicinal plants) from Marlboro College and the University of Illinois at Chicago. She regularly leads wild plant identification walks in Windham County. Other interests include working as a volunteer EMT and Firefighter for the town of Marlboro.

### Matt Stinchfield

Matt Stinchfield is a career safety professional, writer, and trainer, living in Guilford. His home is made of native timber that was drawn from the woods by horse team. He is an amateur forester interested in firewood, lumber, mushroom cultivation, trails and habitat. He still has all his original fingers and toes, and plans on keeping it that way.

## Errold Nelson

My name is Errold Nelson. I am currently the Forestry/Natural Resources instructor at the Windham Regional Career Center in Brattleboro, Vermont. Prior to teaching, I was the Forestry para educator here for fourteen years. I have been involved in the forestry industry since the late 1980s, beginning with my college degree in Environmental Science. I have held various jobs related to forestry education, logging, contracting and maintenance for over thirty years. My experience in several school systems and special education, in particular, has given me insight into the field of special education and the individualized needs of every student. I have found my niche in education; teaching students about this industry and sharing my love of Forestry.

## Diana Todd

When we were young marrieds, my husband (Lee Todd) and I lived in Vermont for about a decade, including four years in Brattleboro. When jobs lured us out of state, we always

vowed we would return, and now that we are retired, we finally made it back and are full time residents again. During those years away, we never completely left Vermont, being co-owners with Lee's siblings of a family place in Halifax, and eventually buying the property next door to have a place of our own. Even though we weren't full time residents, we were involved over the years with various groups in Windham County. I was on the board of WRWA for six years in the early 2000's, when it was WOA. I have been deeply involved in the creation and ongoing management of the Hogback Mountain Conservation Area in Marlboro, including six years as President. I am a co-founder of DHASH, a backcountry ski club that is a chapter of the Catamount Trail Association that has been working with the US Forest Service to reopen some of the grown-over ski slopes at the abandoned Dutch Hill ski area in Readsboro. (No lifts – this is do-it-yourself skiing.) What were those jobs that lured us out of state all those years ago? For me, it was structural engineering. We lived in the Washington, DC area for 29 years, and I ended up working for the National Institute of Standards and Technology on improving building codes for earthquake safety.

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## A Message from incoming President.

### Andrew Morrison

Serving as president of the Windham Regional Woodlands Assoc isn't so different from my day to day work as a forester. As WRWA prepares to celebrate its 75th year on this planet next year it makes it easy to recognize my role in tending this institution which is nearly twice as old as I am. Good forestry is similarly about following up on the legacies and work of those who came before you, using your time as manager to move things incrementally along in a positive

direction. Later in this edition of Woodlot Tips there is a poem by Lynn Levine, herself a forester and past trustee about black cherry. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Allegheny National Forest with a group to talk about forestry management in this region known for his high quality black cherry sawtimber. That visit really highlighted for me the long lasting impacts of management decisions on our forests, a topic I hope to share in further depth in the next newsletter.

## Look at Your Land at your Leisure with Lidar

by Diana Todd

What is Lidar? It's like radar, but it uses a light from a laser as the bounce-back signal. The data is collected from planes, not satellites. The entire state of Vermont has been recorded and you can look at the data for free online.

Data? Why would you want to look at data? Because it has been processed into images. There are several different types of images that have been produced, but one of the most interesting, especially for people interested in history, is called a "hillshade." This layer is so detailed that you can see fine details like stone walls and even cellar holes.

Take a look at some spot you know well using Lidar's hillshade, and you might see something you didn't know was there. A sharp ravine. A big flat spot. (Is that a beaver pond?) Stone walls far from any road. Then go out in the woods and see what that interesting thing really is.

Here's how to see the Lidar hillshade online.

- Go to [vcig.vermont.gov](http://vcig.vermont.gov), or just type [vcig Vermont](http://vcig.vermont.gov) into the search box in your browser and pick the top result.

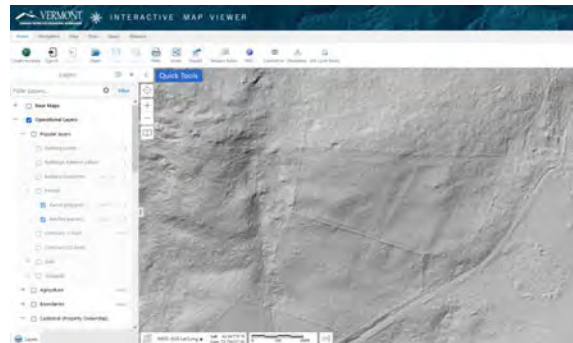
- Scroll down just a little bit – to the six boxes showing major choices. Pick the middle one in the top row, "Use Map Data."
- On the next screen, choose "Launch Map Viewer" in the box for Vermont Interactive Map Viewer.
- When the page loads, it shows a map of the entire state of Vermont. Zoom in to the area you are interested in.
- Change what shows up on the map by clicking and unclicking boxes in the menu on the left side of the screen.
- Scroll down the alphabetical list and click the box next to Lidar.
- The image will open showing the Lidar layer that features the treetop level.
- To see the hillshade layer, click the plus sign (+) next to the Lidar box in the menu to show the multiple Lidar options.
- Unclick (turn off) the Normalized Digital Surface Model and the Digital Surface Model, which are on by default when you open the app.
- Click Hillshade to turn it on.

The hillshade layer shows the surface of the land. You won't see existing buildings. They essentially disappear. You can easily pick out roads, which show up as smooth ribbons through the landscape. Ponds are large flat areas. You can often tell the difference between

mowed fields and forests because forested land looks rougher, more uneven. The stone walls are lines. Cellar holes show as pits.

The screenshot shows the southernmost section of the Hogback Mountain Conservation Area in Marlboro. Grant Road is the smooth, wide ribbon cutting diagonally across the lower right quadrant of the image. Notice the interesting set of parallel stone walls in the middle of the image that fan out into a wedge shape at their southern end, near the road. These walls are much closer together than is typical for a public road. Was this a cattle chute (or sheep chute) to move livestock from barns to pasture, keeping them out of cultivated crop fields?

There's a very distinct cellar hole adjoining the northern stone wall in this image. At the eastern end of that stone wall is a less distinct set of short stone walls and rectilinear structures. These are the remains of the house, barns, sheds and other farm yard structures of the Bishop farm, which was abandoned shortly after the Civil War.



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### WRWA Programming continues

Over the summer there were two very interesting programming events.

First, in July there was a tour of a dry oak portion of the Roaring Brook Wildlife Area in Vernon.

Special thanks to Martin Langeveld for hosting the tour from his home and Bob Zaino, Natural

Community Ecologist with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department for leading the event.

In August, Jeff Hardy of Cersosimo Industries hosted a tour of the kiln drying operation on Vernon Street., providing water and snacks as well. About 20 people attended.

Thanks, Jeff!

## Enrollment of Reserve Forestland in Use Value Appraisal

Sam Schneski, Windham County Forester

As of July 1, 2023 a new subcategory of the Use Value Appraisal (UVA) program will go into effect. This is probably the most significant change to the program since its inception in 1980. As most readers of this newsletter and members of the Windham Regional Woodlands Association know, the UVA program is rooted in the concept of keeping working lands working.

The original premise of production of high-quality forest products on a sustainable basis remains the primary focus of management efforts on all enrolled parcels. The new Reserve Forestland subcategory will allow for management on eligible parcels for things other than, and sometimes complementary to, forest products, including ecological diversity, forest complexity, and accrual of old forest characteristics and values.

Important characteristics of old forests include large old trees, spatial variability in tree density and size, abundant downed dead wood at varying rates of decay, multiple canopy layers, large standing dead trees (snags), native regeneration, and unique plant communities. Forests with a critical mass of these characteristics can provide important contributions to native biodiversity, wildlife habitat, hydrologic regulation, carbon storage, forest resilience to a changing climate, and localized cooling and climate buffering.

It is estimated that less than 1% of Vermont's forest are in an old forest condition. We realize

the value and importance of old forest structure and want to promote it where possible and hasten its development. Eligibility requirements for enrolling in this category are based on the current requirements of having at least 25 enrollable acres, 20 of which need to be potentially or currently under active forest management on productive soils. Of eligible parcels for UVA, the following requirements apply to enroll in the Reserve Forestland subcategory. Parcels with equal to, or greater than, 100 enrolled acres need to have at least 30% or more of those acres composed of significant and sensitive conditions, per program standards. Parcels with less than 100 enrolled acres need at least 50% or more of those acres composed of significant and sensitive conditions.

Significant and sensitive conditions are defined as consisting of 3 previously enrollable types/categories of land, as well as one new land condition that helps add to the ability of reaching the eligibility threshold of 30 or 50%. These conditions are ecologically significant treatment areas (ESTAs), site class IV (nonproductive soils), special places and sensitive sites, and steep slopes equal to or greater than 35% grade. For more details on ESTAs and special places and sensitive sites, visit the "for private landowners" and "Use Value Appraisal" tabs at [frp.vermont.gov](http://frp.vermont.gov). There is also a link to more detail about the Reserve Forestland category.

During development of this category there was some concern that this could inappropriately be a "do nothing category". Statutory purpose requires land enrolled in Reserve Forestland be managed for old forest values and functions. Because of Vermont's land use history most Vermont forest is not currently expressing old

forest characteristics and therefore is not realizing the values and functions of old forests. In some healthy forests, old forest characteristics may accrue over time with little intervention needed while in degraded forests, some intervention may be necessary to get, or keep, a forest progressing towards old forest values and functions. The standards have been designed to help ensure that land enrolled in Reserve Forestland will be evaluated to determine its position on a trajectory towards old forest values and functions and in some cases to require management interventions to support its progress. The plan requirements are designed to enable evaluation of accrual of old forest characteristics and satisfaction of the statutory purposes of the enrollment subcategory.

We are still in the development phase creating tools that will help landowners and foresters more easily determine if their land is eligible for the Reserve Forestland category. Refining of

outreach material is currently underway and will be ongoing for quite some time. Some examples include a frequently asked questions brochure, a mapping tool that will identify 35% grade slopes, case studies, webinars, social media presence, refined website, as well as one pager handouts addressing some of the intricacies and components of the category.

Vermont needs and values forests. We need more old forest, and to maintain working forests. While there can be tension between these goals, if thoughtfully pursued, they are not just compatible, they can be complementary. A strategically balanced and workable approach is possible to continue to support working lands while accelerating attainment of old forests/old forest function. This can be done at a scale and in a pattern that could support significant progress toward old forest targets and benefits in our state.

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## #6 Black Cherry

As Black Cherry grows  
ever larger,  
Bark forms delicate plates.  
That cover the trunk looking like  
Potato chips or dragon scales.

In the fall when fruit is ripe  
Bears climb to the top and  
drench themselves  
In the sweet juice.

When the cherries  
Fall to the ground,  
We can eat them raw  
Or make pies.

From the reddish-brown wood  
We make chairs, tables, and floors.  
Daniel Boom crafted  
cherrywood coffins -  
Legend says he slept in them.



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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.