



STEWARDS OF THE LAND

A publication for owners of land conserved with the Vermont Land Trust

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Vermont Land Trust | 8 Bailey Avenue | Montpelier, Vermont 05602 | 800-639-1709 toll-free

Selecting the Right Forester and Logger

Many people with land in current use have had the experience of being approached by a logger offering to clear some timber or thin the forest. How do you know that the logger is qualified and will do the work the way you want it done? How do you ensure that the logger will abide by your forest management plan? For many stewards, getting the right forester to oversee your plan is a crucial step in making sure that your desires for your land are being properly fulfilled.

Owners of conserved land in Vermont have had both good experiences and bad experiences with logging. One landowner, a farmer in Lamoille County who conserved several hundred acres of forestland in the 1990s, had helped manage the land for years. The farmer grew up on the property and is deeply connected to it. A logger showed up at the door one day offering to harvest some wood, and the farmer knew that the forest needed to be thinned out. After discussing the goals and prescriptions in the forest management plan, a rudimentary contract was drawn up by the logger and signed by both parties.

"I checked the references he gave me, and I felt reasonably confident that he understood my wishes for the land," the farmer said in a recent interview. "Our plan was very clear about what could be harvested where. Once he really got going, I knew that he was pulling out more than he should, but I didn't want to confront him. He made a lot of money off my timber, then he left without finishing the job. He left butt ends that



Jack and Helen Burbank of Leicester, Vermont

we've had to hire someone to take out, and he left terrible ruts in areas that had been gorgeous. He took out young maples that I was hoping would restore our sugarbush. You know, it takes a human lifetime to grow a sugar maple to timber size."

Such stories are not uncommon in Vermont. To protect yourself and your land, make sure your forester knows about any plans to log and involve your forester in overseeing the logging.

Jack and Helen Burbank of Leicester, Vermont have donated easements on several parcels of land in Vermont and New Hampshire. They began purchasing

Visit www.vlt.org/landownerresources for a list of VLT's recommended foresters.

This webpage also offers additional helpful web links for owners of conserved land including resources on agriculture, fish and wildlife, conservation programs, forestry and renewable energy.

woodlots as an investment about 40 years ago. They have always had a good forester and logger involved in managing their land, which they consider to be an important aspect to a successful harvest. Paul Harwood has been the forester for their Vermont properties for about 12 years. "Paul understands our plan and has helped keep our forest in a productive state," said Jack Burbank. "Good management just makes sense. It is economical, and for someone like me who views this as an investment, it maximizes the potential of the land."

Selecting both the right forester and the right logger ensures the best long term return from your forestland.

To help you locate a good forester, the Vermont Land Trust has posted a list of foresters on the VLT website; go to www.vlt.org/landownerresources and look in the forestry section. These are foresters that we have worked with and that we know will do a good job. The listed foresters do not all take the same approach to forest management. Some favor more aggressive management; some will encourage you to use a longer harvest rotation; others will be more attentive to specific environmental concerns identified in your plan. To choose a forester, VLT recommends meeting with two or three. Invite the forester to walk your land with you and talk about his/her approach to forest management. Look for someone who appreciates your intentions for the land, and whose approach will help you meet your goals. Always feel free to call VLT's Stewardship Forester, Pieter van Loon if you're looking for additional assistance at (802) 251-6008.



Vermont Land Trust

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Sugaring Season Predictions from VLT's Sugarmakers:

Give Thanks to Canada, Mud and Technology!

Conversations with VLT Board Chair David Marvin, owner of Butternut Mountain Farm and Robert Baird, VLT's Southwest Agricultural Director, Farmer and Sugarmaker

David and Robert agreed that it would be foolish to make predictions about the sugaring season before the first of May. Now with that disclaimer out of the way, the two veteran sugarmakers had some interesting things to say about the upcoming season.

Canada

David offered that the price will be good no matter what the crop is because the Quebec producers have established a price and will enforce it with a quota system. "For Vermont producers this means there is a floor price which is over the cost of production," said David.

Mud

Sap runs best after the ground has thawed, Bob Baird explained. "So, the best sap runs are when it is the muddiest. This may mean the dirt roads are the muddiest and not great to drive on but I don't complain."

Using Sugaring Technology

Veteran and amateur sugarmakers have found that technology makes all the difference in the world. New tubing and vacuum systems will level things out regardless of the weather events. Both Bob and David felt that it is worth the investment in technology. "This can mean fewer people working each season, not fewer hours. However, the overall cost of production is much lower with the technological improvements," David said and then added, "these systems can be worth the investment even for small scale producers."

Dedicated Sugarmakers Using Buckets

For those who choose to harvest their sap with buckets, it seems that the weather is the best predictor. David and Bob both said that during the season, freezing nights and warm days offer the most intense flow. Bob also said that sugarmakers should be happy with water in their cellars this past fall and this winter because, "this means there is lots of



The Elder Sugarhouse in Starksboro. John Elder, VLT Board member, Middlebury professor, and a relative newcomer to sugaring shared his favorite sugarmaking proverb: "You can have two bad years in a row but you can't have two good years in a row." Elder then added, "it might turn out to be a pretty good year."

moisture in the ground and the sugaring season should go well."

Organic Maple Syrup?

David mentioned that organic syrup is at its peak demand because there has been growing consumer demand. What's the difference? Organically certified trees are large enough to be tapped and are not over-tapped. Organic production also requires an organic foamer such as organic canola or safflower oil.

If you have other predictions or thoughts on sugaring please send them to Annie Crawford at annie@vlt.org