



So What Is a *Working Forest*?

A Forest is a biological community dominated by trees, other woody vegetation¹, and non-woody plants.

Forests provide a variety of ecosystem services² including:

- Provision of food, fresh water, wood & fiber, and fuel;
- Support services such as wildlife habitat, nutrient cycling, soil formation, and primary production;
- Regulation of climate, floods, disease, and water quality; and
- Cultural services including aesthetics, spiritual connections, education, and recreation.

A Working Forest is a forest where forest ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and storage, water filtration, flood control, terrestrial and aquatic habitats for flora and fauna, recreation opportunities, and natural beauty are actively conserved. A working forest may also be managed for wood products such as timber, fuelwood, smallwood, or pulpwood and non-wood forest products such as maple syrup, wild edibles, herbs, and medicinals.

Wilderness is a Working Forest since it provides forest ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, water filtration, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

A Tree Farm is a Working Forest since it focuses on the production of high quality timber and associated values.

A Family Forest is a Working Forest since it focuses on conserving forest health first, and when appropriate, on providing forest ecosystem services, non-wood forest products and wood products.

A Healthy Working Forest is a forest where forest ecosystem services, wood products, and/or non-wood forest products are produced and where the forest's capacity for self-renewal is preserved. Indicators of a forest's capacity for self-renewal include water quality, site productivity, biological diversity, carbon storage and sequestration potential, and forest vitality.

A Healthy Vermont Working Forest Landscape includes a *triad* of:

- Self-willed **Forest Reserves** focused on forest ecosystem services;
- Carefully tended **Tree Farms** focused on wood products; and
- **Family Forests** focused first on forest health while producing a wide variety of forest ecosystem goods and services.

¹ Spurr, Stephen H., and Burton V. Barnes. 1973. *Forest Ecology*. The Ronald Press Company, New York.

² Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Island Press, Washington, DC.