



MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR CERTIFIED FORESTS

Modified December 31, 2002

The Vermont Family Forests Foundation (VFF), a non-profit corporation, exists to conserve the health of the forest community, and when appropriate, to promote the careful cultivation of local family forests for community benefits. VFF believes that the three great conservers of family forests are well-informed stewards, sound economic returns from ecological forestry, and a community-shared land ethic.

The VFF Certification Project provides family forest owners, who carefully manage their lands, with affordable access to independent evaluation and certification of their forestry practices. Once certified, they may use the SmartWood label for public marketing and advertising and have access to VFF's full range of benefits and services.

This memorandum of agreement serves as a constitution for the VFF "Green" Certification Project and establishes the responsibilities of VFF and participating landowners.

VFF hereby agrees:

To develop and maintain a system for accurately identifying sustainable levels of timber harvests on a periodic basis.

To systematically review commercial timber harvesting plans in advance.

To maintain copies of the annual conformance reports, forest management plan, memorandum of agreement, and map for each property in the certified pool.

To provide a list of parcels participating in the VFF certified pool to SmartWood every year in conjunction with the annual audit.

To review and approve the forest management plans, maps, and practices of all family forest lands to be added to the VFF certified pool.

To only add parcels to the VFF certified pool when said parcels meet or exceed the following:

- a VFF-approved forest management plan and map
- a completed summary form for any upcoming, commercial timber sales
- a signed copy of the VFF "Memorandum of Agreement"
- acceptable management practices installed in substantial compliance with the Vermont AMPs

- clearly marked boundaries (i.e. paint spots on trees, corner monuments, and fence posts that are “intervisual” under full leaf conditions) by 2004 for current enrollees and within two years of enrollment for new enrollees
- a clear title
- a list of synthetic pesticides used with the past three years
- landowners who are committed to ecologically sustainable forestry as outlined in the VFF voluntary timber management practices.

To view each property in the certified pool as part of the larger ecosystem and to promote the protection of site productivity, water quality, and biological diversity on a regional basis by:

- developing a comprehensive template for forest management planning
- maintaining a list of recommended timber management practices
- establishing priorities for conservation or restoration and compiling a list of unusual or exemplary examples of plant communities occurring on VFF.
- establishing some regional coordination of its activities (such as GIS mapping) and attempting to incorporate information on the uses and condition of intervening land located between the forests in the certified pool.

To establish both a method of organizing the forest inventory and a monitoring program which serve as a data bank of the individual properties in the VFF certified pool along with a system to centralize and hold this information collectively for analysis, future planning, and marketing.

To assure that all forest management plans on all new and existing properties in the VFF certified land base contain the information listed in the VFF Management Plan Template. This will be completed when properties are enrolled, when plans are revised and updated, or prior to certified commercial timber harvesting.

To notify in writing any owners with forests in the certified pool when VFF determines there is non-compliance and the steps necessary to re-establish compliance.

To have a system for marking logs on the landing and of tracking the wood through the manufacturing process for all certified forest products within the VFF network.

The family forest owner participating in the VFF “Green” Certification Project agrees:

With the spirit and intent of VFF’s Mission and Principles.

To notify VFF in writing when:

- no longer interested in participating in the certified pool, or
- when long-term objectives are no longer in alignment with VFF’s Mission, Principles, and Voluntary Timber Management Checklist, or
- prior to implementation of activities which will deviate significantly from their approved forest management plan.

To comply with the VFF Timber Management checklist to the maximum practical extent.

To submit a simple harvesting plan prior to any harvest which identifies marking guidelines,

estimated volumes to be removed, and any special features or considerations for all commercial timber sales.

To submit an annual conformance report by February 1 of each year to VFF for each parcel in the VFF certified pool.

To grant VFF access to the forestland in the certified pool to review compliance with the forest management plan.

To verify that the forest land in the VFF certified pool is clear and legally secure, that boundaries are properly identified on the ground, and that timber harvesting is legally permitted.

To periodically (i.e. every 5 to 10 years) update the forest management plan to reflect changes in ownership objectives and forest conditions and to submit that plan to VFF for review and approval.

To only use pesticides - including insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides - in the certified forest as a last resort, under limited situations, and with careful application; to only use those pesticides accepted by the Northeast Organic Farming Association; and to avoid use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

It is mutually agreed by VFF and the family forest owner that:

This agreement pertains to VFF Parcel Number _____, further identified as follows: _____ and shown on the attached map.

The family forest owner may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying VFF in writing.

Failure by VFF or by the family forest owner(s) to abide by the provisions of this memorandum of agreement shall, upon written notification by either party, be grounds for notification that this agreement will be terminated unless otherwise appealed.

Family forest owners may appeal any decision by the VFF staff to the VFF Executive Committee. These appeals should be in writing and should be sent to: VFF Executive Committee, PO Box 254, Bristol, VT 05443. The Executive Committee will meet with the landowner and VFF staff as quickly as possible and will make every effort to resolve the problem. VFF will notify the landowner of its findings in writing within 15 days of hearing the appeal.

Landowner(s)

Vermont Family Forests Foundation, Inc.

Name

Date

Name

Date

Name

Date

Title

Welcome to VFF—we're delighted to have you aboard!