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# News from the Forest

## Founder's Thoughts

*"The ultimate soul-restoration is that which is undertaken on behalf of the land and all that lives upon it."*  
--Caitlin and John Mathews

VFF is nearing the completion of two years of work under the Ford Community-Based Forestry program. We have conducted many exciting projects involving public education, ecological forestry, green certification, value-adding demonstration, and marketing. We have also conducted much behind-the-scenes work, such as the development of monitoring systems, forms, templates, and procedures to promote the practice of ecological forestry and to reward forest stewards economically for doing so.

I want to express my deep appreciation to all of the individuals, landowners, value-adding businesses, subcontractors, value-adding businesses, and customers who helped get the VFF experiment this far along. I want to give special thanks to VFF's exceptional staff, Len Schmidt, Director of Operations and Sandra Murphy, Office Manager. Len and Sandra each work about 16 hours per week for VFF and most of what VFF has accomplished is the result of their dedicated work.

Thanks, too, to VFF's Board of Directors, including John Elder, Deb Brighton, Chris Klyza, Paul Ralston, and Jonathan Corcoran. Thanks also to Conrad Motyka, Commissioner of Forests, Parks, and Recreation who has also been very supportive of my continued involvement in VFF while serving as the Addison County Forester. And finally, thanks to the Ford Community-based Forestry Demonstration Program for providing the funding that has helped make much of this possible.

In some ways VFF has now completed the easy part. The hard part will be succeeding in the marketplace and maintaining landowner interest and commitment over time. My hunch is that succeeding in the marketplace will require the launch of a commercial entity of some

type. How will that organization be affiliated with the VFF Foundation? How will landowners be involved in the forest, in the value-adding, and in the marketplace? What value-adding services are currently available and what services must be established? How will the credibility of the Family Forest® brand be maintained in the marketplace?

Maintaining landowner interest and commitment presents another set of challenges. Thinking back to the landowner soiree, I can remember looking around the room at so many different people who are stewards of so many different forests. What connects these people? It is money, timber, recreation, wildlife habitat? No. What connects these forest stewards is that each and every one of them shares a deep appreciation and love for their forests. That is what they have in common, and that is what has attracted them to be involved in Vermont Family Forests.

In answering the many questions we will encounter as we move Vermont Family Forests forward, we will not go too far astray if we always remember to ask of any proposed action: "Is this good for the forest?" But we must also never forget to ask, "Is this good for the forest steward's relationship to the forest?"

As always, VFF welcomes your thoughts and input. Thank you. And "May the forest be with you!"

-David Brynn, VFF Founder and Director

### ***Northern Woodlands* Features VFF project**

Be sure to check out *Northern Woodlands'* Autumn 2002 issue for a feature article by Andrew Savage, a Middlebury College student who used VFF beech lumber that had been milled for the College's LaForce Hall project to build a small table. His essay beautifully interweaves the woodworking process, VFF's approach to forest stewardship, and his experiences growing up in the forests of Vermont.

**Mark Your Calendar!  
September 20-21, 2002**

**Dorothy Maclean Lecture and Workshop**

VFF is pleased to announce the visit of Dorothy Maclean to Vermont. A co-founder of the Findhorn Community in Scotland in 1962, Dorothy has devoted her life to telling the world her story of how we can and must have direct contact with the divine intelligences of nature to heal ourselves and the Earth. Come hear this extraordinary ambassador from nature:

**Lecture.** Friday, September 20, 7PM. Congregational Church, Middlebury. "Nature Speaks Out: 'Go Within to Renew Yourselves and Heal the Earth.'" \$7.00 at the door

**Workshop.** Saturday, September 21, 9AM-1PM Congregational Church, Middlebury. "Attuning to Wholeness" \$45.00 (includes Friday lecture). Must pre-register/pay in advance. To register, send payment to VFF.

**Natural Community Mapping Progressing**

Our efforts to create natural community maps for all prospective and current landowners in the VFF pool of well-managed forests is proceeding well, thanks to the collaborative efforts of forester Laura French and GIS specialist Robert Turner. We have performed aerial ortho photo interpretation on 17 parcels, prepared draft natural community maps for 14 parcels, and produced final field-verified maps for 4 parcels. Now that many of the kinks have been worked out of the process, we anticipate that map production will proceed quickly in the latter part of the year.

**Natural Community Mapping Workshop**

**\*\*Date Change\*\***

**Thursday, April 17, 2003 & Thursday, April 24, 2003**

VFF had originally scheduled these workshops for September. We have decided to postpone them, both because we would like to have more mapping work completed for the workshops, and because, with our limited staff and our need to attend to other major events this autumn, we do not have the staff resource to give to the workshops at this time. For more information about the workshops, please visit the events page of our website, [www.familyforests.org](http://www.familyforests.org).

**Management Plan Template Completed**

Mapping and database specialist Phil Girton recently completed work for VFF, creating a software packet that allows us to create management plans using the VFF

template. This software will allow consulting foresters to easily plug their data into VFF's template to create a plan that meets the criteria of both VFF and SmartWood, our third-party certifier.

**LaForce Hall Demonstration Project a Great Success**

Five VFF forestlands, 3 loggers, 3 foresters, 2 sawyers, 1 trucker, 5 kiln driers, and 3 woodworking businesses—all within 75 miles of Middlebury, provided 60,000 board feet of certified logs to produce 32,500 board feet of beech, birch, and maple for Middlebury College's LaForce Hall, scheduled for completion in late August.

When architects originally designed the Hall, they stipulated clear cherry for all millwork, a product that Vermont's forests cannot sustainably provide. VFF suggested instead that the architects consider woods that Addison County's forests *are* willing to sustainably yield, and as a result, millwork specifications changed to character-marked beech, birch, and maple. ("Character" refers to streaks, small knotholes, and other such markings).

LaForce Hall now offers an enduring testament to the beauty and utility of conventionally under-valued wood grades and species. In the Ross Commons Lounge, clear cherry veneer paneling was originally to have lined the walls, which would have necessitated out-of-state wood and out-of-state manufacturing. Instead, sawyer Bob Growney of Shoreham, Vermont, milled beech logs into 3/8" flitches. The flitches were numbered in the order in which they were sawed, then applied as horizontal paneling on the lounge walls in this same order, revealing to observant visitors how grain patterns change within the trees.

Likewise, ceiling specifications that required milling in Wisconsin were altered such that Tioli Woodworking of Middlebury could produce the 23,000 board feet of ceiling panels. The architects, contractors, and the College are exceptionally pleased with all the millwork they received.

In the project, VFF was able to fulfill its mission of returning value to the forest community, providing excellent wages for excellent forest stewardship. Landowners received between 1.92- and 2.20-times conventional stumpage prices for their trees, and loggers received roughly 1.6-times conventional logging wages for their fine work.

**VFF stocks ecoforestry supplies at cost:**

**Red latex boundary-marking paint** (\$20/gallon), **Canola oil-based bar & chain oil** (\$10/gallon, \$40/5 gallon). Stay tuned for our **VFF Biltmore stick**, made with VFF-certified wood—available in September. We also have VFF's "**May the Forest be with you**" t-shirts, sizes Child's L - Adult XL for \$10. Spread the word!