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News from the Forest

Summer - Autumn 2006

Long-term Conservation in the New Haven River Headwaters

Last spring, Lincoln landowners Jackie Tuxill and Jim Taylor approached Vermont Family Forests to enlist our help in carrying out a conservation project they'd been envisioning for some time. Concerned about maintaining Lincoln's working landscape and community character, Jackie and Jim wanted to spread the word to Lincoln landowners about conservation easements as a long-term conservation tool and about the advantages of working together to pursue easements.

Jackie and Jim modeled their idea, which they called the New Haven River Headwaters Conservation Project (NHRHCP), on the highly successful Orange County Headwaters Project (OCHP). In Orange County, 24 landowners were interested in donating conservation easements on their lands. But placing an easement on one's property can be costly — many thousands of dollars. By banding together, these landowners were able to attract grant funding to cover nearly all of the costs of the easement process. We at Vermont Family Forests welcomed

the opportunity to work with Jackie and Jim on the NHRHCP, since it aligns beautifully with our mission. To launch the project, we contacted 70 Lincoln landowners who own 55 acres or more. We sent them background about the project and about conservation easements as a conservation tool, and we invited them to attend a meeting on July 13 to learn more.

Twenty-five landowners attended the meeting at the Lincoln Library. During



Lincoln landowners contemplated conservation easements during a recent meeting of the New Haven River Headwaters Conservation Project.

the meeting, landowners currently participating in OCHP shared their insights and offered encouragement to our budding project. Other presenters described the economic, community, and legal implications of conservation easements. Most importantly, landowners asked questions, shared stories, and contemplated this initiative together.

In Phase II of this project, we'll be applying for grant funding not only to carry forward the collaborative conservation easement process, but also to connect landowners with a range of other short- and long-term conservation options — from forest certification to community-supported forestry to estate planning. We'll also be expanding the project beyond the town of Lincoln to fully embrace the New Haven River headwaters, including the towns of Starksboro, Ripton, and Bristol.

Visit our website education page, www.familyforests.org/public-education, for updates on this exciting project. ☞

Sustainable Forestry Goes to Summer Camp

“So Cool!” That was the feedback from the Girl Scout counselors-in-training who participated in a Vermont Family Forests workshop in sustainable forestry this summer. From searching for macroinvertebrates in a forest stream to hand-planing a spruce board to carve a canoe paddle, the girls experienced sustainable forestry in action in the woods surrounding their summer camp.

For ten years, Camp Wapanacki, in Hardwick, Vermont, has been home-away-from-home during the summer for hundreds of Girl Scouts who come to the camp to ride horses, swim, camp, canoe, hike, sing songs, and more. Three hundred acres of rolling, forested landscape form a beautiful backdrop for camp life.

This year, Vermont Family Forests and the Girl Scouts Council of Vermont teamed up to move those forests from backdrop to center stage. Our mutual goal was to integrate sustainable forestry into camp life and involve campers in the scientific, technological, and economic aspects of sustainable management of the Camp's forest lands. Moreover, the proj-

ect would expose campers to forest-related careers and broaden their knowledge of the relationships among Vermont's forests, people, environmental health, and local economic vitality.

The first step was to develop a Forest Stewardship Council-certified management plan for the property. With this in hand, land managers can make management decisions that maintain or improve forest health. This spring, mapping specialist Barb Otsuka inventoried and mapped the land's natural communities, and Nancy Patch of North Woods Forestry created the forest management plan. These steps accomplished, Camp Wapanacki became the latest addition to the VFF certified forest pool.

Next we planned and carried out a workshop that immersed the girls in sustainable forestry, from the healthy forest to a finished wood product. Led by Sterling College student Silas Clark of Bristol, the girls first explored indicators of forest health — excellent water quality, productive soils, and native biological diversity.

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VERMONT FAMILY FORESTS™

Vermont Family Forests™ is a non-profit education organization whose mission is to conserve the health of the forest community and, when appropriate, to promote the careful cultivation of local family forests for community benefit. We accomplish this mission through public education, forest certification, and research and demonstration projects.

News From the Forest is published quarterly by Vermont Family Forests™. To subscribe to *News from the Forest*, please email us at info@familyforests.org or call 453-7728. Call us or visit our website at www.familyforests.org for more information on VFF's programs.

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Growing Family Forest® Flooring: Beautiful Vermont Floors from Healthy Vermont Forests

The Family Forest® Flooring Project continues to evolve and prosper. Our first batch was very well received, and customers have been raving about the quality and beauty of their hardwood floors built with wood from healthy, local, beautiful, productive Vermont forests. Our second batch of flooring is arriving now and includes 15,000 square feet of beech, birch, ash, cherry, red oak, sugar maple, and red maple flooring.

Several customers have opted for our Northern Hardwood Forest Floor™, a mix of fine-grained woods from the dominant members of the Northern Hardwood Forest community — sugar maple, American beech, and yellow birch. These floors are as beautiful, diverse, and richly hued as the forests they came from.

Another mixed-species flooring line is in the works: the Clayplain Forest Floor™, a mix of more distinctively grained woods from trees common to the Clayplain Forest community — ash, hickory, and oak. The beauty of Family Forest® flooring is that customers can design their own floors from what local forests have sustainably yielded. Customers may opt for a single-species floor, or one that mixes grains and hues of their favorite local hardwood species.

We are growing Family Forest® Flooring to become Vermont's Conservation Brand™. Customers buying this wood know that the trees come from healthy, local Vermont forests. They know that value-adding is done locally to the maximum extent possible. They know the conservation story behind the wood, and so are directly connected with the forest community that grew their floor.

The flooring project, by design, involves many landowners, consulting foresters, loggers, truckers, and secondary wood product manufacturers. David Brynn, who coordinates the project for Vermont Family Forests, jokes that steering the process sometimes seems like herding cats. "It's a community-based, forest conservation initiative, if there ever was one!"

Family Forest® flooring is available through Planet Hardwood in St George. Check out their website at www.planethardwood.com, give Peter or Diane a call at 802-482-4405, e-mail Peter at peter@planethardwood.com, or visit their showroom at 401 Barber Road, St. George. Or stop by the Vermont Family Forests office in Bristol to see a beautiful, finished sample of mixed-species flooring. ☞



Bill Torrey's log forwarder helps minimize soil compaction and erosion during logging at the Little Hogback Community Forest.

Community Forest update

Although we are still waiting for a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service to allow us to accept tax-deductible donations for Community Forests, the harvest at Little Hogback Community Forest has proceeded as planned. The trees that were marked with blue paint have been cut and turned into flooring. (See story above). The returns from the sale will go into an account to help future shareholders pay for management and taxes. As part of the logging job, Bill Torrey built a road that winds gently through the forest, making it easier to walk, ski, and harvest firewood. Check it out! Visit the Community Forests Project page on our website for more information about the project.

Upcoming Events

Game of Logging Chainsaw Training, Levels I-III

Dates:

Level I: Friday, October 13, 2006 (rain date, October 20, 2006)
Level II: Friday, October 20, 2006 (rain date, October 27, 2006)
Level III: Friday, October 27, 2006 (rain date, November 3, 2006)

Time: 8:00am-4:00pm

Cost: \$150 per workshop level, full payment in advance required.

Limit: 10 participants per level

The autumn Game of Logging training courses are filling rapidly. Sign up soon!

The Game of Logging training program combines Scandinavian logging techniques with the latest systems for working safely around trees. *We can't overstate the value of these training courses. We've had participants who have used chainsaws for 30 years prior to taking GOL Level I say that the course changed the way they work in the woods.* Visit our website (events page), www.familyforests.org, for more information and to download a registration form, or call Vermont Family Forests at 453-7728.



Game of Logging graduate Amelia Gardner demonstrates safe felling of a spruce tree during the Camp Wapanacki Sustainable Forestry workshop in early August (see story, page 1).

Sustainable Energy Conservation Congress coming soon!

This winter, Vermont Family Forests will host a symposium on local, sustainable energy alternatives. Students, community members, and local organizations will join round-table discussions on energy issues, including wood and wind energy development, housing, transportation, energy conservation, and more.

Please contact Vermont Family Forests if you'd like to help plan or participate in the event.

Welcome, International Society of Ethnobiology!

In June, we welcomed another non-profit organization into the Vermont Family Forests office. VFF's office manager, Susannah McCandless, a doctoral student in geography, will also be working part-time as the coordinator for the International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE). The ISE is committed to achieving a greater understanding of the complex relationships, both past and present, that exist within and between human societies and their environments.

Work for both VFF and ISE complements Susannah's research interests in issues of access and equity in private land conservation. "The ISE shares with Vermont Family Forests a focus on the interdependence of human and natural communities and the importance of conservation at a local scale," she notes. For more information about the ISE, see www.ethnobiology.net.

Susannah's roles with VFF and ISE mean that Susannah's sunny face is around the office most days. So, call or stop by, peruse our little eco-forestry lending library, pick up a gallon of non-petroleum bar oil, and meet Susannah and the ISE. ☞



Susannah McCandless, VFF's office manager and ISE coordinator.

Sustainable Forestry goes to Summer Camp, from pg. 1

David Brynn of Vermont Family Forests then explained how a forest manager selects trees for harvest in a way that maintains forest health. The girls measured and calculated the lumber volume of a spruce tree that had been selected for thinning. Then, after a pause to give gratitude to the tree, logger Amelia Gardner felled the spruce, and the girls carried two eight-foot logs out of the forest to a nearby portable sawmill.

Local sawyer Will Strong milled the spruce logs into boards, which the girls carried back to the camp maintenance building, to be stacked to dry until next summer. Paddle-maker Ann Ingerson of Craftsbury Common then showed the girls what those spruce boards will yield when dry — lightweight, beautiful, hand-carved canoe paddles. Ann demonstrated the paddle-making process, and the girls tried out the tools, hooting with delight as shavings curled from the wood.

During the fall, the camp will fell and mill several more spruce trees to build up a supply of wood for paddle-making. Next summer, the wood will be dry and ready for the first campers to begin carving their paddles.

Says Charlie La Rosa of the Girl Scout Council of Vermont board of directors, "When the girls who attend our camps now come back with their own daughters in future years, they should be able to point with pride and satisfaction to the forests they visited, analyzed, monitored, and cared for when they were Scouts." What's more, they can share with their daughters the paddles they carefully crafted out of wood from those healthy, carefully managed forests. Now *that's* experiential education! ☞