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IN THIS ISSUE: Our 2022 Annual Report, Creating a forest ecosystem advisory council, and *Portrait of a Forest*.

Conservation Forestry

2022 brought changes to our conservation forestry staff. After eight years with Vermont Family Forests, Kathleen Stutzman returned to the forestry program at the University of Vermont to pursue a master's degree. Kathleen first came to VFF as a volunteer in 2014 and soon joined the VFF staff. Heartfelt gratitude for all her great work.

Ralph Turzini joined Vermont Family Forests as conservation forester in March, bringing his wide and deep skills as forester, educator, and woodworker to the table. In addition to working with several landowners to write or update forest conservation plans, Ralph worked in a number of family forests to help landowners carry out careful, organic, ecologically sound practices outlined in their Current Use (CUA) plans.

Collaborating to Expand Current Use

Responding to an urgent need to expand Vermont's timber-focused Current Use (CUA) program to recognize and value wild forests, Vermont Family Forests continued work with the Wild Forests Vermont initiative. VFF Executive Director David Bryn testified before the House Natural Resources Committee on the importance of CUA changes from the perspective of a family forest owner. He submitted op-ed pieces to VTigger, Addison Independent, and Times Argus on behalf of Wild Forests Vermont, supporting inclusion of a Wild Forests Category within CUA.

In her testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee, Duxbury Selectboard member Janison Erwin—a globe expert on parks and forest management—cited a Vermont Family Forests study ([Enhancing Forest Resilience of Vermont State Lands](#), commissioned by the State of Vermont and completed in collaboration with hydrologist Kristen Underwood), which shows the impacts of forest roads on state lands on stream sedimentation, flood resilience, and water quality.

During the 2022 legislative session, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 146, amending Vermont's Current Use program to add a sub-category of "Reserve Forestland" to the Managed Forestland land use category. This modest change allows private landowners whose forests meet particular (and frankly uncommon) criteria to manage qualifying portions of their land for non-timber values. This is a small step in the right direction, and we will continue to work for more.

Community-based Forest Renewal

Conventional forest plans use the term "Timber Stand Improvement," or "TSI," to describe various forest management activities aimed at growing high-quality timber. We think "Community-based Forest Renewal" better describes the work we do to help landowners fulfill their Current Use forest management plan commitments. CBF practices focus first on forest health, with the side-benefit of improved timber quality. Through the CBF practice of grating trees (above), landowners enhance large dead wood, feed mycorrhizae, maintain carbon storage, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Wild forests sequester and store carbon, protect water quality, support biodiversity, and increase flood resilience. They protect assets we hold in common—water, wildlife, and air—an immense contribution to the public good.

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2022 Annual Report

Take a look back at our past year in the forest community. Deep gratitude to the forests of this beautiful place we call home, and to all who love and care for them.

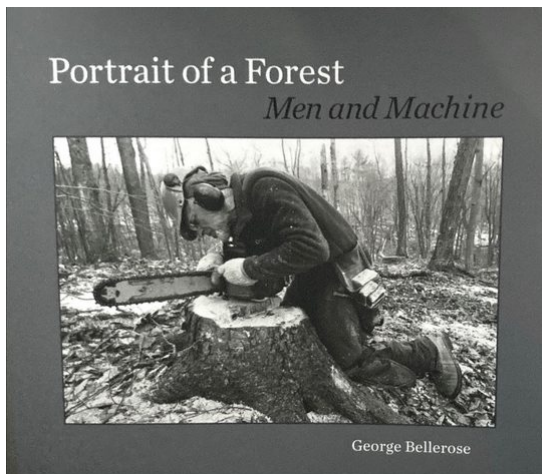
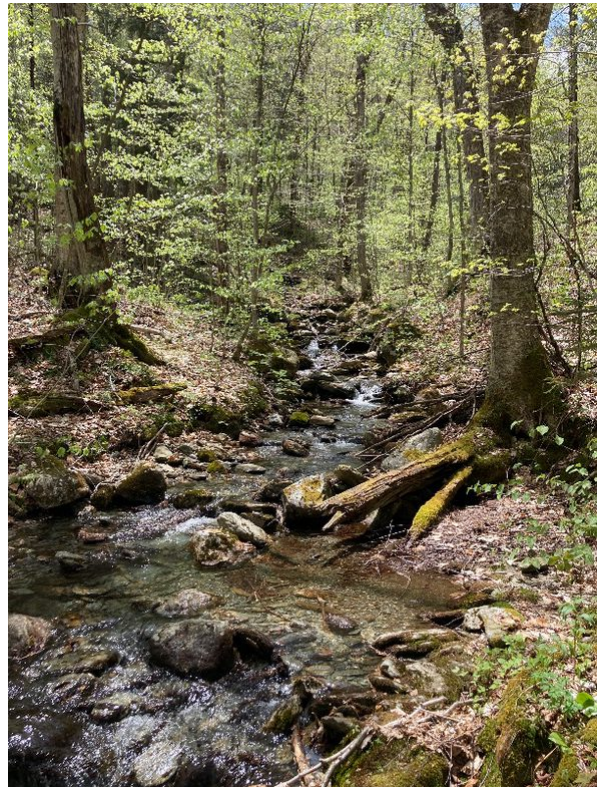
We'd love to hear your thoughts.

[Read the annual report](#)

Time for a Forest Ecosystem Advisory Council

It's time to bring back a vehicle for citizen involvement in the processes that inform how we relate to Vermont forests. In his commentary, VFF Executive Director David Brynn describes the role and benefits of a Forest Ecosystem Advisory Council.

[Read David's commentary](#)



Sharing the Gift of *Portrait of a Forest*

If you haven't had a chance to pick up a complementary copy of George Bellerose's beautiful book, *Portrait of a Forest: Men and Machine*, you're in luck. We still have a small number left. [Read about the book, and how you can receive a copy.](#)



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