



Vermont Land Trust

CONSERVING LAND FOR THE FUTURE OF VERMONT

MANAGING & HARVESTING WOODLAND CONSERVED WITH VLT

A GUIDE TO VERMONT LAND TRUST'S REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

Introduction: For the Landowner

The long-term health and sustainable harvesting of every actively managed woodland begins with a thorough and well-prepared *forest management plan*. Most conservation easements held by the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) allow timber harvesting, but only after VLT has approved a forest management plan for the conserved property.

VLT recognizes that the cost and quality of forest management plans vary with each landowner's objectives. Although the plan can be prepared by a well-informed landowner or other person, we recommend that landowners hire a consulting forester and communicate their goals and concerns to the forester before development of their plan begins.

This guide offers technical help to the professional who is preparing a forest management plan. If, after reading this bulletin, you have questions about forest management or your easement, we will be happy to answer them. Please call or write the Woodstock office:

3117 Rose Hill
Woodstock, VT 05091-3117
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Notes to the Plan Preparer

VLT will accept forest management plans that were developed before the property was conserved. However, we reserve the right to condition them before issuing an approval to ensure adequate protection of the resources identified in the Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions ("the Grant").

The requirements described on these pages are consistent with the standards of Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Forest Land Program. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are additional requirements imposed by VLT.

1. Objectives

- Describe the forest management objectives that the plan has been designed to achieve.
- List the products and/or values that are desired from the forest resource.
- Briefly explain how these products and/or values relate to the Purposes section of the Conservation Restrictions*.

2. Maps

Maps provided with the management plan must include a title block which includes: the owner's name; a north arrow; and an indication of scale. Maps must show: the town(s) in which the parcel(s) is located; the number of acres in each parcel; boundary lines; significant features (buildings, public roads, truck roads* and major skid trails,* landings, wetlands, streams, ponds, bogs, power lines, historic or cultural resources, designated significant habitats, etc.); and forest stands ("treatment units"), delineated by number and corresponding with the plan. Maps should be appropriately scaled and detailed to reflect each parcel's size and its resource objectives.

2. Forest Stand (“Treatment Unit”) Descriptions

Forest Types: Society of American Foresters cover type, or an equivalent.

Topography:* Describe the topography of each treatment unit (approximate elevation, position in the landscape, average slope, aspect). A topographic map with parcel and stand boundaries outlined can substitute for a written description of each stand.

Soils:* Identify the characteristics of the soil(s) that enable it to grow the present or desired forest type.

Past Management History: Identify the approximate date and type of the last treatment or harvest. Include planting records, etc., if known.

Stocking Level and Age Class Distribution Before Harvest: Describe the current stocking level, including basal area and mean stand diameter. Include a written description or listing that tells whether the stand is understocked, adequately stocked, or overstocked. Determine if the stand is even-aged or uneven-aged.

Stocking Level After Harvest: Estimate what the stocking structure of the stand will be after the harvest is complete. VLT uses the USDA’s Silvicultural Guides for the Northeast as its standard in determining approval or denial for silvicultural reasons. If no stocking guide is available, the residual stand basal area of acceptable growing stock should not be less than 60 square feet per acre.

Heavy cutting, defined as harvesting below the “C” level in the appropriate guide, is permissible when it is:

- Recommended in a generally accepted silvicultural guide or handbook based on a stand analysis;
- Required because of the natural occurrence of fire, insect, or weather related damage; or
- Otherwise permitted by the Grant.

Stand Quality: Derive this by computing the acceptable growing stock basal area. “Acceptable growing stock” is defined as any potential crop tree that is to be retained and managed to meet the objectives of the Grant.

Site Class: Determine this through soils information, site index, or growth calculations.

Insect and Disease Occurrence: Note any major disease or pest problem within the stand. If there is a problem, identify the silvicultural action, if any, that will be taken to address it.

Prescribed Silvicultural Treatments: Identify what silvicultural method will be employed to achieve the goals for the stand. (Stands that need to develop should be identified as such.) The cutting system prescribed for the stand should be based on the information derived from the stand analysis and the stocking guide for the forest type with adjustments made (if needed) for non-timber considerations.

4. Plant and Wildlife Considerations*

Identify any known significant habitats and/or natural heritage sites on the parcel, as identified by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife or a qualified biologist. Describe the plan’s management recommendations for minimizing the effect (if any) of harvesting on these habitats.

5. Aesthetic and Recreational Considerations*

Describe the impact (if any) of harvesting on views from public roads, trails, and local communities. Identify management recommendations for minimizing the impact of the harvesting operation on these scenic resources.

6. Historic and Cultural Resource Considerations*

Identify any known historic or cultural resources on the parcel. Describe the plan's management recommendations for minimizing the impact (if any) of harvesting operations on these resources.

Plan Updates

If the landowner plans on harvesting timber or other wood products for commercial purposes, forest management plans should be updated every ten (10) years.

Water Quality Provisions (AMPs)

Truck roads, landings and skid trails must be designed and maintained during and after the harvesting operation according to the "AMPs" — the guidelines prescribed in *Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont*, a Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation publication dated August 15, 1987 — or according to a successor publication approved by the Vermont Land Trust.

Notice Provision*

Some easements require landowners or their representatives to provide VLT with written notice at least 15 days before beginning any commercial harvesting operations outlined in the approved forest management plan. The following are exempt from the notice provision:

- Thinning of forest stands done without a commercial sale of the harvested products (precommercial thinning).
- Any timber harvest that involves less than ten (10) acres.
- Any timber harvest that involves less than 8,000 board feet of sawlogs, or 25 cords of pulpwood or firewood.
- The cutting of firewood for use on the protected property.
- Maple sugaring.

Forest Management Plan Amendments

Amendments are required when the landowner or a representative proposes a silvicultural treatment that is not included in the approved forest management plan. *Amendments are not required** for any change in the timing or sequence of treatments, if the change does not vary more than five years from the prescription scheduled in the approved forest management plan.

*Amendments must be submitted** to the Vermont Land Trust for approval no less than 30 days before the silvicultural activity that requires the amendment begins.

To learn more about how VLT works with landowners to conserve forestland and other open, productive properties in Vermont, please call the Montpelier office or visit us on the web at www.vlt.org

Conservation Stewardship Office

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Vermont Land Trust's Landowner Information and Charitable Giving publications are:

Landowner Information Series:

Land Conservation Options
Conservation Easement Donations
Farmland Protection: How to Conserve Your Farm
Community Land Conservation
Conservation Easement Stewardship
Conservation Easements: Guide to the Legal Document
Operating Farm Easements: Guide to the Legal Document
Property Tax Impacts of Land Conservation
Tax Benefits of Donating Conservation Easements
Tax Benefits of Donating Land
Appraisal Requirements for Gifts of Land or Conservation Easements
Managing and Harvesting Woodland Conserved by VLT

Charitable Giving Series

OVERVIEW: Ways of Giving
Charitable Gift Annuities
Charitable Lead Trusts
Charitable Remainder Trusts
Contributing Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds, and Other Publicly Traded Securities
Remainder Interest in Land: Giving Land While Continuing to Live On It
Gifts of Life Insurance to Charity
Giving Through Bequests
Using Retirement and Other Tax Deferred Accounts to Benefit Charity

Other VLT Publications:

Annual Report
Newsletters
Stewards of the Land
Property Tax Impacts of Conservation
Fact Card