



VFF Landowner Survey Results

In August, 2017, we sent a survey to the 150 or so landowners Vermont Family Forests has worked with over the years in some capacity, most often by developing a forest conservation plan for Vermont's Current Use program. We received 44 completed surveys and have compiled the results below.

1: What limits your engagement with your forest? Please rank the following in order of significance, with #1 being the biggest limitation.

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 1. | 1,2,2,2,2,3,3,5,5 | Time |
| 2. | 1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,5,6 | Money |
| 3. | 1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,6 | Know-how |
| 4. | 1,1,1,1,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,5,6 | Equipment |
| 5. | 2,2,2,3,3,3,4,5,5,5 | Lack of Access to Markets |
| 6. | 1,3,5,6,6,6,6 | Current Use |
| 7. | 1,1,1,1,1,2,2 | Other (please specify) |
- Distance from forest
 - Help/my own energy; other priorities
 - logger who will do small jobs;
 - age
 - lack of help
 - forest roads and affordable stream crossings
 - this year, the wet climate and bugginess, including ticks
 - priority on other things
 - low-impact logger

2. What skills or knowledge would you like to develop to better understand and care for your forest? Check any that would interest you:

- 14 Chainsaw skills (Game of Logging training program)
- 13 Access Road Layout
- 17 How to Comply with Vermont Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs)
- 25 Crop Tree Release/thinning
- 28 Ecological control of invasive species
- 27 Improving wildlife habitat
- 17 Mimicking natural processes in forest practices
- 15 Maple sugar production
- 3 Other (please specify) **understanding mycorrhizae of our forest; timber bridge construction; using small mechanized equipment safely and effectively; GOL 5; mushroom identification**

3: Are there skills, knowledge, or infrastructure lacking in your community that inhibit creating a local, value-added forest economy that values forest health? If yes, what do you see as limiting factors (check any that apply)

- 10 Careful loggers
- 19 Access to light-on-the-land forest equipment

- 15 Local markets for ecologically harvested forest products
- 2 Other (please specify) [access to small-load log trucks](#)

4. Are you interested in learning more about your forest? Check all that interest you:

- 23 Measuring and monitoring forest health
- 24 Forest practices to improve forest health
- 15 Soils
- 14 Wildlife
- 12 Maintaining clean surface water
- 24 Plant diversity/identification/ecology/use
- 25 Wildlife diversity/identification/ecology
- 23 Mushroom diversity/identification/ecology/use
- 1 Other (please specify) [Forest farming—to add more edible biomass into the forest, for both people and animals](#)

5. Forest equipment can be prohibitively costly for individuals. Are you interested in creating or being part of a cooperative to own or lease forest equipment (for example, log forwarder for light-on-the-land hauling of logs, firewood processor, portable sawmill)?

- 18 Yes
- 21 No

Add comment, if needed

- I know little about the choices, having used a chainsaw and splitter for so long.
- Interesting concept, who will operate the dangerous equipment? Need trained people to do so.
- Backhoe for drainage project, firewood processor
- (no) but I think a coop is a great idea! I just know I would not need to join.
- Would have to see the agreement before investing.
- Possibly (2)
- (no) the person who leases and sugars the forest does this.
- (no) Not right now but later on I would be.
- Yes, I'm having trouble finding low-impact equipment and operators
- Forwarder, dozer, firewood processor (possibly)
- Establish some ground rules for how to use and who can use?
- Content to use vendors—though not a lot of experience in this area
- Maybe yes. Working together could help others. Teamwork is important.
- Would welcome if VFF proposed doing or recommended best loggers to economically do minimum logging necessary for current use.
- Yes, at least in exploring the idea, but have concerns on how “community maintenance” would work and how much time I have available to use.
- In a very modest way

6. Over the years, VFF has conducted demonstration projects to explore the viability of local, value-added forest products that support and contribute to forest health and resiliency. Examples include NeighborWood (developing local firewood cooperative) and Community Flooring (developing a local cooperative to produce hardwood flooring). Are you interested in participating in a local, value-added forest product cooperative?

26 Yes

13 No

Add comment, if needed

- Depending on the products. NeighborWood could be of interest. Not community flooring. I would be interested in learning of others' successes with different forest products.
- (possibly) For developing better markets for maple products and possibly shitake.
- I would like to harvest a few species over an extended period and somehow get them to market.
- Too limited on time right now!
- Yes, but I really need support due to lack of time and skills
- No, could be in the future
- Yes, maybe. Don't really understand what is entailed
- Yes, possibly. Depending on what the coop venture was.
- Tell me more about it. How could I help? What do I do?
- Depending on details. Unlikely, though with sugaring lines throughout woods after recent logging

7. Vermont's Current Use program emphasizes timber harvest as a primary product of forest management. Vermont Family Forests advocates for Current Use to recognize and value non-timber forest products (for example, ecosystem services like clean water and air, flood attenuation, stable soils, wildlife habitat.) Would you be interested in working on or lending your support to this issue?

32 Yes

Add comment, if needed

- We are supportive of VFF's emphasis
- Would be extremely difficult for anyone to establish the criteria for measuring these. It is hard enough for the county foresters already without adding more for them to do.
- I would be happy to work on this in the legislature
- If I can. I have limited time.
- Most of our forest is too young for large-scale harvest—makes much more sense to emphasize other goals.
- Time right now is very limited.
- Interested, but depends on time/format
- Yes, eventually
- Support, but not with time
- Maybe, but our current use product is maple syrup, so we wouldn't be a good example.
- No time as of now. Maybe in another couple of years when I retire
- This is a critical issue for landowners. The multiple values and benefits of forests for landowners, communities, and our environment are not fully realized in the current use program as presently structured.

8. Are you interested in having a list of VFF-endorsed contractors in your community?

33 Yes

9. VFF is planning to hold a gathering in the early fall for all VFF landowners to discuss what we're up to, and to see where our mission and activities overlap with and can support your vision for your forest. Would you be interested in attending such a gathering?

10. Please rank your forest priorities, with #1 being the highest priority

overall #1: 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5

overall #4: 1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,5,5

overall #3: 1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,5
1,2,3,4,4,5

1,1,1 (sugaring),1,2,4

1,1,1,1,2,3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5

overall #5: 1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5

1,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,4,5,5,5

1,2,2,3,5

1,1,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5,5,5

2,2,5

overall #2: 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,4,6,6

1,1,1,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,4,4,5,5,5,5,5

- Clean water
- Clean air
- Wildlife habitat
- Hunting
- non-timber forest products
- Carbon sequestration
- Sustainable timber mgmt
- Sustainable firewood mgmt
- Economic returns
- Recreation
- View-shed
- Peace and solitude
- Legacy

The results of this question illustrate the diversity of interest among VFF landowners. Top ranking (forest priorities given a “1” or “2” ranking) was quite equally spread among clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, peace and solitude, and sustainable wood products (timber or firewood).

11. We welcome any additional thoughts and suggestions you might have.

- Since we have our property on the market—unfortunately it’s time to move on to something smaller and more manageable in our old age—hopefully the next owners will continue to manage the forest as well, or better, than we have for the past 26 years. Keep up the good work.
- Would love to work on the drainage issues but don’t qualify for the programs (income too high)
- Like the idea of de-emphasizing timber in current use!
- Thank you for reaching out
- You have been very helpful. Much appreciated!
- I’m unable to spend much time right now, but will be involved soon!
- I think the idea of cooperatively sharing forwarding equipment is very exciting. Thank you VFF!!
- We have just moved to Vermont, after being part-time for 10 years. I am looking forward to learning more about forest management.
- Survey mentions an equipment and markets coop. What about a landowner labor swap/coop?
- Option for Q10 (specific to LHCF) a place to share/work/recreate with like-minded individuals
- Q10-Economic returns: Just need forest ownership not to be a financial drain.
- Would LHCF new trail work-in-progress make a good place for an access road workshop?
- Very interested in figuring out more ways to add value to our locally grown and processed wood.
- Cheap transportation costs seem to undermine the value of local goods more than we realize!
- Where does maple syrup fit into all of this?
- A big thanks to VFF for being (unfortunately one of the few) local leaders on these issues, and for addressing the multiple layers of action needed to make Vermont forests healthy and productive over time—education, sustainable management, policy, etc.
- Keep up the good work

Thank you very much for completing the survey. May the forest be with you!