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# The Green Leaf

Greenleaf Consulting Inc.

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## New Options for Special Ecological Areas in Current Use

Current Use has always been—and still is—primarily about, well...use. In exchange for a reduction in taxes, participating landowners actively use their land for forestry or agriculture. However, Act 205 passed by the Vermont legislature in 2008 acknowledges that some forestlands include special ecological areas—like rare plant communities or important wildlife habitat—that have other values worth protecting. In response, the Current Use Program has been modified to allow some of these areas to be enrolled in the program without being managed for timber. In other cases, timber management is compatible with protecting these ecological areas, but landowners and foresters now have more options for how different sites can be managed.



Significant wildlife habitat, such as beech stands used by black bears, now have new options for management within the Current Use Program.

- Beech stands with bear claw marks
- Cliffs or rock outcrops
- Swamps or forested wetlands
- Stands that haven't been cut in 100+ years with big, old trees
- Old homestead sites
- Woodland pools with breeding frogs and salamanders
- Floodplains along streams or rivers
- Valley forests on clay or sand soils

The following are just some of the special features that may qualify for enrollment and protection under the new changes:

*What do the changes to the Current Use Program mean for you and your forestland? Call us to discuss what new options may be available to you.*

## Greenleaf Helps to Enroll State's First ESTAs

This past summer, Greenleaf Forestry staff worked with two of our clients—Dr. Philip Howard of Burlington and Selby Turner of Isle LaMotte—to document and enroll natural communities of statewide significance on their properties as ESTAs in the Current Use Program. These ESTAs were among the first to be submitted for approval to the State after the changes to the Current Use

Program took effect in April 2009.

We are proud to have helped these landowners reach their goal of protecting these important ecological sites and look forward to assisting others in doing so.

*Read about Greenleaf clients who have enrolled ESTAs on their properties on the following pages.*

**What are ESTAs?** Ecologically Significant Treatment Areas—or ESTAs— can now be enrolled in Current Use under a protective conservation plan that does not require active timber management. They include: natural communities of statewide significance; rare, threatened or endangered species; riparian areas; vernal pools with amphibian breeding habitat; forested wetlands; and old forests.

## The Green Leaf

### ESTA: Restoring Rare Sandplain Forest in Colchester



Pitch pine seedling: a sign of regeneration in Vermont's rare Sandplain Forests.

Like many landowners, Dr. Philip Howard of Burlington, Vermont feels that his 78 acres of forest near Niquette Bay in Colchester that he has owned and carefully stewarded for the past 40 years are special. And he's right. Many of us feel a strong connection to our woods, but in Dr. Howard's case his land is significant ecologically as well as personally.

What makes Dr. Howard's property ecologically unique are its geology and soils. Calcium-rich limestone cliffs and talus support a unique diversity of trees and

herbs, including white cedar. Below the cliffs, the soils are sandy and well-drained. Most sites like these have been converted to non-forested uses in Vermont, making the few places where natural plant communities continue to thrive very rare in our area. Dr. Howard's property supports 40 acres of this rare Pine-Oak-Heath Sandplain Forest. White, red, and black oak all grow in this community, as well as the rare pitch pine, which only regenerates when forests are disturbed by agents such as fire.

Dr. Howard has known that he has a natural community of statewide significance on his property for a long time and has worked hard to protect it. When the opportunity to enroll the community as an ESTA arose, he was eager to take advantage of the flexibility that the designation allows. In this case, Dr. Howard plans to focus on protecting and restoring the natural species composition of the sandplain forest by regenerating pitch pine through plantings, releasing existing trees through sound logging practices, and experimenting with controlled burns.

**"Dr. Philip Howard of Burlington, Vermont feels that his 78 acres of forest near Niquette Bay in Colchester that he has owned and carefully stewarded for the past 40 years are special. And he's right."**

### ESTA: Best Example of Cedar-Pine Bluff Forest Protected

"The Head" on the southern tip of Isle LaMotte has long been known by ecologists in Vermont as the best example of a beautiful and rare natural community: the Limestone Bluff Cedar-Pine Forest. The 40 acres that make up the western half of this community is privately owned and stewarded by Selby Turner and his family.

Mr. Turner has managed his 215 acres of forest and open land

within the Current Use Program for mixed uses for many years including timber and firewood production, recreation, and wildlife habitat. He has always known that the thin strip of majestic cedar woods clinging to the shoreline of Lake Champlain is unique. And he has long been frustrated by the requirement that this sensitive site be managed for forest products in order to be enrolled in Current Use.

Last summer, Greenleaf was happy to help Mr. Turner complete the documentation and application process for enrolling this community as an ESTA. Now, this natural community of statewide significance will continue to be enrolled in the Current Use Program, but with no active management, except what would be necessary to protect the community, such as invasive plant control.

### Greenleaf's New Ecologist



Greenleaf Forestry's new ecologist, Kristen Sharpless.

**Kristen Sharpless** joined the Greenleaf team in June 2009 as the staff ecologist. Kristen graduated from the UVM Field Naturalist Program in 2007. She has worked as a consulting ecologist and naturalist in the towns of Hinesburg, Eden, Guildhall, Underhill, and Warren and as assistant forester for Northwoods Forestry in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. She brings experience in landscape,

forest and cultural history inventory, assessment, and planning for private landowners and municipalities. Kristen works closely with the foresters on the Greenleaf team to document and integrate considerations for wildlife habitat, natural communities, rare plants, and other ecological features into clients' management plans.

Kristen also currently teaches and coordinates education programs at

the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington, Vermont including outreach to forest landowners and foresters through the *Forest Bird Initiative*.

Kristen lives in Hinesburg next to the creemee stand where she enjoys gardening, skiing and walking in the woods.

## Spring Stewardship To-do's

Spring is a great time to be out working in and enjoying your forest. The birds are returning, trees and woodland herbs are beginning to flower, and black flies haven't hatched yet.

Here are some suggestions for things to do and look for during this fleeting season:

**Re-blaze and/or flag your boundaries** before the leaves come out. You'll be glad you did!

**Walk your trails.** Flag trouble spots and muddy places to fix later during the summer. Now is

also a great time to mark out new trails.

**Learn a few new birds** in your woods by sight and sound this year. If you'd like some help, the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington offers free expert-guided walks every Friday morning during May and June.

**Look for vernal pools** that will dry up later in the summer. You'll hear the wood frogs "quacking" in April before you see the pool. Flag these sites and protect them during firewood and timber har-

vests.

**Call Greenleaf Forestry.** Whether you are due for a plan update, planning a timber harvest, or are interested in learning more about our services, we will be happy to help.

Some of our services are limited to the growing season or other times of year, so timing may be important. Call now to ensure that we can plan ahead to meet your specific needs.



Many amphibians, like this wood frog, rely on woodland vernal pools that dry up annually or occasionally for successful breeding. Look and listen for pools in your woods this spring.

## Emerald Ash Borer Update: What You Can Do To Prepare

*This excerpt is taken from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's publication Preparing for Emerald Ash Borer: Recommendations to Reduce the Impact in Vermont, which is available online.*

Emerald ash borer is a significant threat. There are over 100 million ash trees in Vermont, and ash represents over six percent of the state's hardwood growing stock trees. Emerald ash borer attacks all ash species. Ash mortality can

be close to 100% in infested areas, with trees dying within one to three years. Current control tactics are extremely limited in infested areas. With continuing research, management recommendations will be updated as more is learned. For now, follow these general guidelines:

**Get other people involved.** By increasing public awareness, we are more likely to find new intro-

ductions before they have spread. A variety of printed materials is available for distribution. VT FP&R welcomes volunteers to participate in our exotic pest surveys.

**Inventory ash.** Implementation of many emerald ash borer detection and management activities depends on knowing where ash is located. *Continued on page 4.*

**"Emerald ash borer attacks all ash species. Ash mortality can be close to 100% in infested areas, with trees dying within one to three years."**

## Matt Latiolais Recovering From November Accident

Many of you know former Greenleaf forester, Matt Latiolais, who worked with our company since 2006. Last fall, Matt and his wife, Keri, were in the process of moving to a farm in Dummerston, Vermont when Matt suffered a severe head injury during an accident while working at a lumber mill. According to Keri, there was a jam in one of the machines. Matt grabbed one of

the boards and his shift leader grabbed the other. Matt's pulled loose while he still had backward momentum and he slipped off the side of the three-foot catwalk. As he fell, he hit a suspended control panel which fractured his skull on the left side right above his ear. After undergoing surgery in March, Matt is recovering at Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center with the support of

family and friends. It will be a long recovery process. Follow Matt's progress on:

[themattupdate.blogspot.com](http://themattupdate.blogspot.com)

Cards and well wishes and we assume donations can be sent to :

Matt and Keri Latiolais  
Crotched Mountain  
1 Verney Drive  
Greenfield, NH 03047



Greenleaf forester, Matt Latiolais. Get well soon, Matt!

Their home address is:  
Matt and Keri Latiolais  
207 Knapp Road  
Dummerston, VT 05301



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**Emerald Ash Borer galleries.** Photo from Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation website.

## Emerald Ash Borer Update *continued from page 3*

**Stay abreast of emerald ash borer detections.** Trees are in immediate risk if the infestation is within three miles.

**Search for emerald ash borer symptoms.** Focus, especially, on declining ash and on logs that will be moved off-site. Exit holes are difficult to detect, so look for galleries under bark which is cracked or with signs of woodpecker feeding.

**Keep firewood local.** Don't move firewood more than 50 miles. Be aware of any regulations on firewood movement. Currently, Vermont State Parks do not allow firewood if it originated from an area more than 50 miles away. The Green Moun-

tain National Forest prohibits out-of-state firewood.

**Encourage a variety of tree species to minimize the impact of emerald ash borer.** In stands with a high percentage of ash, initiate treatments to regenerate or enhance the growth of other species. Stands are more likely to recover from pest infestations if no species comprises more than 25% of the basal area. Remove low vigor ash, since they allow emerald ash borer to develop more rapidly. Individual trees may have some resistance to emerald ash borer. Leave enough residual trees to make it possible to identify them when the insect arrives.

**Don't rush to remove all the ash.** You may be salvaging unnecessarily. We don't know where emerald ash borer will first appear in Vermont. Continuing research may uncover better management strategies. Widespread salvage would obliterate some genes unique to ash. If ash loses genetic diversity, its odds of survival will diminish.

**Identify potential markets.** Develop detailed familiarity with local product opportunities. This will help capture the economic value of forests with high densities of ash, should they become directly threatened by emerald ash borer.