

Vermont Timberland Owners' Association, Inc.
Records, 1915 - 1996
Doc 512 – 518, Size A and D

Introduction

This collection contains the records of the Vermont Timberland Owners' Association (VTOA), a non-profit organization that represents the commercial and environmental interests of woodland owners in Vermont, for the period 1915 through 1996. The records were given to the Vermont Historical Society by the association in November 2001 (ms. acc. no. 2001.10). The collection occupies 7 records center boxes and two oversized folders (7 linear feet) and includes four videocassettes. The organization's name is sometimes written without the apostrophe.

Organizational History

The Vermont Timberland Owners' Association was formed in 1915 by owners of large timberlands including the Berlin Mills Co. (subsequently Brown Co. and then James River Corp.) and Connecticut Valley Lumber Co. (subsequently St. Regis Paper Co.) and then Champion International, who were concerned about the lack of forest fire monitoring and control. At that time, much of Vermont had been recently cut over for logs, leaving large tracts of dry, fire-prone logging residue. Several years of dry weather coupled with sparks from steam locomotives resulted in large fires. Private forestland owners organized VTOA to create an early warning system of fire lookout towers and to employ a crew of patrolmen to follow behind trains to spot and extinguish fires. The effort was largely effective and, as membership in the association grew, the scope of protection expanded to include monitoring for harmful forest insects and diseases. As technology improved, VTOA adopted the use of telephones in fire towers by supplying the wire and other hardware. After World War II, the association provided several surplus military trucks to towns for use as fire control vehicles.

Eventually the Vermont Forest Service assumed most of the forest protection responsibility for the state's forest. However, VTOA continued into the 1980s providing funding for books and laboratory equipment for insect and disease identification.

In the 1950s, the movement to actively manage private forestland gained momentum. Forest industries in the Pacific Northwest created a program of recognition, education and certification of non-industrial private forest owners called the American Tree Farm System. It was envisioned that a tree farm chapter would be active in every state, sponsored by a local organization. Vermont Timberland Owners' Association became the sponsor of the Vermont Tree Farm Program, providing funding and administrative support.

Since 1975, VTOA was a strong supporter of Use Value Appraisal, a program that allowed well-managed forests to be taxed at the value of their current use rather than potential development value. This program, still active today, has allowed many thousands of acres of woodland in Vermont to remain productive and undeveloped.

Membership numbers remained small, from 26 in 1940 to 28 in 1961 while total acreage covered fluctuated between 400,000 and 500,000 acres. With the advent of use value appraisal for taxation, membership numbers grew from 86 in 1987 to a high of 174 in 1991 while the acreage covered remained about the same. Acquisition of some large tracts for Green Mountain National Forest and the State of Vermont and increasing numbers of smaller tracts due to the improved tax situation probably accounts for the change in numbers without much acreage change.

On May 17, 1996, Vermont Timberland Owners' Association merged with Vermont Woodland Resources Association and became known as Vermont Woodlands Association (VWA). Today VWA carries on the role of sponsoring the Tree Farm Program and advocates fair taxation of forestland.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the organizational records of the Vermont Timberland Owners' Association as well as records of a related organization, the Current Use Tax Coalition that was active in the 1980s, and publications from many like-minded organizations.

The VTOA was, at the outset, especially interested in the control of forest fires. The collection includes four maps from the 1930s and 1940s that show location of fire towers in the state. The collection also includes material on the governmental policies toward the taxation of forestland and environmental concerns such as clear cutting, water and air quality, and wildlife habitats.

The Vermont Current Use Tax Coalition was formed on December 13, 1983, by a group of farm and forestland organizations to promote the continuance of the current use program, its funding, and improvement. "Current Use" is a program, begun in 1980, under which farmland and forestland is taxed on its use value rather than on its fair market value. By reducing the local property tax, the state program encourages landowners to make a long-term commitment to keep their land undeveloped and productive.

James E. Wilkinson, natural resource consultant and former Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, was elected chairman of the coalition. Wilkinson was a professional forester with much experience since graduation from Penn State University in 1939. He acted as the coalition's chief legislative spokesman for over eight years carrying on voluminous correspondence, lobbying the legislature, and keeping the membership informed. This collection documents Wilkinson's efforts on behalf of the current use program.

The collection also includes videotapes of the tree farmer of the year for 1986 and 1989.

Organization

- I. Organization (Doc 512:1—Doc 512:2)
- II. Administration (Doc 512:3—Doc 512:25)
- III. General correspondence (Doc 512:26—Doc 513:4)
- IV. Membership (Doc 513:5—Doc 514:3)
- V. Financial (Doc 514:4—Doc 514:14)
- VI. Miscellaneous Administration (Doc 514:15—515:1)
- VII. Programmatic activities (Doc 515:2—515:21)
- VIII. Organizations supported (Doc 515:22—516:14)
- IX. Organizations and activities supported (516:15—518:12)
- X. Issued of concern (Doc 518:13—518:16)
- XI. Fish and wildlife (Doc 518:17—518:20)
- XII. Miscellaneous (Doc 518:21—518:22)

Inventory

I. Organization

- Doc 512:1 By-laws, articles of association, 1915-1989
2 VWRA-VTOA merger = VWA, 1996

II. Administration

- 3 Annual meetings, 1918-1933
- 4 _____, 1935-1946
- 5 _____, 1950-1974
- 6 _____, 1975-1986
- 7 _____, 1987-1991
- 8 _____, 1992-1993
- 9 Annual reports, 1917-1940
- 10 _____, 1954-1975
- 11 _____, 1976-1987
- 12 _____, 1988-1994
- 13 Directors meetings, 1950-1953 & 1972-1982
- 14 _____, 1983
- 15 _____, 1984
- 16 _____, 1985
- 17 _____, 1986
- 18 _____, 1987
- 19 _____, 1988
- 20 _____, 1989
- 21 _____, 1990
- 22 _____, 1991
- 23 _____, 1992
- 24 _____, 1993
- 25 _____, 1994

III. General correspondence

- 26 1925-1927

- 27 1931-1943
- 28 Fred Dwinell, 1950-1955
- 29 1950-1962
- 30 1967-1976
- Doc 513: 1 1981-1986
- 2 1987
- 3 1988-1991
- 4 1992-1994

IV. Membership

- 5 General, 1940 & 1984-1987
- 6 Dues, 1983-1992
- 7 Members, A – B
- 8 _____, C
- 9 _____, D – I
- 10 _____, J – K
- 11 _____, L – M
- 12 _____, N – O
- 13 _____, P – R
- 14 _____, S
- 15 _____, T – V
- 16 _____, W – Z
- 17 Brown Company, James River, 1919-1987
- 18 Champion International, 1981-1987
- 19 Diamond International, 1915-1988
- 20 Gilman Paper, 1931-1969
- 21 Glastonbury Timberlands, 1915-1976
- Doc 514: 1 International Paper, 1915-1948
- 2 International Paper, 1950-1987
- 3 Middlebury College, 1915-1955

V. Financial

- 4 Audits, 1946-1987
- 5 Officers' Expenses, Fees, 1987-1991
- 6 Expenses, Income - Consulting forester, 1992
- 7 Expense and cash journals, 1984-1989
- 8 Expense and cash ledgers, 1923-1933
- 9 _____, 1933-1951
- 10 _____, 1952-1976
- 11 _____, 1977-1987
- 12 Tax exemption, 1988,1993
- 13 Workers compensation insurance, 1953-1992
- 14 Vt. dept. of employment & training, 1983-1992

VI. Miscellaneous Administration

- 15 Mark Riley re: VTOA
- Doc 515: 1 Publication offers, 1990-1992

VII. Programmatic activities

- 2 Fire equipment, acreage survey, 1951
- 3 Forest fire control, 1908-1971
- 4 Fire tower, Glastonbury, 1926-1975
- 5 Forest fire wardens, 1923-1940
- Size A Map of Vermont, Northern fire towers, patrols, telephone lines, no date
- _____, _____, _____
- _____, Highway map with fire towers, existing and proposed, 1933
- Size D _____, _____, 1940
- 6 Position papers, 1982-1989
- 7 Background for position papers, 1968-1991
- 8 NH & MA regarding position papers, 1982-1990
- 9 Landowner liability, 1990-1991
- 10 Capital gains, 1975-1990
- 11 Forest taxation study, 1968
- 12 Taxation – lease lands, 1971
- 13 Economics, taxation, 1991
- 14 Property tax education, 1992-1993
- 15 Conservation easements, 1992
- 16 Legislation, 1924, 1984-1994
- 17 Act 200, growth management, 1988-1989
- 18 Silviculture for loggers, 1988-1993
- 19 Continuing education, New Brunswick
- 20 Forest road building, 1982
- 21 Tree nurseries, 1989

VIII. Organizations supported

- 22 Current Use Tax Coalition, News clips, 1989-1991
- 23 _____, Special project, 1987-1988
- 24 _____, Act 200, planning, 1988
- 25 _____, H. 271, introduced
- 26 _____, H. 553, introduced
- 27 _____, Correspondence, 1982-1984
- 28 _____, _____, 1985-1986
- 29 _____, _____, 1987
- Doc 516:1 _____, _____, 1988
- 2 _____, _____, 1989
- 3 _____, _____, 1990
- 4 _____, _____, 1991
- 5 _____, General, 1992-1996
- 6 _____, FTEEC, 1976-1981
- 7 _____, Executive committee, 1985-1990
- 8 _____, Legislature, 1987-1993
- 9 _____, Newsletters, 1984-1991
- 10 _____, Account book, 1987
- 11 _____, _____, 1988

- 12 _____, _____, 1989
- 13 _____, _____, 1990
- 14 _____, _____, 1991

IX. Organizations & activities supported

- 15 State forest planning, 1987-1988
- 16 _____, 1989
- 17 _____, 1986-1992
- 18 *Vermont Land Acquisition Survey Report*, 1991
- 19 Forest statistics, 1973-1986
- 20 Green Mountain National Forest, wilderness, 1983
- 21 _____, general, 1940-1950 & 1987-1988
- 22 _____, _____, 1989-1990
- 23 _____, _____, 1991-1993
- Doc 517:1 _____, project findings
- 2 White Mountain National Forest, 1993
- 3 Northern Forest Lands Council, 1988-1990
- 4 _____, Jan.-Jul., 1991
- 5 _____, Aug. 1991-Oct. 1992
- 6 _____, 1993
- 7 _____, related publications
- 8 Vermont tree farm program, 1981-1988
- 9 _____, 1989-1992
- 10 _____, 1993-1996
- 11 Future Farmers of America, 1982, 1988, 1993
- 12 *The American Tree Farmer*, 1985-1991
- 13 Forest stewardship program, 1990-1993
- 14 Forest communications council, 1987-1988
- 15 _____, 1989-1992
- 16 Vermont Natural Resources Council, 1970-1983
- 17 _____, 1984
- 18 _____, 1985-1993
- 19 VFPA/VTPA, 1978-1990
- 20 _____, 1991-1993
- 21 _____, newsletters, 1992
- Doc 518:1 N. E. Society of American Foresters, 1991
- 2 Associated Industries of Vermont, 1987-1990
- 3 Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, 1990-1992
- 4 National hardwood lumber association, 1990-1993
- 5 Vermont nature conservancy, 1990-1992
- 6 Vermont forest resources advisory council, 1995
- 7 UVM extension service, 1987-1991
- 8 National woodland owners association, 1989-1992
- 9 Forest landowners of California, 1993
- 10 New Hampshire TOA, 1960-1993
- 11 Massachusetts *Tree News*, 1989-1994
- 12 Urban & community forestry, 1991-1992

X. Issues of concern

- 13 Chip harvesting, clearcutting, 1981, 1988
- 14 Earth right institute, 1989-1990
- 15 Water quality, 1986-1990
- 16 Air quality, global warming, 1988-1990

XI. Fish and wildlife

- 17 Fish and game department, 1982-1992
- 18 Deer management, 1990-1995
- 19 Watchable wildlife, 1991
- 20 *Habitat Highlights*

XII. Miscellaneous

- 21 Forest insects & diseases, 1980-1989
- 22 Various publications, 1982-1992
- Size A Map, Middlebury College, Battell Forest and Battell Park, 1926
_____, _____, _____, 1928
- Size D *The Northern Forest Forum*, publication, 1992-1993
- Video
- C-83 Harry Chandler, outstanding tree farmer, 1986, about 5 minutes
- C-84 Harry Chandler, American Forestry Assoc. Tree Farmer of the Year,
1986/87, about 6 minutes
- C-85 Jim & Lucy McCullough, tree farmers, 1989, about 15 minutes
- C-86 Jim & Lucy McCullough, tree farmers, 1989, about 18 minutes

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