

ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS CHECKLIST

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TAX POLICY

The following recommendations focus on tax policies that influence the way forestland is managed and conserved in Vermont.

- The Forest Roundtable strongly endorses Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program (UVA) including continued funding.**
- Educate municipal officials regarding the lack of impact of the UVA Program on municipal tax rates.**
- Provide the UVA Program with adequate resources to administer the program. The Agency of Natural Resources, The Department of Taxes, and the Legislature should study ways to improve the overall efficiency and administration of the Program.**
- Conduct an independent legislative study of the UVA Program which examines the statutory goals of the program and assesses the program's effectiveness with respect to the original goals. For example, is the goal of conserving natural ecological systems adequately addressed? This study should also assess ways to expand landowner enrollment in the program, and assess the effectiveness of the land use change tax.**
- Assess property with perpetual conservation easements at a lower value.**
- Disburse property transfer tax revenue according to the formula set in statute.**
- Strengthen the collection of the land gains tax on timber sales on land subject to the land gains tax, and develop better mechanisms to track timber sales and assess taxes from these sales.**

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CONSERVATION PLANNING

The following recommendations focus on conservation planning as a broad theme encompassing state, regional, municipal, and estate planning mechanisms to reduce the rate of parcelization and forest fragmentation in Vermont.

- Educate landowners about programs for keeping forestland intact across multiple generations.**
- Track annual rates of parcelization in Vermont.**

- Utilize existing data and develop maps to identify and prioritize forest blocks for conservation.
- Track and analyze rates and degree of forest fragmentation in Vermont.
- Integrate existing planning efforts at the local, regional and state level to better address parcelization and forest fragmentation.
- Identify and correct gaps in Act 250 and other land use regulations to attenuate the rate of parcelization and forest fragmentation in Vermont.
- Implement planning efforts that reflect the public values of forests.

**RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CONSERVATION,
STEWARDSHIP, AND VALUATION OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

The following recommendations focus on conservation, stewardship, and in particular, the recognition of the value of healthy functioning forested ecosystems in Vermont.

- Develop a system to consistently quantify, recognize, and compensate landowners for the value of ecosystem services provided by forestland in Vermont.
- Communicate the value of forests to the public in everyday terms, including the ecological benefits that the public is receiving for free from healthy functioning forests.
- Convene a forum on how to manage for ecosystem services at the regional scale, paying attention to property rights, alternative models of ownership and management, and to required policies and distribution of costs and benefits.
- Create an annual award for ecosystem service stewardship to increase awareness and showcase forest ethics role models in the state.
- Fund the development of build-out models and case studies to show projected impacts on ecosystem services in order to assist planning, conservation, and stewardship activities.
- Create a model for community based Timberland Investment Management Organizations (TIMO's) that can buy and manage forestland collectively.
- Support the establishment of landowner cooperatives that foster conservation, forest stewardship, ecosystem services and forest product marketing efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

The following recommendations focus on supporting the forest products industry as a way to strengthen the viability of working forestland, which makes up a considerable percentage of the Vermont landscape.

- ☐ Bolster development of strong, effective, cooperative statewide organizations that bring together forest products industry representatives, landowners and manufacturers to promote the forest products economy.**
- ☐ Increase the visibility of the contribution of a working forest to the state, including the economic, ecological and social benefits of forestland.**
- ☐ Increase the professionalism of logging. Invest in programs to support youth who are interested in becoming loggers. Develop loan programs, a worker's compensation pool, and better access to health insurance. Promote the use of low-impact equipment and natural resource management programs.**
- ☐ Continue and strengthen state promotion for the forest products manufacturing sector.**
- ☐ Promote the use of Vermont wood in Vermont and in Vermont-sponsored development. Support buying local as a concept and encourage architects and builders to support the use of local wood.**
- ☐ Increase weight limits on Vermont Interstates to make Vermont competitive in the region.**