



FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION

VERMONT



AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

VT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP
House Agriculture & Forestry Committee Briefing
Oliver Pierson, Director – Forests, FPR
May 22, 2026



WELCOME

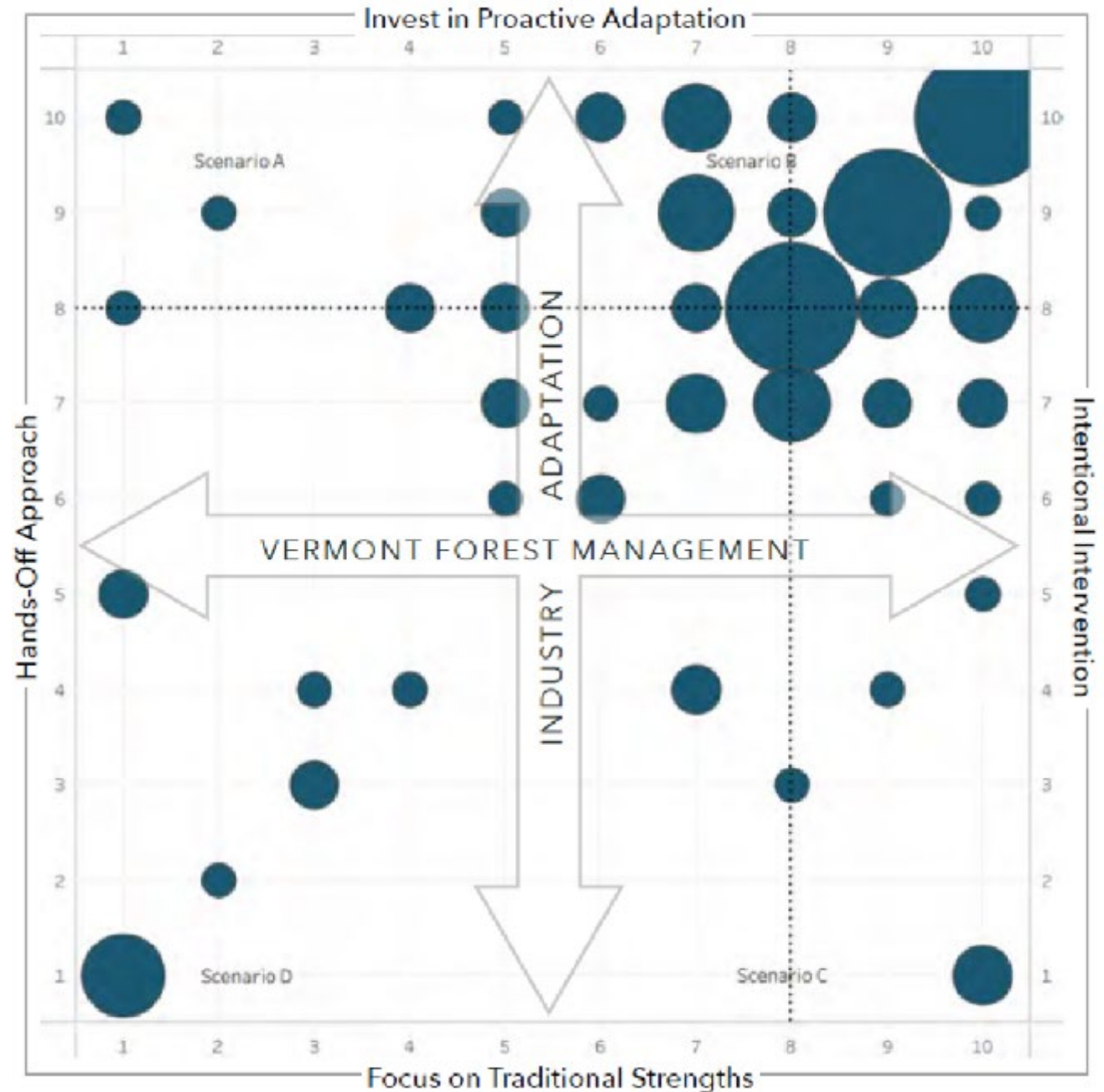
Roadmap Development

- Act 183 of 2022
- Engaging Perspectives: Insights from Tours, Presentations, and Direct Conversations
- Advisory Panel: Wide range of perspectives and voices, took a “big tent” approach
- Roadmap Finalized in March 2024

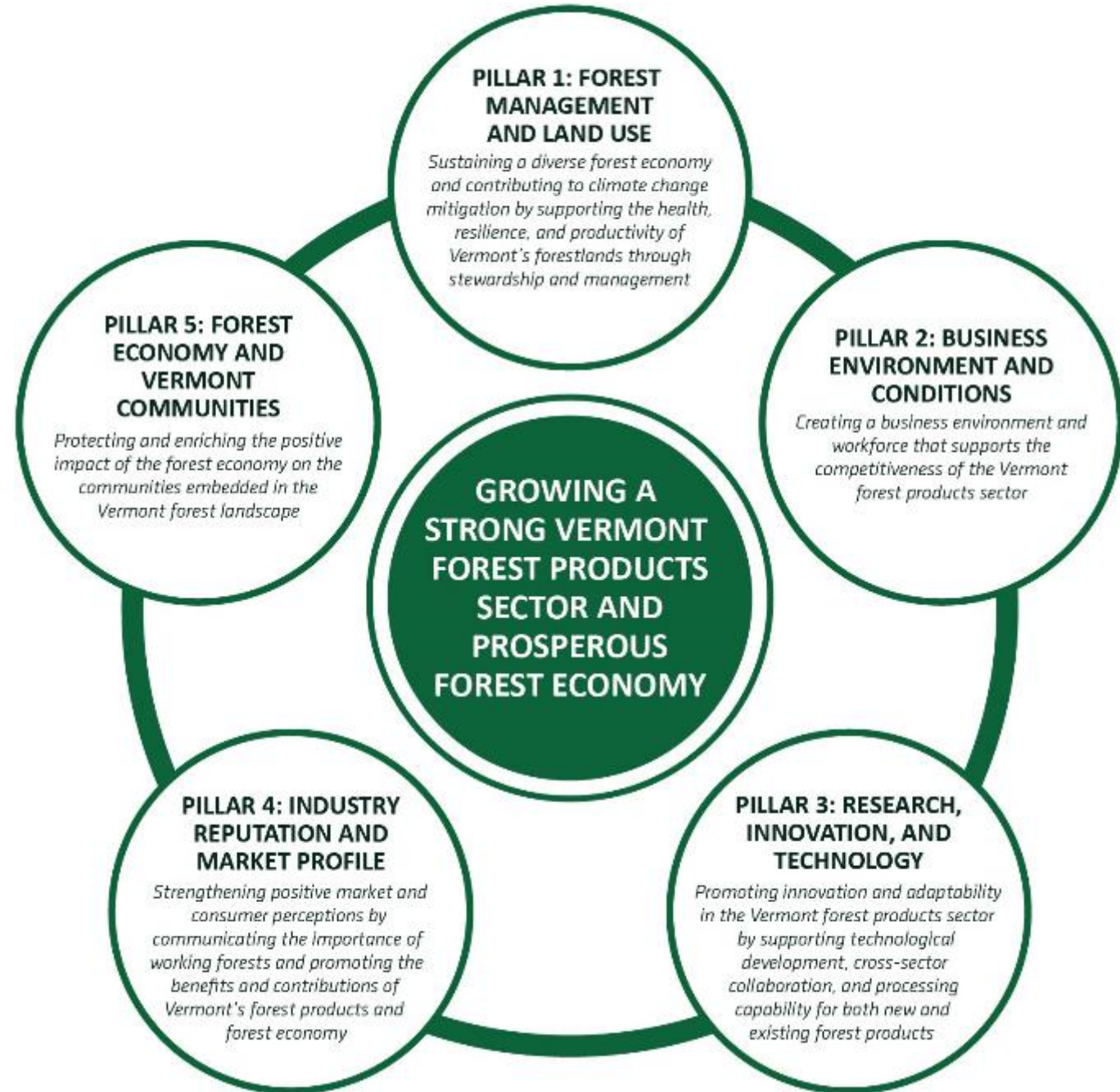


Preferred Future

- Intentional forest management and proactive industry adaptation
- Public and private capital investing in innovation, technology, & marketing
- Forest health & management increase via policy to maintain working forests, mitigate threats to forest health.
- Demand for skilled workforce increases as wood products sector becomes more technologically advanced.
- Industry changes rapidly, greater focus on regional supply chains, innovation networks, and new products.



5 Interconnected Pillars





Photos Erica Houskeeper, VSJF

Pillar 1: Forest Management and Land Use

- Manage for increased forest health
- Promote land use policies to maintain working forestlands
- Empower landowners to maintain working forests by reducing barriers and creating incentives



Photo: Erica Houskeeper, VSIF

Pillar 2: Business Environment and Conditions

- Enhance capacity for industry adaptation.
- Build strong connections to the next generation workforce.
- Create a “problem-busting” approach focused on the forest economy.



Photos Erica Houskeeper, VSJF

Pillar 3: Research, Innovation, and Technology

- Pursue new development opportunities and innovative uses of Vermont forest products.
 - Accelerate the adoption of technical innovation.



Photo: Erica Houskeeper, VSJF

Pillar 4: Industry Reputation and Market Profile

- Strengthen and maintain the social license of the forest products sector.
- Encourage the demand, use, and appreciation for Vermont forest products.



Pillar 5: Forest Economy and Vermont Communities

- Build stronger linkages between forest users and the forest products sector.
 - Imagining the forest community of tomorrow.



Short-Term High Priority Actions

- **Action 1:** Provide robust data on forest health trends.
- **Action 4:** Promote working forests in land use planning.
- **Action 9:** Adopt climate resilience strategies.
- **Action 12:** Boost the next generation of forest workers.
- **Action 18:** Invest in accelerating innovation.
- **Action 19:** Promote forest industry's critical role as ecosystem manager.
- **Action 22:** Elevate the importance of modern and efficient wood energy.
- **Action 26:** Connect recreational uses and the forest products sector.
- **Action 30:** Promote the economic contribution of forest economy to VT

Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap Implementation Steering Committee



Committee Members

- **Trevor Allard**, Allard Lumber Company*
- **Chris Brooks**, Vermont Wood Pellet Company*
- **Tony D'Amato**, University of Vermont
- **Scott Duffy**, Rockledge Farm Woodworks*
- **Jamey Fidel**, Vermont Natural Resources Council*
- **Chris Fife**, Weyerhaeuser*
- **Liz Gleason**, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board*
- **Steve Hardy**, Green Mountain Forestry*
- **David Lane**, Farm Credit East*
- **Elizabeth Lesnikoski**, Burlington Electric Department*
- **Chris Lindgren**, UVM Extension*
- **Jed Lipsky**, Blue Hill Land + Timber LLC
- **Abby Long**, Kingdom Trails Association
- **Matt McAllister**, Matt McAllister Logging
- **Christine McGowan**, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund*
- **Luke McNally**, Ruffed Grouse Society*
- **Joe Short**, Northern Forest Center*
- **Allan Thompson**, Vermont Woodlands Association*
- **Danny Fitzko**, Commissioner, Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation*
- **Oliver Pierson**, Director of Forests, Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation*
- **Katharine Servidio**, Forest Economy Program Manager, Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation*
- **Molly Willard**, Wood Energy and Forest Products Specialist, Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation*
- **Charlie Hancock**, Franklin and Grand Isle County Forester, Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation*

**indicates previous participation on the Advisory Panel*



Implementation Progress to Date

- No dedicated staff or funding for the Roadmap
- Created Implementation Steering Committee
- Socialization of Roadmap
- Fundraising & Financing efforts
- Legislative Engagement (Reports, Tours & Funding)
- Initiating Work on Roadmap Actions



Implementation Progress to Date

What has FPR done?

- Regularly convened the ISC
- Supported hosting of multiple legislative tours
- Staffed the re-start of the VT SWET
- Secured grants to implement roadmap activities: NBRC grant, T4T grant, WIGs, IRA, Loggers
- Provided testimony on many legislative issues related to the roadmap
- Supported regional application to NSF for as much as \$160M over 10 years in FPI innovation, product commercialization and workforce development



Implementation Progress to Date

Forest Management and Land Use

- Members of the ISC have been active in important work to ensure that land use policies are in support of the forest sector
- Wood Products Manufacturing Report (H 932)
- Advocating for Role of Working Lands in Act 59
- Updated Forest Inventory & Analysis Data
- UVA Standards Revision
- Forest Resiliency Grant (\$5.5M)



Implementation Progress to Date

Business Environment and Conditions

- Promote use of logging equipment / techniques that reduce impacts on soil and water quality.”
- Workforce Development
 - Investing in post-secondary tech ed programs that provide hands-on training and education in modern, cutting-edge technologies and equipment.
 - VTSU Randolph establishing a sawmilling operations certificate program
 - Sending 2 Vermonters to Mechanized Logging Operations and Forest Trucking Course in Maine



Implementation Progress to Date

Research, Innovation and Technology

- Promoting existing funding opportunities for working lands -> funded projects via WLEI
- Multiple ISC members are leading an effort to secure substantial NSF funds for forest innovation
- Graduated cohort of VSJF Forest Business Accelerator
- NBRC T4T nano concrete initiative



Implementation Progress to Date

Industry Reputation and Market Profile

- Wood energy- lots going on.
 - Statewide Wood Energy Team
 - Maryland Wood Energy Tours
 - [Fueling the Future – Wood Energy Economy](#)
 - WIG Grants
 - Support to VRG Lyndon CPG Process
- VFPA video series:
 - Seeing the Forest for the Trees
 - [Episode 3: Wooded Vermont](#)
 - NEW: Missing Common Ground



Implementation Progress to Date

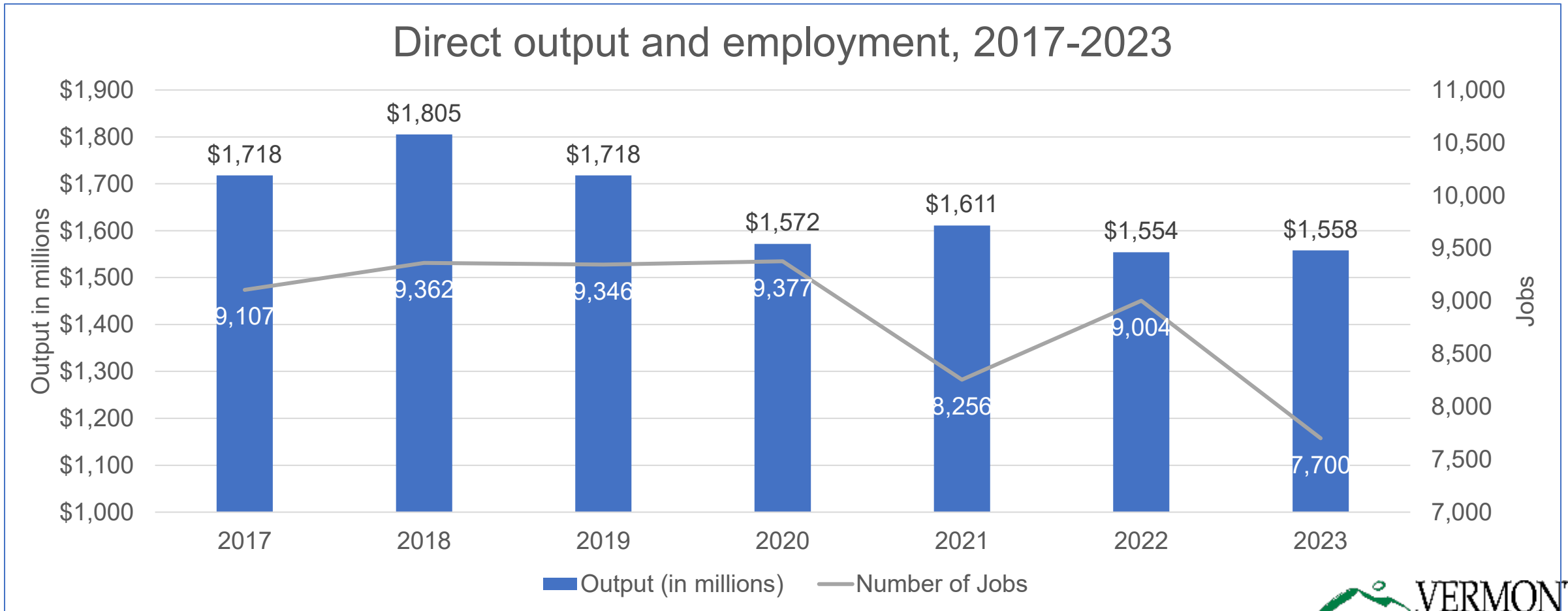
Forest Economy and Vermont Communities

- Legislative tours (multiple in 2025/2026)
- VSJF Forest Industry Summits (2025/2026)
- Linkage between Forestry and Recreation on Private Lands
- VCPM Wood Warms / Wood Bank Assistance
- Vermont Forest Products Industries' Economic Contributions Report (2023)

Sneak peek: updated economic impact study



- Industry consolidation & increased labor efficiency





Thoughts on Roadmap Implementation

- Funding for implementation a barrier
- Implementation of the Roadmap is happening via individual members / organizations and existing workflows, rather than via new ISC-led efforts
- ISC serves more as a platform to elevate work and highlight potential coordination / collaboration.
- The Pillar Working Groups have limited capacity.
- ISC needs to better capitalize/engage existing networks, such as industry group meetings?
 - How to we reengage people who participated in roadmap development but are not ISC members?



Thoughts on focus for ISC in the coming year

- Organizing legislative tours to educate on forest health and forest economy
- Cataloguing and promoting what is happening to advance roadmap priorities, where we see gaps
 - Show the broader world that work is happening, and that we still have needs
 - Dashboard? Annual Report?
- Advance a few specific projects as the ISC
 - Workforce Development
- Legislative work to promote working forests



Roadmap Implementation

- Implementing a 10 Year Vision and Set of Actions is a marathon, not sprint
- Forest Products Sector still facing many challenges
- Roadmap provides a great framework for forest sector, state and partners to revitalize and grow the forest-based economy
- Open to your idea and participation
- Thanks for your support!





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