

WOW-VT Landowner Forestry Demonstration Project Information Guide

Women Owning Woodlands (WOW)-VT is seeking landowners to help us create a network of forestry demonstration projects on women-owned or women-managed forests in Vermont. Specifically, we are looking for WOW landowners who are interested in working with a Vermont Youth Conservation Corp (VYCC) Forestry Project Program crew to implement forestry and stewardship activities on their land that will serve as future demonstration sites for other women woodland owners. WOW-VT has funding to bring the VYCC crew to your property to do the work, however, landowners may incur some expenses around project planning and preparation. Interested landowners are required to submit an application to be considered for this opportunity. This document contains information about this partnership and guidance to assist landowners in developing an application.

Background on VYCC Forest Project Program

The VYCC's mission is to take action and build community by working and learning together with the land. In 2020, VYCC ran its first pilot program for Forest Projects crews and saw the potential to perform meaningful work that improves the health and resiliency of Vermont's forests and the development of corps members' professional skills. Additionally, this program seeks to provide the training and experience necessary to create skilled professionals capable of entering the Vermont forest products industry and conservation fields which will aid in economic development in Vermont. Moving into the 2022 field season, VYCC is partnering with WOW-VT to expand the capacity of their crews and a more diverse array of project types.

VYCC Forestry Projects Program consists of two crew types:

- AmeriCorps crews consist of two crew leaders and six crew members which in 2022 will run from June 20th through September 30th. Crew leaders come into the program with prior chainsaw and forest project experience whereas crew members are not required to enter the program with previous experience. AmeriCorps crews camp at or near the project site and their projects have a focus on skill-building and education through project work.
- Pro crews consist of one crew leader and three crew members and this year will operate from June 13th through October 28th. Pro crew leaders are highly skilled and crew members are required to have prior experience operating a chainsaw and carrying out forest projects. This crew, while still valuing skill building and education, is primarily focused on efficient production.

Potential VYCC forestry and stewardship projects may include:

- Crop tree release
- Tree planting
- Pre-commercial thinning
- Timber stand improvement

- Apple tree release
- Early successional habitat improvement
- Site preparation/cleanup
- Timber Unit Boundary Marking
- Invasives removal (mechanical and assist with herbicide application)
- Firewood harvesting
- Assist herbicide applicators
- Erosion control

Project Considerations

- VYCC Forestry Crews will run from June until the end of October so all projects for this season will have to be completed during this timeframe.
- VYCC is open to projects of varying scales. Some factors to consider are our season length and our crew sizes. While we are open to larger projects these will require additional planning and may have to be accomplished over several years or shift to the next year.
- Crews will require safe access to project sites. Any access issues should be addressed before finalizing a services agreement with the VYCC.
- Camping: Crews camp during the work week at or near project sites. Ideally, the project partner would have a space for crews to camp, however, this is not required. Crews are capable of being self-sufficient and do not require any amenities but it is helpful to have restroom facilities, drinking water, and access to electricity.

Project Eligibility

Below are guidelines for project eligibility. Proposed forestry demonstration projects must meet the following criteria to be eligible.

- **Project Alignment-** *Projects must align with the VYCC mission, program goals, and crew model, and support the work of WOW-VT.*
- **Publicly Accessible-** *Parcels must be publicly accessible for visiting the forestry demonstration site. Landowners can set the terms of accessibility, such as by permission, for educational programming only, etc.*
- **Active Management-** *The proposed forestry practice must be aligned with an existing, approved forest management plan, and/or conservation easement.*
- **Landowner Commitment-** *Landowners must demonstrate the necessary commitment and capacity for carrying out the project on their property. Harvesting projects must be marked by a licensed forester, at the cost of the landowner.*

Review Process

We seek to implement a diversity of forestry practices on women-owned and women-managed forestland in Vermont. To assist project partners in reaching this goal, potential projects will be evaluated and weighted according to the following criteria:

- **Project Readiness-** *Projects need to be ready for implementation in 2022 or 2023. Proposed management activities must align with existing and approved forest management plans.*
- **Geographic Location-** *Project location will be considered. Preference will be given to projects that contribute to the statewide distribution of demonstration projects around the state.*
- **Project Types-** *Preference will be given to projects that contribute to a diverse array of forestry and stewardship practices demonstrated.*
- **Other Considerations-** *Additional selection criteria include conservation status, parcel size, accessibility, and project logistics.*

Landowner Requirements

Selected landowners will be asked to commit to the following:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)-** *Participating landowners may be required to enter into an MOU with WOW-VT that outlines the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of each party.*
- **Service Agreement-** *Participating landowners will be required to enter into a Service Agreement with VYCC.*
- **Landowner Investment and Match-** *Participating landowners may incur costs during the project planning, implementation, and closeout. For example, landowners may need to hire a licensed consulting forester to mark trees and layout the project area. Any expense incurred by participating landowners will need to be tracked as part of the project match. Landowners will be expected to document any project costs, including their time, any stewardship costs, consultant fees, and materials as in-kind match.*

Questions?

For more information, questions about potential projects, or assistance submitting an application contact: Kate Forrer, UVM Extension, (802) 476 – 2003 or katherine.forrer@uvm.edu

Women Owning Woodlands-VT is an initiative of Vermont Coverts, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Woodlands Association, UVM Extension, VT Department of Forests Parks and Recreation, and VT Department of Fish and Wildlife