



VERMONT

WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

www.vermontworkinglands.com

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

- Public and Private Partnership
 - 3 State Agencies
 - Private Sector Board Members
 - 3 Non-Voting Public Members



Our Purpose

- Statewide Effort
- A Small Piece of a Bigger Puzzle





Vermont's Working Lands Economy

- 78% of Vermont is forested (4.46 million acres)
- Forests provide \$3.4 billion contribution to VT's Economy from forest products, tourism & recreation
- Vast Economic Contribution from Tourism & Outdoor Recreation
- Vermont is dominated by family and farm forests
- 21% of Vermont is in agriculture
- Farming vital to Vermont's economy - \$4 billion impact on the state's economy
- Concerted effort to integrate agriculture with forestry



Building the Vermont Brand

- High Quality Producers and Products in Vermont with Strong Consumer Interest
- Importance of Technical Assistance
- Impacts along the Value Chain
- Leveraging Funds





Addressing Tensions and Risks

(Perception is reality)

- Segregation between agriculture and forestry
- Government Interference
- Diminished Tensions as a result of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative
- Inherent risks of investing



Grants to Date: FY '13, '14, '15

- \$3,222,353 total dollars granted
- \$4.9 million dollars leveraged
- 112 Total grants to date
 - 78 Ag, 32 forestry, 2 ag and forestry
 - Enterprise Area – 62 grants for \$821,177
 - Service Provider Area – 26 grants for \$1,197,374
 - Capital and Infrastructure Area – 24 grants for \$1,203,802



Impact Info Gathered to Date:

- 39 Grantees Reporting on \$785,489 Grant Funds Allocated (FY13 and FY14 Grantees)
- 65 Jobs Created
- \$3,597,255 Increase in Gross Income
- 54% Increase in Average Product Output

*Board Commitment to Forest Viability



WLEB Activities

- Forestry Systems Analysis

- Investments Identified
 - Strengthening sub-sector value chains
 - Increasing public awareness



- Policy Committee

- Merger of Development Board and Working Lands Board – WLEB now has a policy development role.
- Consideration:
 - Significant impact on working lands businesses
 - Timely with a real decision in play
 - Are those over which “reasonable people could disagree” on the proper course of action
 - Find common interests, agreement
 - Address supply chain bottlenecks

FY2016 Granting Plan

- Approximately \$580,000 available for two investment areas
- Business Investments - Consolidating Enterprise and Capital and Infrastructure
 - Business plan required
- Service Provider Investments
 - Technical assistance is critical
- RFP released on October 1 – due dates fast approaching



Lessons Learned

- Invest in Technology
- Better Define Expectations for Public, Legislature, and Grant Applicants
- Board Development

