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