



CASE STUDY

BARBARA MOORE

PAWLET, VT

A valley woodland surrounds a historic farm. Nestled in the Mettawee River Valley, the Moore Farm features a diverse woodland surrounding rich farmland. The woodland sits just below Haystack Mountain and next to the North Pawlet Hills Natural Area.

MEET THE LANDOWNER

Barbara Moore is grateful to have any chance to get out on her beautiful land. For much of her adult life, she lived in New York, running The Good Table, her farm-to-table food service business. Whenever possible, she made her way back to a rural corner of Pawlet to spend time on the land that has been in her family since the 1940s. In 2019, she came back full-time as the sole owner and manager of the property. The woodlands are nestled around a farm that has hosted cows, chickens, and organic vegetables over the years. When Barbara's father stopped farming in 1988, the barns lay empty for years. Today, Barbara leases the farmland to Laughing Child Farm, an organic sweet potato farm. A highlight of the surrounding woodland is a unique forest landscape: dry oak, hickory, and hophornbeam trees with an open grassy floor. Barbara jumps at the chance to explore her woodlands to monitor growth, plan for new projects, and understand its unique character.



A view of the unique dry oak, hickory, and hophornbeam forest on the property with good density and mixed ages of the trees.

AT A GLANCE

PROPERTY / PROJECT ACREAGE
225.5 acres (198 actively managed)

LOCATION
Pawlet, VT

FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
Mast Tree Release - 8 acres
Patch Cuts - 3.9 acres and 2.0 acres
Irregular Shelterwood Harvest - 7 acres
Timber Stand Improvement - 13.9 acres

PARTNERS
Southwind Forestry **VT Agency of**
Natural Resource **Natural Resources**
Conservation Service **Redstart**

WOMEN & OUR WOODS

Vermont's Women & Our Woods (WOW-VT) is a collaborative women-centered community that shares information, resources, and support for people who care about and steward Vermont's forests. WOW-VT has developed a series of case studies to highlight a variety of management activities being conducted on women-owned or women-managed woodlands to highlight successes, share lessons learned, and identify resources available.

To learn more visit wowvt.org.

HOW HAS THIS LAND BEEN MANAGED?

Barbara's goals are to increase wildlife on the land and be a good steward of a healthy forest. In 2006, her family learned about the Current Use (or Use Value) program. Under this program, land is appraised (and taxed) as farming or forestry land rather than at its fair market value. This program incentivized the Moores to actively manage the land as woodland. The Moores developed a forestry management plan alongside Southwind Forestry and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Barbara is now working from her second ten-year plan, which she will renew in 2027. In 2016 Barbara's land was certified as a Tree Farm, which confirms that the forest management meets certain sustainability standards.

All but 18.7 acres of the woodland produce valuable timber. Wildlife biologists and foresters worked with Barbara to identify five unique stands – areas of the forest where the trees can be grouped by certain characteristics. The professionals identified priority activities for each stand. In one stand, they created patch cuts: clearing areas by harvesting mature trees. Barbara's priority was to create open space with shrubs and grasses to attract migratory birds and other wildlife. In another stand, they cleared an area around specific, healthy trees that provide food for local wildlife. The fruit of forest trees and shrubs are called "mast." Mast-producing tree species in this stand included red oak, white oak, and shagbark hickory. Allowing these trees more room to grow can improve mast production. Barbara was able to secure funding through the Natural Resource Conservation Service for both of these activities as well as to pay Redstart Forestry to do invasive plant control. In a third stand, they selectively harvested individual mature trees to prioritize hardwood trees like red oak, white oak, shagbark hickory, and sweet birch. In addition to being mast-producing and high-value timber-producing species, these trees are also prime roosting spots for bats.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

When Barbara envisions this land in 50 years, it doesn't look that different than it does today. She is committed to managing the forest, making space for wildlife, and keeping trees healthy. She looks forward to walking the land with foresters, evaluating the work that was done previously, and making plans for new projects. Her advice to other landowners? "Get connected. There are so many resources available to help with this work and to connect you with other resources."



One of the two patch cuts completed in one section of Barbara's woodland.



The same area of the forest three years after the patch cut, showing the growth of shrubs and other low-lying plants.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Southwind Forestry

Barbara brought in Southwind Forestry to create and manage her Forest Management Plan.

Redstart Natural Resource Management

Barbara worked with Redstart to manage invasives in the woodlands and is planning on working with them to complete a tree and shrub planting in the future.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Barbara received funding from NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to pay for activities that improve the health of the forest and its wildlife.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)

Barbara worked with the county forester at the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation and biologists from the Department of Fish and Wildlife to understand and promote the health of her forest.