

A gurgling stream runs through a gently sloping woodland. Once used for pasture, the rocky soils now support wildlife like deer, bear, turkey, grouse, and other forest birds. It is being managed to encourage new wildlife and other forest products, like timber and maple sap.

MEET THE LANDOWNER

Growing up in Bulgaria, Lina never expected to be a landowner in Vermont. But she's jumped into the opportunity with both feet. Since taking over management of the land, she has learned a whole variety of skills she never expected to use, like operating a chainsaw. Lina went on a bear hunt, following hounds chasing the scent of bears and attended VT Coverts' three-day intensive Cooperator Training on forest and habitat management. When Lina added a sugarbush, she realized basic plumbing skills were necessary for its upkeep and maintenance. Lina is growing mushrooms in a small clearing in the forest and she joined volunteers with the Connecticut River Conservancy to plant shrubs supporting the stream running through the property. She has planted trees throughout the property and has worked to expand the network of trails running through her property. Each project she undertakes helps meet her goals of welcoming wildlife into the land and enabling recreation. But at the end of the day, Lina has understood that she is only a guide for the woods – nature will ultimately choose its own course.



Lina participated in Northeast Woodland Training's Game of Logging four-day course.

AT A GLANCE

PROPERTY / PROJECT ACREAGE
90.23 acres (79.23 actively managed)

LOCATION
Woodstock, VT

FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
Patch cut - 2.2 acres
Overstory removal - 10.73 acres
Single tree and group selection - 8.16 acres

PARTNERS
Natural Resource Conservation Service
VT Fish and Wildlife Department
HB Logging
Redstart Forestry

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?

Lina got started managing her land in a way that will feel familiar to other landowners: **invasives**. She saw invasives taking over the edges of the property and brought in Redstart Forestry to manage the ongoing work of removing them. To meet the requirements for the Current Use program, where land is appraised (and taxed) as farming or forestry land rather than its fair market value, she created a forest management plan with Patrick Bartlett (since retired). Lina continues to complete projects with Redstart and a local logging company, HB Logging. She received funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to complete projects including addressing invasives, planting shrubs, and patch cuts.

As part of her plan, the foresters recommended strategies to remove trees that were diseased or infested with pests and promote healthy trees. Lina

prioritized sugar maples and softwood trees that support deer during winter. In one area of the forest, she completed patch cuts to clear small areas of trees. This strategy creates an opening, allowing direct sunlight to reach the forest floor. This promotes the growth of native plants like blackberry and raspberry bushes. Birds carry berry seeds in their droppings. Wild bushes will grow on their own within a year of a patch cut and provide wildlife food for many years.

Foresters recommended leaving tree tops behind in the patch cuts. The tops provide nesting spots for forest birds. They also protect sensitive new growth from browsing deer. As they decompose, they put nutrients back into the soil. The dead wood also stores carbon and keeps it from going into the atmosphere, helping slow climate change.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Lina would advise other women landowners to **get out into the woods and do more hands-on work**. Each project she completes builds her confidence and her familiarity with her woods. She's looking forward to growing nut trees in one of the patch cuts. She has dreams of planting a newly revived hybrid version of the American chestnut. She's also building bat houses around the property. Additional harvests will prioritize high-quality sugar maples and remove declining species. And of course, there's always more work to be done on invasives. In fifty years, she wants her land to be healthy, full of birds, and full of people enjoying the woods the way Vermonters do.



A volunteer crew from the Connecticut River Conservancy planted trees on the property.

PROJECT COSTS

ACTIVITY	ACRES	FUNDING	COST
Invasive Plant Control	13.3	\$3705 (NRCS)	\$7100
Shrub Planting (materials)	.6	\$483 (NRCS) plus grants & volunteers	\$1000
Patch Cut	2.2	\$1603 (NRCS)	\$1200

PROJECT PARTNERS

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

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

VT Fish and Wildlife Department

Habitat Biologist Travis Hart worked closely with Lina to plan, layout and certify the work funded by NRCS.

HB Logging

Lina brought in HB Logging to complete logging projects on the land.

Redstart Forestry

Redstart Forestry is helping manage invasives and working with Lina on her next forest management plan.