

2014 Statewide Heavy Cut Summary Report

Background

In 1997, the Vermont Legislature passed H.536 (Act 15), known as Vermont's "Heavy Cut" law, V.S.A.10 Chapter 83 § 2625, to regulate heavy cutting/clear-cutting of forestland in Vermont. The law requires landowners who intend to conduct a heavy cut of 40 acres or more on land owned or controlled by the landowner to file a "Notice of Intent to Cut" with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR). Landowners heavy cutting more than 80 acres within a 2-mile radius must also file a "Notice of Intent to Cut." The law defines heavy cutting as a harvest which leaves a residual stocking level of acceptable growing stock below the "C-line", as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture silvicultural stocking guides.

The law provides for the following exemptions: (1) heavy cuts intended to carry out an agricultural conversion plan and that the conversion will be completed and the land will be in agricultural production within 5 years, (2) carry out a conversion subject to regulation by an Act 250 District Commission and the Vermont Natural Resources Board under 10 V.S.A. Chapter 151 Act 250 or by the Public Service Board under Title 30, (3) be consistent with an approved Use Value Appraisal (UVA) ("Current Use") forest management plan, (4) have a chip-harvesting plan approved by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife under a permit issued under 30 V.S.A. §248, or (5) be consistent with any other plan approved under other FPR rules. Landowners are required to file and receive approval for all proposed heavy cutting activity even if an exemption applies.

Administration

Since the Heavy Cut law went into effect, FPR has been providing assistance to landowners to help them comply with the Heavy Cut law and has been documenting the level of heavy cutting activity. The level of heavy cutting activity is tracked by applications received and acres harvested and whether or not the heavy cut required a "Notice of Intent to Cut" or qualified as an exemption. To obtain a geographic representation of where heavy cutting occurs within Vermont, heavy cuts are tracked by the Division of Forests administrative districts. There are five administrative districts in Vermont and their corresponding counties are listed in the summary.

State-Wide Trends

The level of heavy cutting state-wide has remained fairly consistent over the last decade. Numbers of approved heavy cuts range from a low of 22 in 2003 to a high of 59 in 2014. Acres that were heavy cut range from a low of 3,151 in 2006 to a high of 8,009 in 2010. A majority of approved heavy cuts qualify as exemptions. During the last 7 years (2008-2014), 284 applications (37,260 acres) qualified as exemptions. During this same timeframe, there were 73 approved Notices of Intent to Cut for 6,226 acres. Most of the approved heavy cutting has

occurred in the Northeast Kingdom counties of Essex, Caledonia, and Orleans. Statewide, from 2008 through 2014, 58% of approved heavy cuts and 67% of the total acreage were located within these three counties.

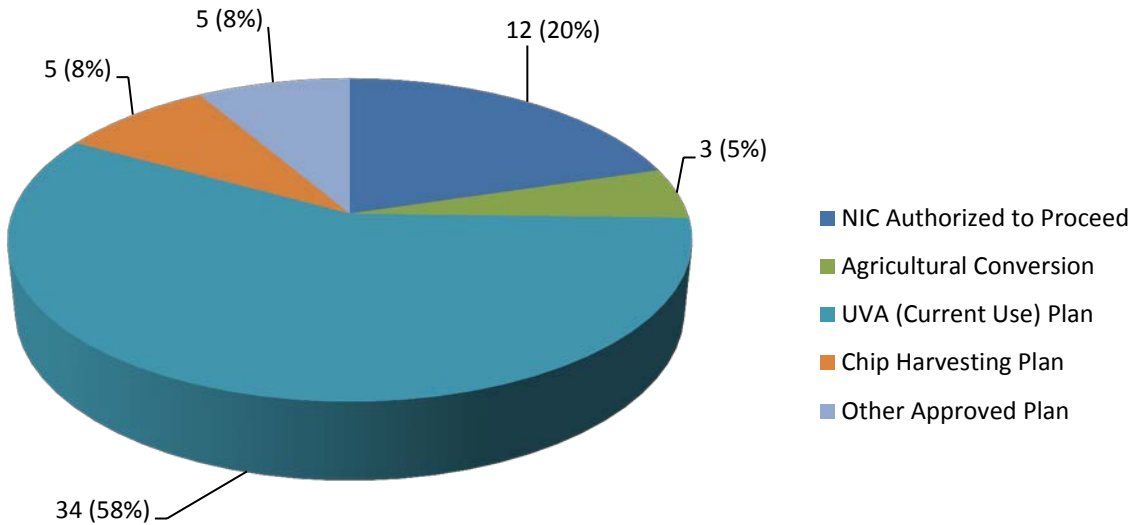
Highlights for 2014

The following highlights, data charts, and tables reflect the activity that occurred during 2014 and shows trends in the level of heavy cutting activity since the law went into effect. In 2014, 59 applications were received to heavy cut 4,607 acres, the majority of which qualified as exemptions. Also in 2014, 47 heavy cuts, representing 3,820 acres, were approved as exemptions. A UVA (Current Use) forest management plan represented a majority of these exemptions: 34 applications for 3,089 acres. A Notice of Intent to Cut was approved for 12 heavy cuts representing 787 acres. Geographically, most of the heavy cutting occurred in the Division of Forests administrative district that includes Essex, Caledonia, and Orleans counties. These three counties accounted for 47% of the applications and 49% of the acres that were approved for heavy cut in 2014.

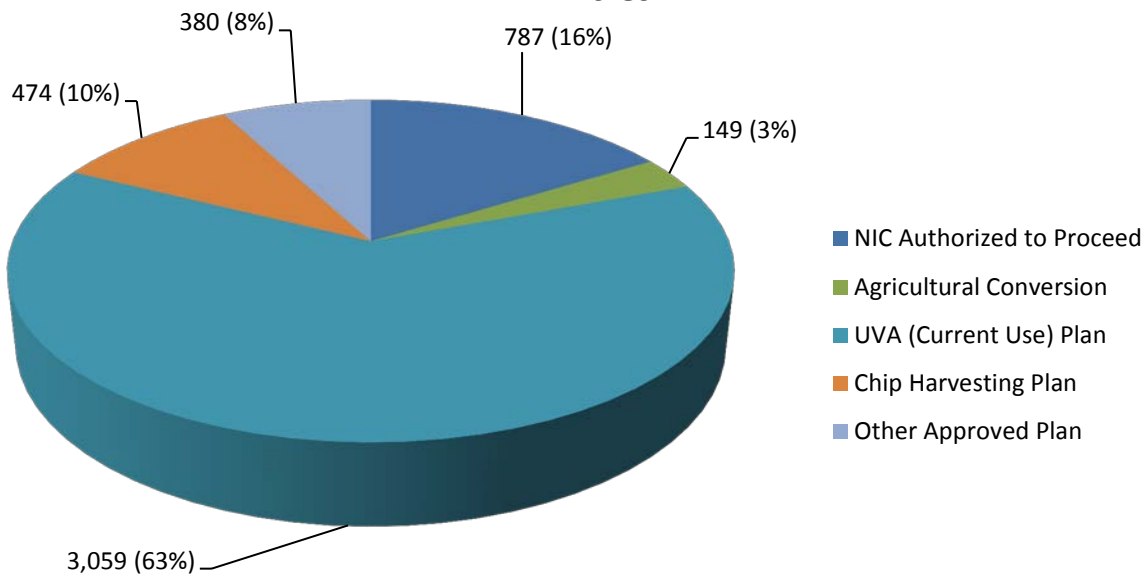
2014 Heavy Cut Statewide Summary

Notices of Intent to Cut (NIC)	Applications (Number)	Acres (Number)
Authorized to Proceed	12	787
Exemptions		
Informational	0	0
Agricultural Conversion	3	149
Act 250 (10 V.S.A. Chapter 151)	0	0
UVA (Current Use) Forest Management Plan	34	3,089
Chip Harvesting Plan (30 V.S.A. § 248)	5	202
Other Approved Forest Management Plan in Effect	5	380
<i>Total Exemptions Issued</i>	47	3,820
GRAND TOTAL	59	4,607

Applications



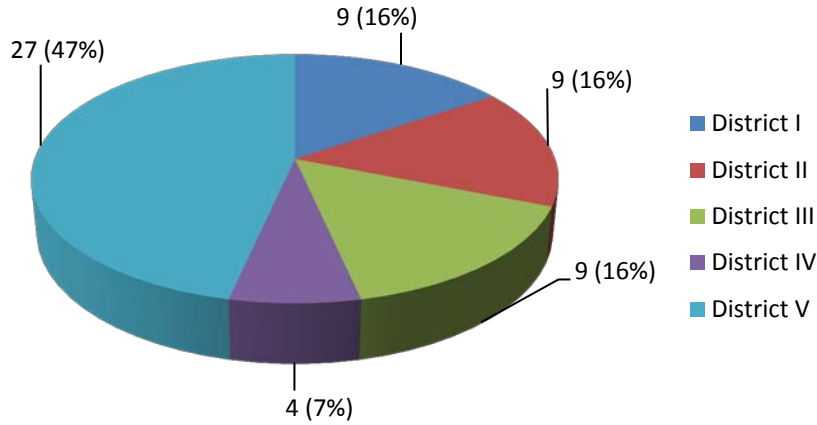
Acres



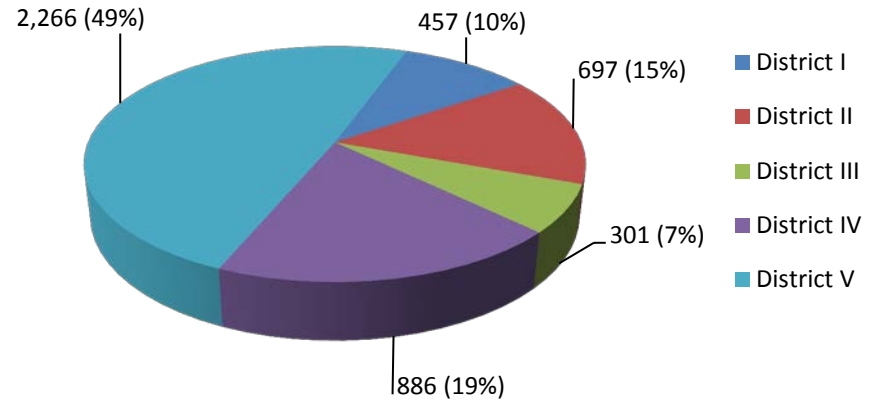
Comparison by Forestry District

District I:	Windham, Windsor
District II:	Bennington, Rutland
District III:	Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle
District IV:	Lamoille, Orange, Washington
District V:	Caledonia, Essex, Orleans

Applications

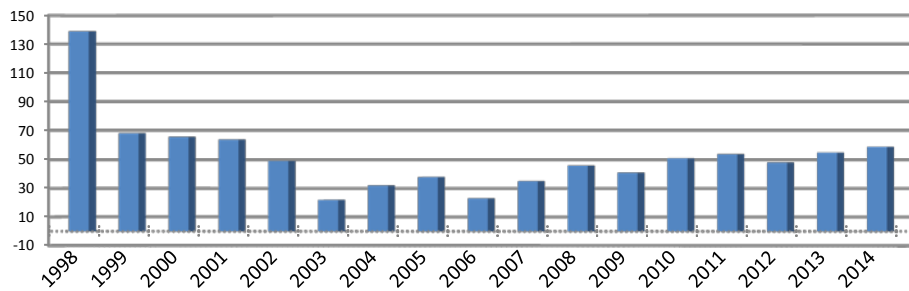


Acres



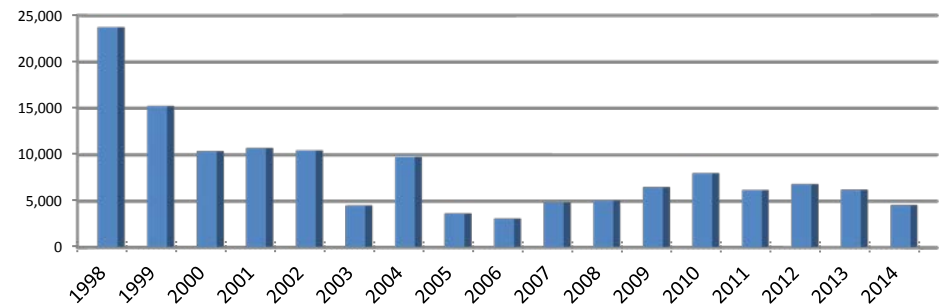
Statewide Comparison by Year

Applications



Years 1998-2005 represent fiscal data and 2006 onward calendar data.

Acres



Years 1998-2005 represent fiscal data and 2006 onward calendar data.