

# 2015 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.

## Statewide Trends

The level of heavy cutting statewide has remained fairly consistent over the last decade (2006 through 2015). Numbers of approved heavy cuts range from a low of 23 in 2006 to a high of 57 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 9 years (2007 through 2015), 356 applications (45,295 acres) qualified as exemptions. During this same timeframe, there were 86 approved Notices of Intent to Cut for 7,599 acres. Most of the

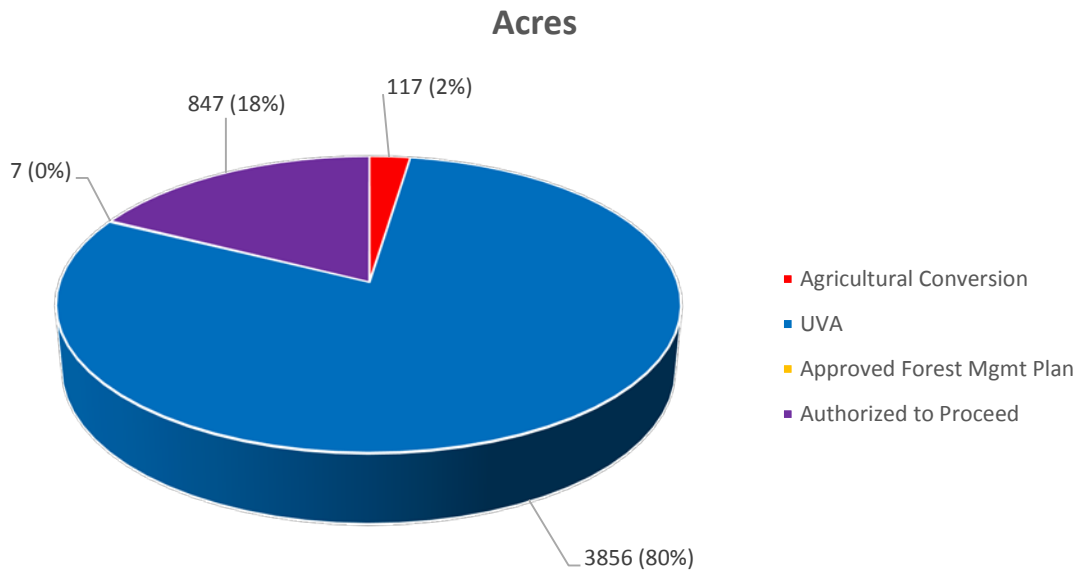
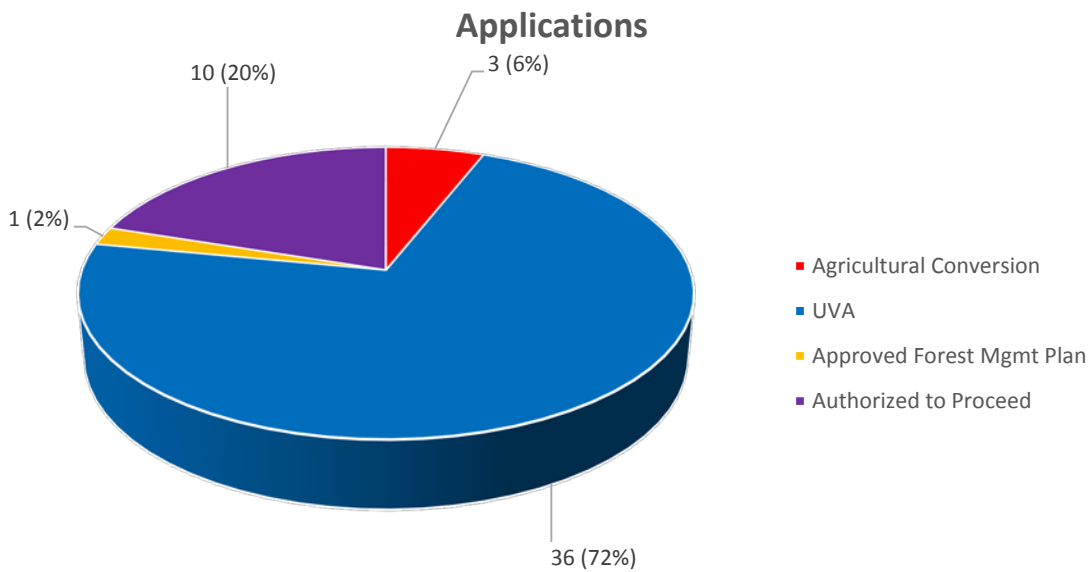
approved heavy cutting has occurred in the Northeast Kingdom counties of Essex, Caledonia, and Orleans. Statewide, from 2008 through 2015, 65% of approved heavy cuts and 73% of the total acreage were located within these three counties.

### **Highlights for 2015**

The following highlights, data charts, and tables reflect the activity that occurred during 2015 and shows trends in the level of heavy cutting activity since the law went into effect. In 2015, 50 applications were received to heavy cut 4,827 acres, the majority of which qualified as exemptions. Also in 2015, 40 heavy cuts, representing 3980 acres, were approved as exemptions. A UVA (Current Use) forest management plan represented a majority of these exemptions: 36 applications for 3,856 acres. A Notice of Intent to Cut was approved for 10 heavy cuts representing 847 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 70% of the applications and 76% of the acres that were approved for heavy cut in 2015.

## 2015 Heavy Cut Statewide Summary

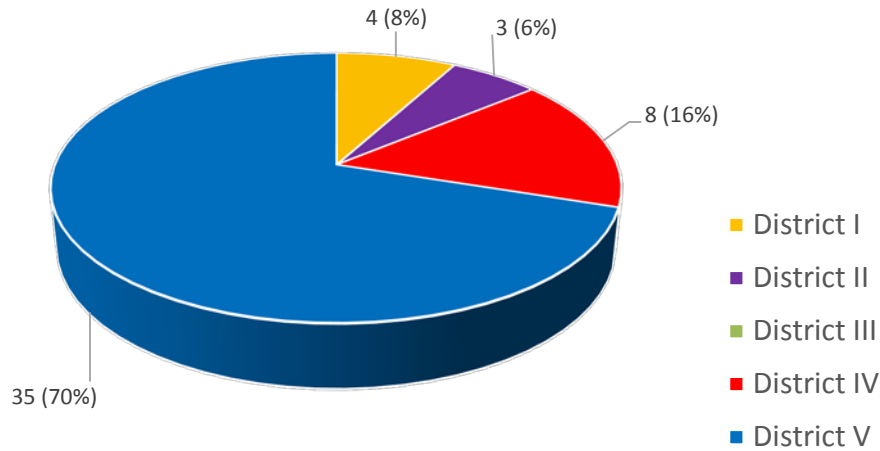
Notices of Intent to Cut (NIC)	Applications (Number)	Acres (Number)
Authorized to Proceed	10	847
<b>Exemptions</b>		
Informational	0	0
Agricultural Conversion	3	117
Act 250 (10 V.S.A. Chapter 151)	0	0
UVA (Current Use) Forest Management Plan	36	3,856
Chip Harvesting Plan (30 V.S.A. § 248)	0	0
Other Approved Forest Management Plan in Effect	1	7
<i>Total Exemptions Issued</i>	40	3,980
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>4,827</b>



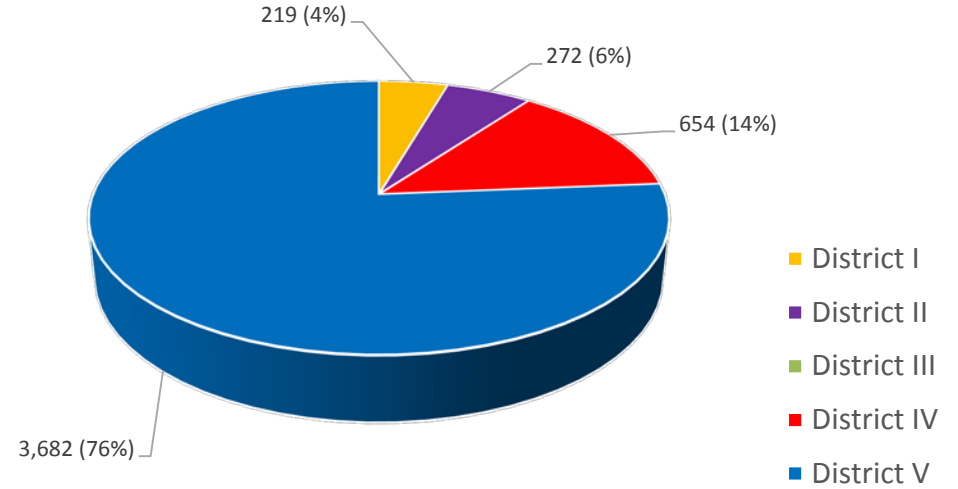
## Comparison by Forestry District

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

### Applications

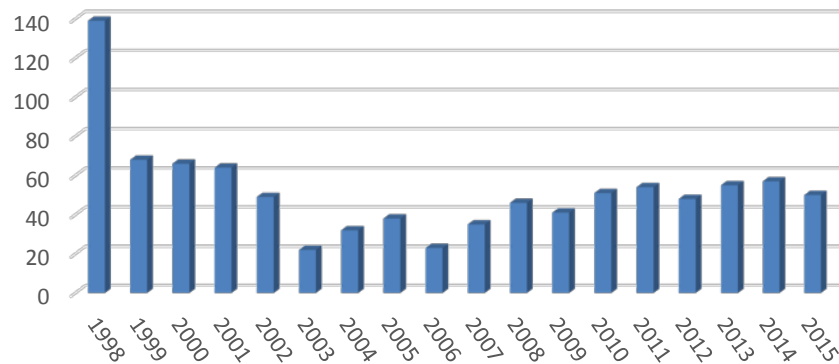


### Acres



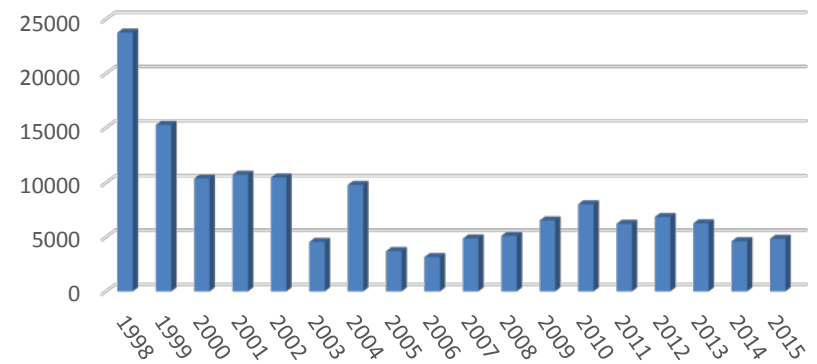
## Statewide Comparison by Year

### Applications



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

### Acres



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