Green Mountain Division Holds Legislative Breakfast
By Ginger Anderson (GMD SAF Secretary)

At their last in-person Winter Meeting before COVID restrictions in 2020, the GMD membership by straw vote asked that the Division resume hosting a Legislative Breakfast at the beginning of the biennium. The breakfast introduces legislators, especially new members, to SAF and professional foresters. It provides a chance for the GMD to highlight the diversity and professionalism of foresters living in the legislators’ districts. The last time this event was held was in 2015. It has traditionally been organized by the Policy Committee.

On February 9, 2023, the Breakfast returned to Montpelier. Pete Clark, the current Policy Committee Chair, took the reins and developed a list of key legislative committee members to invite, along with partner organizations working on forestry issues. Because legislators usually have a full schedule of meetings, the event was held early in the day, with a short program and time for networking. In addition to remarks by Pete and a welcome by current GMD chair, Bill Musson, Danielle Fitzko, Interim Commissioner of the VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation, outlined the breadth of work by the Department and some of the issues currently being addressed – namely, the Future Forest Strategic Roadmap. Tony D’Amato, Director of the Forestry Program at UVM, followed with a presentation on the importance and conditions of Vermont’s forests which illustrated the complexity of the resource and its potential for the economy, ecosystems and culture of Vermont.

Roughly 30 people attended the Breakfast. While most were SAF members or from partner organizations the event was well-received by the legislators, notably from the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy Committees.