

## ***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.



*Dr. Tony D'Amato (UVM) fields questions from state legislators about the state of forestry in Vermont*

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 of 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.

**Legislative Breakfast Program Schedule**  
Hosted by Green Mountain Division of the Society of American Foresters  
February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
7-10 am at the Capital Plaza Hotel Montpelier

**7:00 am: Registration open**

- Grab coffee and breakfast while casually meeting among legislators, agencies, and the Vermont forestry community

**7:30 – 8:00 am: Welcome remarks and Presentations: *Why forests and forestry matter to Vermonters***

- **Welcome remarks** by Bill Musson (GMD Chair) and Pete Clark (GMD Policy Chair)
- **State update** by Danielle Fitzko (ANR Forest, Parks, and Recreation - Interim Commissioner)
- **Formal presentation:** *The state of forestry in Vermont*, by Dr. Tony D'Amato (University of Vermont, Forestry Program)

**8:15 am: Roll Call**

- Learn more about the diverse perspective and organizations pursuing work related to forests in the state. Attendees are encouraged to give a 1-minute plug for their work.

**8:30 am – 10 am: Informal meet and greet**

- Networking time to meet among legislators, agencies, and the Vermont forestry community

**Registered event attendees include representatives from:**

House Committee on Ag., Food Resiliency, & Forestry	Audubon Vermont
House Committee on Environment and Energy	The Nature Conservancy Vermont
Senate Committee on Agriculture	Vermont Land Trust
Senate Comm. on Econ. Dev., Housing & Gen. Affairs	Vermont Technical College
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy	Vermont Woodlands Association
ANR Forest, Parks, and Recreation	Vermont Sugar Makers Association
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Vermont Natural Resource Council
U.S. Forest Service	Vermont Coverts
University of Vermont	Cold Hollow to Canada
Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund	UVM Extension Forestry and Maple Program
Women Owning Woodlands	Various Private Consulting Foresters

*Legislative Breakfast event program, including a list of attending organizations and legislative committees*

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