

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Working Lands Enterprise Board Announces FY19 Ski Vermont Grantee Donation

\$15,000 grant will help KJ Pratt supply more firewood to Vermonters for heating

May 17, 2019 | Montpelier, VT - The Working Land Enterprise Board (WLEB) is excited to announce the annual 2019 Ski Vermont Grant – awarded through the Working Lands Enterprise Fund will be given to [KJ Pratt Logging and Tree Service, LLC](#), of Jericho. The \$15,000 grant will be used to help KJ Pratt acquire a firewood processor, to expand the low-grade wood division of its business. KJ Pratt currently rents one yet experiences a high demand for wood. In order to keep up with that demand, the Working Lands grant is timely to prevent further roadblocks with deliveries. Firewood requests have increased every year the last three years since their program began. Local wood could be utilized, and this acquisition of a firewood processor will ensure most of their low-grade wood products would stay local and sustain the Vermont economy.

The grant is made possible through proceeds from [Ski Vermont's Fifth Grade Passport](#) program, which helped more than 3,000 children get involved in skiing and snowboarding during the 2018-19 season. Last year's Ski Vermont grant was awarded to Fairmont Farm in East Montpelier, to help fund its 'Life on the Farm' Camp for children. To date, Ski Vermont has donated \$35,980. In 2017, sponsoring Larson Creamery (\$19, 980), and in 2018, Fairmont Farms (\$16,000).

"We are very grateful for Ski Vermont's continued commitment to donating to the Working Lands Enterprise Fund," said Michael Snyder, Commissioner of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. "KJ Pratt Logging and Tree Service, LLC is just the type of forest economy enterprise that is prime for WLEB investment — a young entrepreneur, expanding a business offering both forest management services and firewood for homeowners which creates new markets for low-grade wood. This type of diversification helps build stability for a rural business competing with fossil fuel heating prices and global markets for low grade forest products."

The [Working Lands Enterprise Initiative](#) (WLEI) and governing board (WLEB) were created by the legislature in 2012 to stimulate economic development in the agricultural and forestry sectors. WLEI is a collaborative effort between the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM), the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. WLEB, which finalizes all funding decisions, achieves this goal by making investments across businesses and service providers in critical leverage points which will have the highest return on investment. This initiative supports Vermont entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance to help innovate and grow their business while also creating jobs, building infrastructure, and promoting growth in economies and communities of Vermont's working landscape.

"This program helps Vermont businesses keep our state's working lands active and economically viable," said VAAFAM Deputy Secretary Alyson Eastman. "We encourage businesses to explore the possibilities of the Working Lands program."

For 2019, the Working Lands Enterprise Board deployed \$823,000 in grants, to (14) Agriculture and Forestry businesses and service providers around the State. Part of the strategic plan for this year was the creation of Industry Impact grants for projects ranging from \$50,000-\$150,000. These projects must impact the supply chain for low grade wood or dairy, two industries determined by the WLEB in need of larger investments to achieve viability. Since its legislative inception in 2012, the Working Lands

Enterprise Board has invested over \$5.3 million dollars in 184 projects affecting every county of the state, leveraging over \$8.6 million in additional funds.

For questions, please contact:

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