

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

As students at Vermont Law School we are privileged to attend classes in one of the most beautiful settings on earth; the great Northern Forest. One of the last unspoiled stretches of wild lands in the Northeast, the twenty-six million acre forest is under pressure from logging and developing; from vacationers and local residents; and from the public and the private sectors. In response to many calls to "maintain the 'traditional patterns of land ownership and use'" in the Northern Forest, the Governors of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont created the Northern Forest Lands Council to conduct an in-depth study of the area. The Council assessed data, met with concerned citizens, and consulted experts in many related disciplines to create their report and recommendations entitled *Finding Common Ground: Conserving the Northern Forest*.

In the spring of 1994, *Vermont Law Review* decided that the issues facing the Council were of concern and interest to ourselves, our fellow students, our community, our readership, and in some sense, the nation as a whole. We committed ourselves to holding a live conference and dedicating an entire volume of the *Vermont Law Review* to the papers resulting from that conference. The conference, held on September 30, 1994, at Vermont Law School, provided a chance for experts from around the country to discuss and develop the historical, political, ecological, and legal aspects of the Northern Forest, and to debate its future use and management. This issue is the result of that conference.

The symposium would not have been possible without the aid and support of Max Kempner, Dean, Vermont Law School; Pat Parenteau, Director of the Environmental Law Center; the Student Bar Association of Vermont Law School; Tamara Lindau and Jennifer Kitchel Reining, third-year editors who organized and coordinated the conference; and all fifty-five members of *Vermont Law Review* who worked tirelessly on both the conference and this issue.

Common Ground seeks to redefine public land use and control policies on both state and national levels. There are lessons to be learned and "exceptional resources" to be protected; not only in the Northern Forest, but in the West, the South, the Tropics, and the Arctics. We hope this issue helps enlighten and inform the debate.

