

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Governor announces new partnership with sugarmakers
and kicks off Maple Open House Weekend**

MONTPELIER – Governor Jim Douglas today announced a new partnership with the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association that gives the go-ahead to expand tapping on some state land.

The news came as the Governor kicked off the 8th annual Maple Open House Weekend at Marcia Maynard and Ken Denton’s sugarhouse in Cabot.

“Maple sugaring is a vital piece of our agricultural and forest products economy,” the Governor said. “I am very pleased that the state will be able to make this modest contribution to this important industry with an agreement that promotes responsible stewardship of sugarbushes on state land.”

Under the agreement, the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation will license sites that it deems appropriate in state forests and state parks to sugarmakers, who will be required to abide by state land policies and management efforts while operating the sugarbushes. The Department expects to have as many as 11 sites licensed and operational for next season.

“There are few things we take more seriously than our forests and our well-deserved acclaim for forest products like maple syrup and quality timber,” said Jason Gibbs, commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation. “This commonsense partnership recognizes this and strengthens the tradition of Vermont’s working landscape.”

Vermont is the largest U.S. producer of maple syrup and approximately 500,000 gallons of 5.5 million pounds of syrup is produced annually, according to the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association.

“We have a proud tradition of sugarmaking here in Vermont,” said Rick Marsh, president of the association. “We’re excited to be working with the state in taking the next step to promote and protect the Vermont maple syrup brand.”

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