

Town of Richmond, Vermont

# TOWN FOREST RECREATION PLAN



**Vermont Town Forest**  
Recreation Planning



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# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Acknowledgements

All community plans are the result of a collective effort. In the development of this Town Forest Recreation Plan many individuals provided considerable input and expertise to the outcome. The project team would like to thank them for their tremendous assistance.

### Project Team

#### Steering Committee

- ❖ Hannah Phillips, Chairperson
- ❖ Berne Broudy
- ❖ Cecilia Danks
- ❖ Brad Elliot
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- ❖ Elizabeth Wright

#### Interagency Working Group

- ❖ VT Urban and Community Forestry Program—Project Lead
- ❖ VT Agency of Natural Resources—Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
- ❖ VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development

#### Consultant Team

- ❖ SE Group—Project Lead
- ❖ Arrowwood Environmental—Natural Resources Sub-Consultant

### OUR PARTNERS

The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program is a joint initiative of Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FRP) and UVM Extension. Working group members include FPR's Recreation Program, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and Extension's Tourism and Marketing Program. Partners include over 40 organizations and stakeholders who have helped shape the process and deliverables.

# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## About the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Community Assistance Program

Vermont has a long and proud tradition of town-owned and managed forests. Over 168 municipalities own over 67,000 acres of forestland, all open for public benefit. The values of these town forests are diverse, including watershed protection, wildlife habitat, forest products, outdoor classrooms, and neighborhood gathering places. Outdoor forest-based recreation is both a great opportunity and a growing challenge. Recognition of the economic and community benefits of forest-based recreation is on the rise. Concurrently, increased pressure from multiple recreation groups accentuate the need for planning assistance to balance the growing recreation interests and the health of the forest. In response, the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program and its partners received a grant from the US Forest Service to provide recreation planning assistance to ten diverse Vermont communities, and Richmond was one of those selected!

### Project Purpose and Scope

At the broadest level, the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Community Assistance Program is intended to empower communities to move forward with confidence on recreation projects in their Town Forest. This process has provided robust community involvement and comprehensive consideration of potential projects, so the community can move forward with confidence knowing that it is addressing the needs and preferences of its residents and visitors, is protecting the forest resources in its charge, and is effectively managing the forest for the resources and activities it values.



The project encompasses four key areas:

1. Developing the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit to enable planning in ALL Vermont communities
2. Developing a compelling and inspiring vision to help guide the future management of the town forest
3. Developing discrete, clear and action-oriented strategies for improvement of recreation and stewardship that achieves the vision
4. Fostering implementation with support for local plan adoption, guidance for implementation, and the project toolkit

*For Richmond, this planning process has dovetailed with the new management plan for the town forest.*



# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

### Project Process

Over the past year, Richmond has worked with a consulting firm that specializes in community planning, SE Group, in a robust planning process to develop an action-based town forest stewardship and recreation plan. The innovative planning model included a public visioning workshop, needs assessment, facilitated walks in the forest, a community survey, a public strategies workshop, and an engaged steering committee. This process has resulted in a plan that provides actionable strategies to assist the community in taking the next steps. This process has led to a Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit to support sustainable, forest-based recreation in town forests statewide.

### How to Use This Plan

First and foremost, this plan is intended to document the community's desires for the town forest. Through robust public engagement, the planning process identified and solidified the community's comprehensive vision, which encompasses all the primary uses of town forests: conservation, recreation, education, and timbering and forest products. When decisions are being made about the town forest, the vision outlined in this document should be referred to and should inform how the community might weigh in on the future direction of the forest.

In addition to the establishing a shared vision for the forest, this planning process has also identified a series of concrete actions the town and its partners could take to implement the community's vision for the Forest in terms of recreation. Strategies for improvement of recreation could be physical enhancements—such as new trails, parking lots, or facilities—but strategies might also be non-physical improvements like enhanced maps and signage or policy-oriented strategies like creating a process for proposing and reviewing new trails or projects in the forest. Potential strategies were reviewed and prioritized by the steering committee and the public during the Draft Strategies Workshop. All strategies identified by the steering committee and project team are found within the action plan table, but the highest priority projects have also received enhanced detail in the action plan.

Some of the strategies can be implemented directly by the town, its volunteers, and partners without additional funding or resources—others may require additional planning and design or require grants to complete. If grants or additional planning and design steps are needed, likely funding sources and implementation partners are identified in the action plan.

The Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit—a companion to this plan—offers guidelines, designs, case studies, best practices, and standards for the town to pursue towards realizing its vision. Whether the next step involves recruiting volunteers, writing a grant application, or building a trail, the Toolkit can help the town and its partners move forward.

The Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit is available on Urban and Community Forestry's website at: <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>



# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

### Community Benefits of Recreation in Town Forests

Recreation in town forests provides many benefits for local residents, economies, and the natural communities of Vermont.

#### Conservation and Habitat Protection

A town forest, as a protected natural area, has intrinsic conservation value. They act as habitat for local species and help conserve the area's natural resources. Town forests can connect existing forest blocks, providing a larger, safe habitat for species. Linked habitat blocks also allow species to travel and adapt to changing conditions. The forests also protect and buffer local streams, improving water quality and habitat for aquatic species. In absorbing and filtering water, the forests improve flood resiliency and water quality across the watershed. Forests also help protect soils and biodiversity and provide a buffer against pests and disease. As a municipally owned parcel, the forest can leverage additional funds for conservation through taxes and community development grants.

A town forest also provides humans with benefits from conservation by linking people to nature and allowing them to experience a wide range of natural environments. It is becoming clearer that contact with nature is an important element of a healthy life style. Providing convenient, local access to forests and natural areas can make it easier to connect with and experience nature,



which is particularly important for the youth in our communities. According to the Institute for Social Research, the average American boy or girl spends just four to seven minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day, and more than six hours each day in front of an electronic screen (National Wildlife Federation, 2016). This is startling data that has been causing a ripple effect across the country. Nearly every industry that works with young people across the nation has established initiatives to help change this statistic. From school districts and environmental education organizations to federal land managers, conservationists and the outdoor retail industry, new funding streams for outreach and programs have developed.

There are several negative long-term effects of kids' "nature deficit disorder," as coined by Richard Louv, but the two greatest impacts are general health and well-being of America's youth and the ability and desire for future generations to steward and value our public natural and wild areas, including our town forests. Although this national phenomenon is less of an issue in rural places like Vermont, convenient access to forests could help get even more young people outdoors more often.





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Close to Home Recreational Opportunities

Town forests provide trails for both residents and visitors to enjoy. Town forest trails allow walkers, bikers, runners, skiers, and snowshoers to combine exercise and a natural experience in a convenient location without having to travel far from their home. Studies have shown that close and convenient access to recreation and the outdoors can significantly increase an individual's physical activity levels (Schipperijn et al, 2017). Town forests may also connect surrounding trail systems, enhancing the community's overall trail network. Town forest recreational opportunities can also integrate recreation with outdoor education through interpretive signage and nature walks, promoting other community values of health and nature education.

## Economic Development

In Vermont, outdoor and forest-based recreation and the associated tourism are major drivers of the economy. Outdoor and forest-based recreation brings people into our communities. In the Mad River Valley, 78% of visitors have reported that trails and access to the outdoors was important in their decision to visit (MRV Moves, 2017). Trail users, both residents and visitors, will visit local restaurants and shops, bringing in tax revenue and creating jobs as well. Across our state, just four trail systems—the Catamount Trail, the Long Trail, the VAST system, and Kingdom Trails—have been found to generate over \$30.8 million annual economic activity, over \$2 million in annual tax revenues, and have supported over 365 jobs annually (VT Trails and Greenways, 2017). A single trail system in the Green Mountain National Forest—the Blueberry Lake Trails—has been found to generate \$1.8 million in annual sales, \$320,000 in annual tax revenues, and has supported 22 jobs annually (MRV Moves, 2017).



Many people when moving to Vermont will choose a location based on its natural features and recreational opportunities. Nationwide, the National Association of Realtors found that 80% of Americans consider having trails and places to take a walk one of their top priorities when deciding where they would like to live. This ranked higher than even “high quality public schools” in their Community Preference Survey, which was selected by 74% of survey respondents (National Realtors Association, 2015). Access to the outdoors is increasingly being seen as a cornerstone of quality of life, particularly in rural communities, and having this access allows communities to attract and retain their workforce, which in turn helps attract and retain businesses. Therefore, an accessible town forest can be a key factor for strengthening the economic vitality of Vermont towns.





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Health Benefits

Almost all hospitals and health providers encourage patients to include some form of physical activities in their daily lives to increase many aspects of their health. By providing convenient access to the outdoors, a town forest encourages community members to walk, bike, ski, snowshoe, or run in the forest regularly.



Obesity is one of the most significant health threats today. More than two-thirds (68.8 percent) of American adults are considered to be overweight or obese. More than one-third (35.7 percent) of American adults are considered to be obese (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Vermont has slightly lower rates of overweight and obese adults at 57.7% overweight and 23.2% obese, but the issue is of critical importance in our state as well (CDC, 2012). Active lifestyles and physical activity help to combat obesity. Obesity exacerbates many other types of illnesses and reducing the levels of obesity leads to overall better health.

Studies have shown that trails and outdoor recreation contribute to healthy communities and lower healthcare costs for individuals and local governments. A 2004 cost-benefit analysis of using trails in Lincoln, Nebraska to reduce health care costs associated with inactivity found that for every \$1 invested in trails for physical activity, \$2.94 of public health benefits are produced (Wang et al, 2004).

Spending time in the forest's peaceful, natural setting is also proven to be beneficial to community members' mental health. In addition, the forest's trees improve the air quality of the surrounding area as well.

## Carbon and Climate

Protected forests take up carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and release oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) through photosynthesis, transferring the carbon (C) to their trunks, limbs, roots, and leaves as they grow. When leaves or branches fall and decompose, or trees die, the stored C will be released by respiration and/or combustion back to the atmosphere or transferred to the soil. Because of these processes, forests and forested landscapes can store considerable carbon and their growth can provide a carbon sink; landscapes that have been recently converted or reconverted to forests (from another land cover) can provide a carbon sink that is considerably larger than other land cover types. U.S. forests currently serve as a carbon 'sink', offsetting approximately 13% of U.S. emissions from burning fossil fuels in 2011, and from 10 to 20% of U.S. emissions each year (USFS, 2018).



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## Chapter 2: Existing Conditions

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### Community Profile

The community profile presents relevant demographic, economic, and recreational information to planning for the town forest.

### Summary

Richmond is a rural community in Chittenden County known for its outdoor recreation opportunities. The town's median age, 36.9, is well below the statewide average, as many families with children choose to live in Richmond. The town has a higher than average household income, but experiences relatively limited overnight tourism. However, Richmond does draw people from across the region for its outdoor recreation offerings – many miles of trails, Cochran's Ski Area, and acres of conserved land. Private lands are also an important part of the recreational landscape in Richmond.







Population: 4,115



Median Age: 36.9



# of School Age Children: 914



48 % Male 52 % Female



Household Median Income: \$75,145



Residents Below Poverty Level: 5 %



14 % Residential Units in Seasonal/Recreational Use



15 % County Employment in Travel & Tourism



Grand List Assessed Value: \$27,689,000



Number of Parks and Open Spaces: 6



Miles of Trails: 16



# of Playgrounds: 2





## Town Forest Profile

### Forest Overview

The Andrews Community Forest is a 428-acre largely forested parcel just outside Richmond Village in Chittenden County. The property is a diverse forestland with two small meadows. It was once a working farm with pasture lands and logging operations. The farm, including barns on an adjacent property, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A VAST trail and VELCO powerline run across the property. There are also many forest management roads, or logging roads, from previous logging operations that still exist on the forest. These may be used as recreational trails, but a new, sustainably-built trail system is planned for the forest. The forest also adjoins many other trail networks, such as VYCC and other private property owners.

This forest is part of a large, connected forest block that is a habitat for many wildlife species. It is part of the Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project and is a part of a 6,000-acre contiguous forestland, adjoining the 72,000-acre Mt. Mansfield Forest Block. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has ranked the parcel in the top 3% of wildlife habitats in the state and it is in Vermont's only globally "Important Bird Area."

In terms of water resources, the forest has several headwater streams that flow into the Winooski River and then on to Lake Champlain. The property also includes a small beaver pond and wetlands and at least two vernal pools. The quality of these water resources is directly related to the health of the surrounding forest.



# Vermont Town Forest

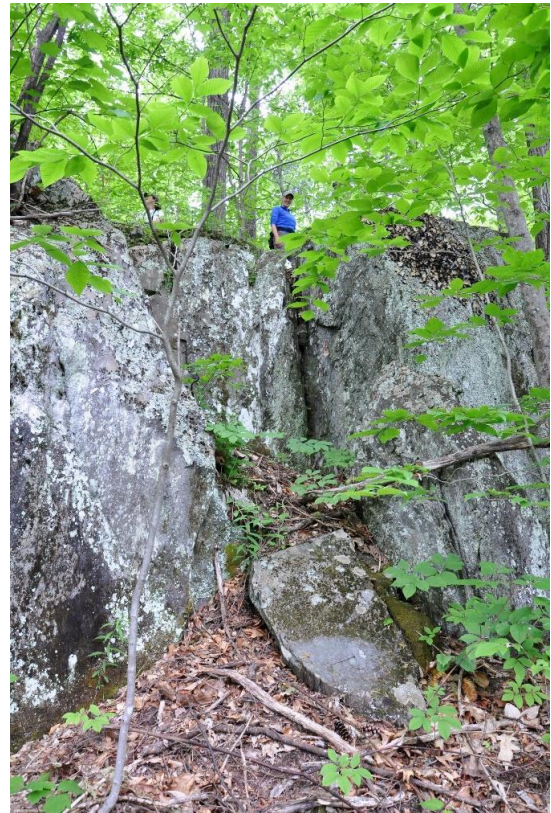
## Recreation Planning

### Land Ownership and Conservation Background

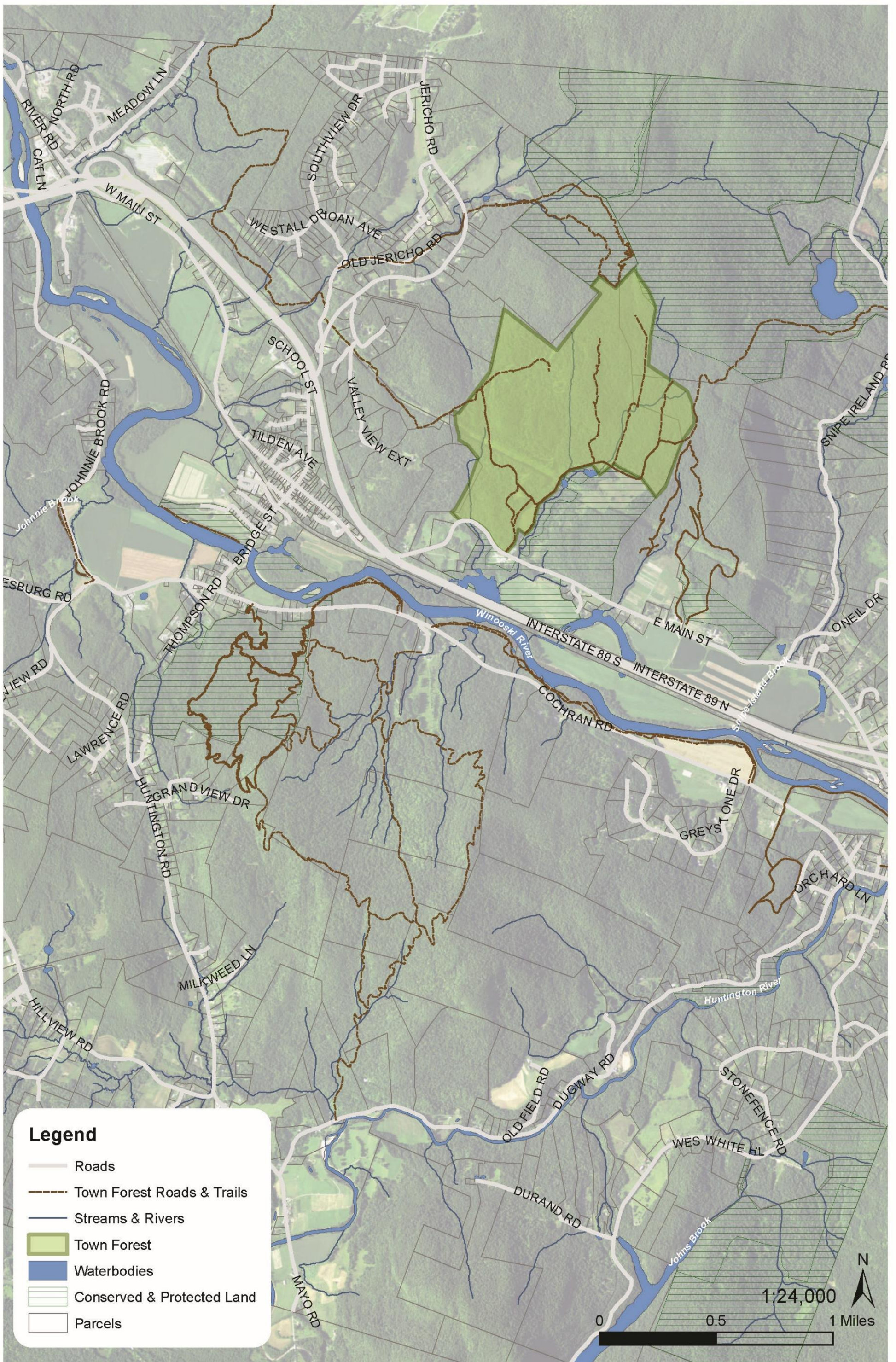
In 2018, the Town of Richmond, with the assistance of Vermont Land Trust, purchased the 428-acre, largely wooded parcel from the Andrews family to create a new community forest. Simultaneous with the sale, a conservation easement was conveyed to both the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to protect the property's natural resources and ensure public access in perpetuity.

The Andrews family had owned the land since 1923 (although farming operations on the property began around 1800). The Andrews family actively managed the timber in the forest. They also allowed hunting and other public recreational use of their land. Maple Wind Farm leases eight acres of the community forest to graze cattle. The farm and community forest are interested in negotiating a long-term lease to continue this arrangement.

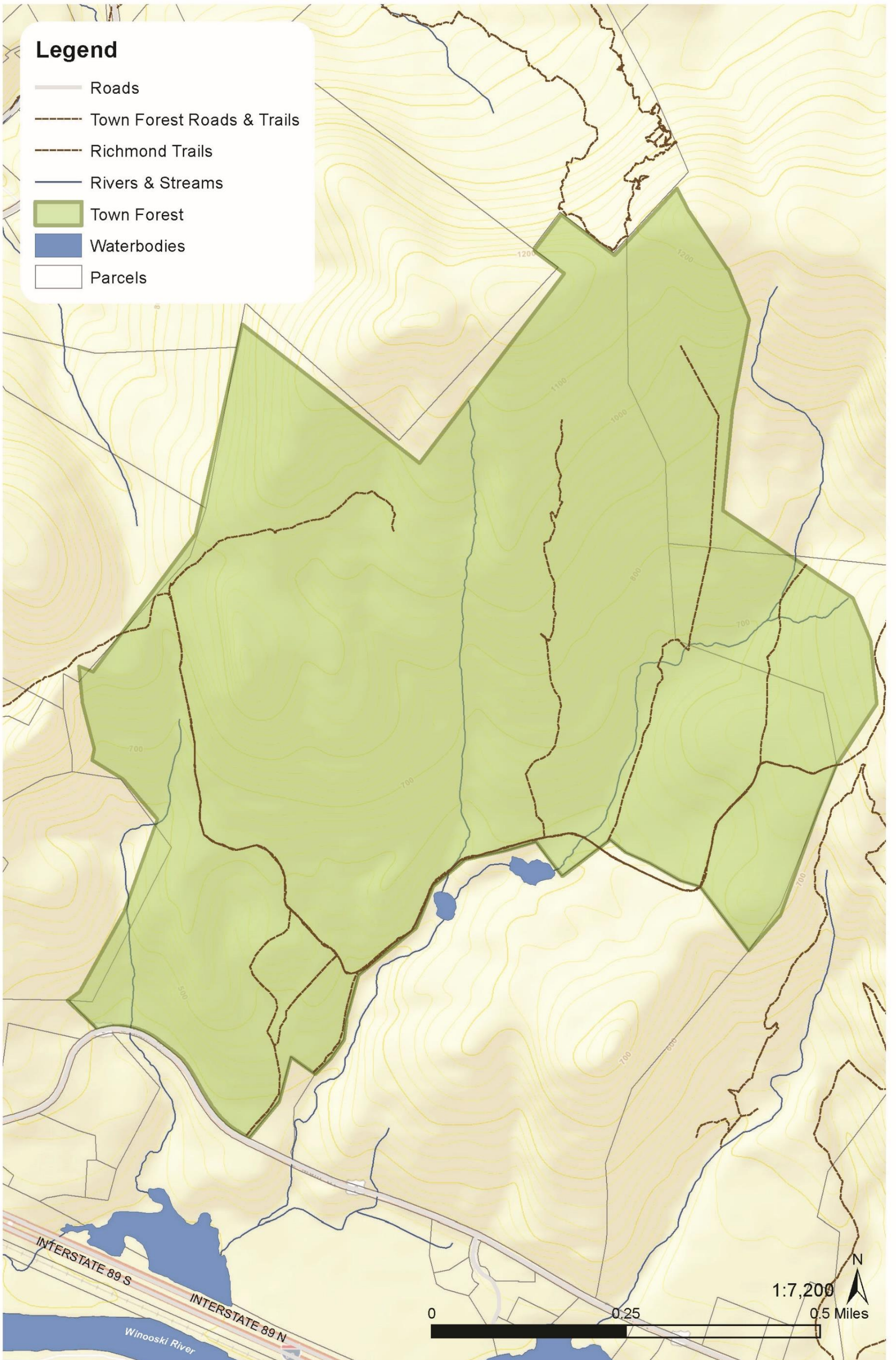
The purpose of the conservation easement is to “conserve the property's natural resources and ecological processes, open space values, provide for non-motorized, non-commercial recreation and education, and involve the public in the management of the property.” The conservation easement also requires a management plan for the forest. The Community Forest Steering Committee, working with SE Group and Arrowwood Environmental, developed a forest management plan in Fall 2018. The plan sets the allowed uses, management objectives, and management actions for the forest.









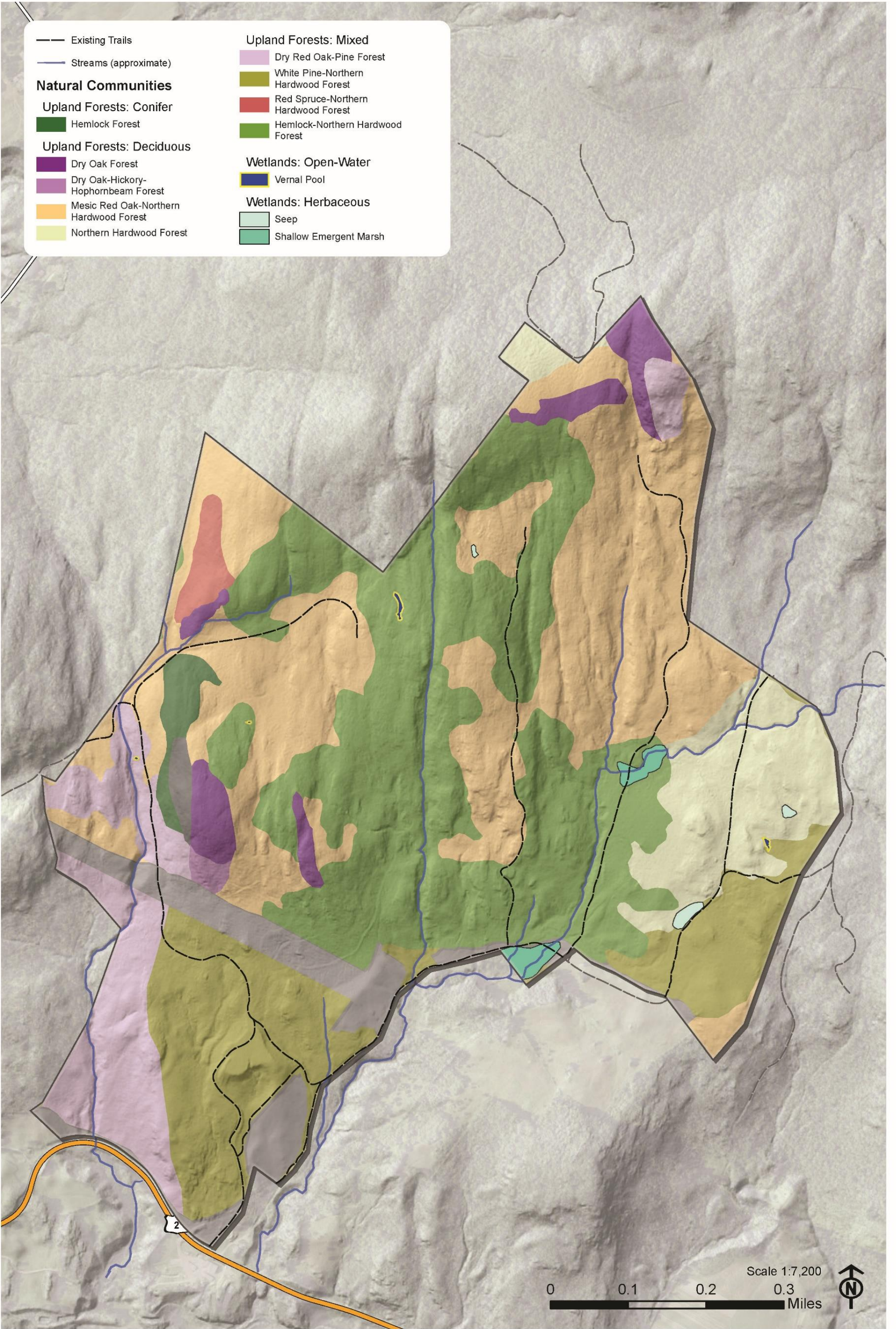


### Legend

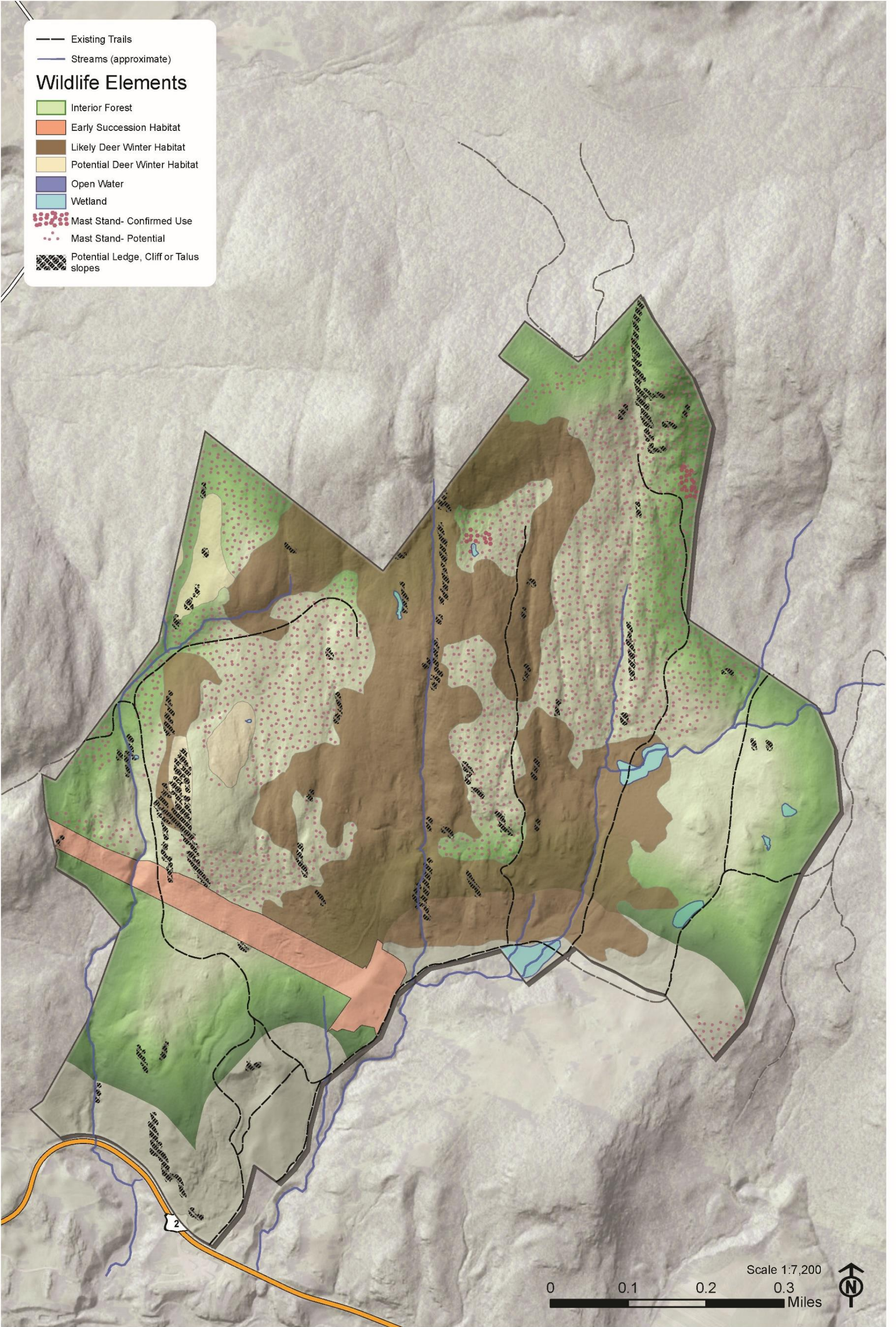
- Roads
- - - Town Forest Roads & Trails
- · · Richmond Trails
- Rivers & Streams
- Town Forest
- Waterbodies
- Parcels













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## Chapter 3: Public Engagement Summary and Needs Assessment

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To bring the “town” into town forest, a robust public engagement process was at the heart of this plan. There were multiple workshops open to the public, a community survey, and many steering committee meetings to guide the plan. Through this process, the public identified issues, needs, desired attributes, and strategies to enhance the forest. The public also offered feedback on the strategies and draft plans, to ensure a fit with the town and forest’s needs, interests, and capacity.

### Public Engagement

#### Kickoff Summit

A project kickoff summit with all 10 towns was held at the Bethel Town Hall on Friday, November 17, 2017. The summit introduced members of the town steering committee to the project and served as an initial opportunity to provide input. The project team provided a background of the project and an overview of the process. Through a working lunch, the committee members completed a SWOT worksheet (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to begin thinking about and analyzing the forest.



A web survey was also available for other committee members who were not present to provide their thoughts. Facilitators led a community breakout session for the committee to speak to existing conditions, issues, and their vision for the town forest. From Richmond, four people were in attendance.

#### Steering Committee Process

The community forest interim steering committee, made up of Conservation Commission members, Richmond Trails members, and other interested community members, was instrumental to the process. Members of the steering committee attended the kickoff summit, helped plan and spread the word about the public workshops, reviewed the draft strategies and draft plan, and met with the project team and on their own to provide ideas and feedback throughout the process.

# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Visioning Workshop

A Visioning Workshop for the Andrews Community Forest was held at Camel's Hump Middle School on January 18, 2018. The meeting was a drop-in anytime, open house format with questions about an overall vision for the town; the balance of recreation, education, conservation/natural resources, and forest products; the natural resources present on the site; and future activities in the Town Forest. Attendees wrote responses on boards, completed dot exercises, and drew their ideas and knowledge on maps. Members of the project team and local steering committee were available for



one-on-one chats with attendees, and a general comment box was provided for open-ended feedback. Background/baseline information about the project, the community, and the forest, was also provided. 55 people signed in and an estimated 80 people were in attendance.

Please see Appendix 1 – Visioning Process Results, which combines the findings from this meeting and the community survey.

## Community Survey

The Community Survey was launched at the public visioning workshop on January 18, 2018 and remained open through the Sunday after Town Meeting Day—March 11, 2018. The community survey asked the same questions as the public visioning workshop, in order to give the people who could not attend the meeting an opportunity to provide input. The survey was online and the community was made aware of the survey through a variety of methods including flyers distributed around town, press-releases and news articles, and email blasts and social media posts. In total, the survey received 317 responses.

Please see Appendix 1 for the Visioning Process Results, which combines the findings from the public visioning workshop and the community survey.



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Strategies Workshop

A Strategies Workshop for the Andrews Community Forest was held at the Richmond Free Library on July 12, 2018. The meeting was a combination presentation and open house. First, the attendees



learned about the project process, the toolkit, vision framework, the management plan, and draft strategies. The meeting transitioned to an open house where attendees prioritized the strategies on boards and had the opportunity to have one-on-one discussions with members of the project team and steering committee. Attendees also indicated locations for the strategies on a large map. An estimated 40 people were in attendance. Attendees also provided input on the full management plan being developed for the parcel.

Please see Appendix 2 for the Strategies Workshop Results.

## Needs Assessment

Through the public engagement process, community members identified the issues and needs associated with the forest to be resolved in this planning process. Additional issues and needs were identified via site visits and natural resources assessments. The following issues and needs were identified:

1. Recently acquired property
2. New forest with many needs such as maps, inventories, assessments, etc.
3. Limited use
4. Traditional hunting ground
5. Invasive species
6. Need to create parking area
7. Lots of logging roads in a variable conditions
8. Powerline through property
9. Steep topography
10. Need for walking/biking route from the town center
11. Part of property in agricultural use and adjacent agricultural land
12. Possible need for designated use trails (hiking only, biking only)





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## Chapter 4: Town Forest Vision Framework

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A vision framework is a critically important tool that informs the goals and direction of the town forest recreation plan. The vision framework encompasses all forest uses—not just recreation—to understand how recreation should fit in with the community’s overall intent for the forest. The vision framework is directional, descriptive, and aspirational, communicating what the community believes are the ideal conditions for the forest—how things would look if all opportunities and issues were perfectly addressed.

The vision framework includes:

1. A discussion of the management balance in the forest; and
2. A list of key attributes that describe the community’s desired character for the forest

The vision framework is broad enough to encompass a variety of local perspectives. Unlike a simple one or two sentence vision statement, a vision framework allows for more complexity to be communicated and better illuminates the community’s desired character for the forest—which is often multi-faceted.

The management balance discussion and list of key attributes work together to communicate the community’s overarching aspirations for the forest. Both aspects of the vision framework should align, without repeating each other. The management balance describes the community’s management priorities for the forest, while key attributes are a list of words or short phrases that expand upon the management balance and describe the community’s desired future character for the forest. These two pieces work together and support each other to communicate the multi-faceted values of the community.

### Visioning

At the public visioning workshop and in the community survey, attendees/respondents were asked, “What word or phrase best describes your EXISTING experience with the town forest in your community?” and “What word or phrase best describes your DESIRED FUTURE experience with the town forest in your community?” The results of these exercises are demonstrated in the word clouds below. The size of the words in the word clouds corresponds to the number of times that word was used in the responses.



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Desired Future Experience



For the future, Recreation was the key phrase. Related words like “trails,” “hiking,” and “biking” were also brought up repeatedly. Habitat and wildlife protection were also important community priorities.

## Management Balance

Town Forests can be managed to provide a wide range of activities and community values. Four common use areas include Recreation; Education & Land Use Demonstration Projects; Natural Resources & Habitat; and Timber & Forest Products. While most publicly accessible forests provide some measure of all four types of uses, they tend to “lean” in one management direction or another.

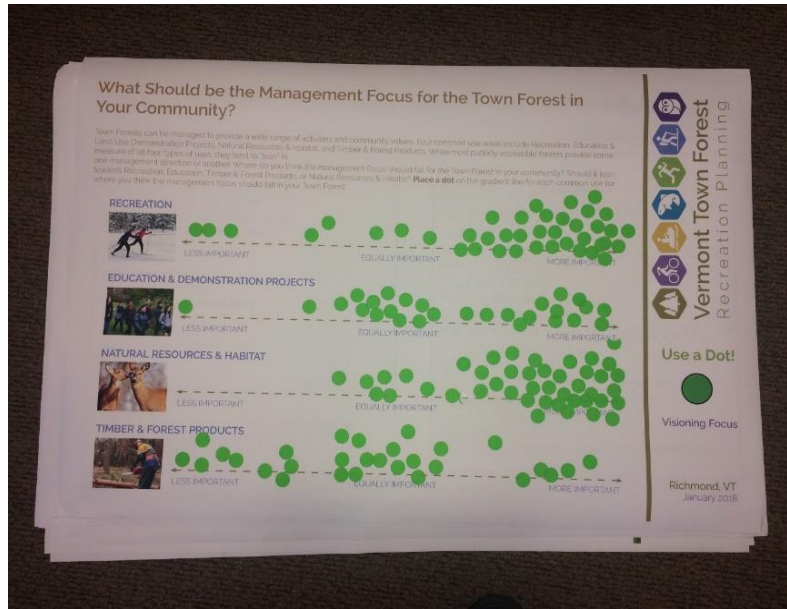
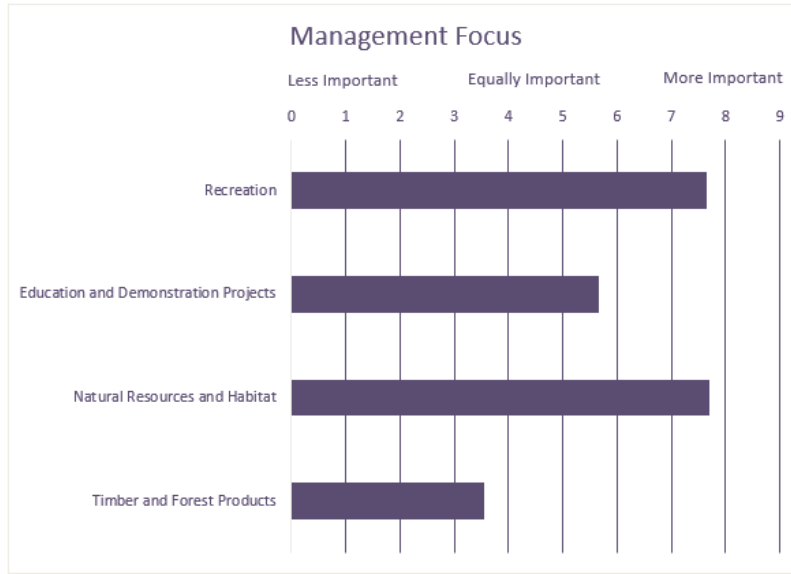
To understand the desired balance for the Richmond Town Forest, the project team probed the steering committee throughout the Visioning Process (kickoff summit, forest walk, first steering committee meeting) and asked survey and workshop participants “Where do you think the management focus SHOULD fall for the Town Forest in your community? Should it lean towards





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Recreation, Education, Timber & Forest Products, or Natural Resources & Habitat?” Their responses are below:



Through these interactions, the Richmond community expressed that each of the four use areas are important in the management of the town forest, but Recreation and Natural Resources & Habitat are very important in the future management of the forest. For the most part, community members want recreation opportunities that do not detract from the natural habitat. The Richmond community placed a greater emphasis on Education & Demonstration Projects than Timber & Forest Products.



# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

### Key Attributes

The following list of key attributes are the words or short phrases that communicate what the community believes are the ideal conditions for the forest – how things would look if all opportunities and issues were perfectly addressed, which may be the same or different from how things currently look. This list is based on the analysis of public and committee input received through the visioning process, as well as the review of the community’s demographics, profile, forest information, current management plans, and surveys.

1. Year-round recreation (snowshoeing, biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing)
2. Peaceful and quiet
3. Sustainable and well-maintained trail system
4. Protection of wildlife habitat and corridors
5. Protection of vernal pools, wetlands, and other water resources
6. Supports the biodiversity of the landscape
7. A piece of a larger connected forest block
8. Maintain healthy balance between stewardship and human uses
9. Low key and low intensity use
10. Accessible and encouraging of community use
11. Sustainable management for multiple uses
12. Managed with designated areas for heavier and lighter use
13. Multi-dimensional
14. Multi-generational
15. Kids in the outdoors
16. Solitude, rest, and rejuvenation
17. Opportunities for learning about stewardship, history and the forest
18. Connectivity to surrounding trail systems (River trail, VYCC, Sunshine)
19. Parking area to accommodate residents, visitors, and school buses
20. Well-known community asset





# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

21. Strengthening local residents' relationship with nature
22. Utilized for scientific studies and monitoring programs
23. Easy to follow maps and trail signage system
24. Educational forest for local school children and higher education research
25. Partnerships with local trail groups, VYCC, and Audubon
26. Balance potentially competing uses: hunting, mountain biking, hiking, and agriculture
27. Responsible, non-commercial timber harvest that maintains healthy forest and recreational opportunities
28. Place for locals and visitors who would support local businesses
29. Provides health benefits and sense of community for residents
30. Model of sustainable management practices for town forest land
31. Continued agricultural use of the land
32. Robust management structure with well-developed processes and sound financial management
33. Large, active, knowledgeable contingent of volunteers



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## Chapter 5: Action Plan

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### Introduction

The Action Plan is a set of recommended strategies and projects to achieve the town's vision. These strategies and projects were developed based on the key attributes, needs assessment, forest walks, and input from the steering committee and community.

### Action Plan Table

The Action Plan Table on the following pages includes all the strategies for the town and additional information to help with implementation. The strategies were categorized under Parking & Access; Trails; Other Facilities & Structures; Education & Programs; Events; Maps, Outreach, and Promotion; and Administrative Actions. Each strategy has the following additional information:

- A detailed strategy description
- Responsibility – who the responsible parties are to pursue this strategy (e.g., Town, Conservation Commission)
- Timing (ongoing, short, medium, long-term) – when the responsible party should begin pursuing this strategy
- Partners involved – possible partners to be involved in this project (e.g., Vermont Land Trust, Vtrans, local trails groups, local schools)
- Planning required – planning, designs, assessments, or studies that needs to happen before this strategy can be pursued (e.g., trail system design, wildlife habitat assessments)
- Relative Cost (\$,\$\$,,\$\$\$,\$\$\$\$\$) – a ballpark estimate of what the project will cost. One dollar sign is little to no cost, two dollar signs is moderate, three dollar signs is more expensive, four dollar signs is very expensive. \$-\$\$ indicates the relative cost is between those two levels. \$/\$\$ indicates that the project can be either \$ or \$\$, depending on the chosen route (e.g., volunteer trail counts vs. electronic trail counter)
- Funding Opportunities – potential sources of funding for the project. These could be grants, local business sponsorships, or fundraising events
- Toolkit and Support Resources – the toolkit elements that provide guidance on pursuing this strategy. Guidance from Vtrans, the Vermont Town Forest Stewardship Guide, or other support resources can also be useful to pursue this strategy



Strategy or Action	Description	Responsibility	Timing (Ongoing, short, medium, and long-term)	Partners Involved	Planning required	Relative Cost (\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$)	Funding Opportunities	Toolkit & Support Resources
<b>1. Parking &amp; Access</b>								
Parking lot and trailhead development	Develop parking lot(s) along Route 2 with trailhead kiosks. One parking lot should be large enough to accommodate a school bus.	Town/Steering Committee	Short-Term	VLT, Conservation Commission	Parking lot design	\$\$\$	LWCF, RTP, TAP	-Trailhead Kiosk Volunteer Designs -Parking Considerations Toolkit
Access paths and connections	Develop access path between town forest and town center. Consider connection from River trail or pedestrian route along Route 2.	Town	Medium-Term	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Trail design	\$\$\$	BCP, BPP	- Sustainable Trail Standards
Vehicle wayfinding signage	Add vehicle wayfinding signage from town and major roadways to the forest.	Town	Medium-Term	Steering Committee	Signage design	\$	BPP, Vtrans Signage Program	-Trail Markers and Wayfinding Toolkit -Vtrans Signage Program
<b>2. Trails</b>								
Existing trail conditions assessment and review	Study the trails and logging roads that currently exist on the property and consider potential for future trail building. Existing corridors may provide opportunities, but should be rebuilt to sustainable trail standards for both user experience and natural resource protection.	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Short-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, VYCC, local builders/users, Conservation Commission	Trail reroute and redesign	\$	RTP, RTC, VHCP, ERG	-Trail assessment forms -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit -Sustainable Trail Standards
Trail network connectivity	Design trail network to connect to adjacent trail systems such as VYCC and Sip of Sunshine.	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Medium-Term	Private landowners	Trail design	\$	RTP, RD, TAP, BPP, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, PBCG, RWJF, TCPN	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
New rugged multi-use paths	Develop multi-use non-motorized natural surface trails that are optimized for hiking and foot traffic but designed to accommodate multiple user groups	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Short-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, VYCC	Trail design	\$\$	RTP, RD, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, PBCG, RWJF, TCPN	-Sustainable Trail Standards
New mountain bike trails	Build "bike-optimized" multi-use natural surface trails to ensure desired experiences for all user groups	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Medium-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, Fellowship of the Wheel, VYCC	Trail design	\$\$	RTP, RD, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, PBCG, RWJF, TCPN	-Sustainable Trail Standards
New ADA accessible path	Explore opportunities for an accessible path for all ages and abilities to enjoy the forest. Topography may be a challenge. Such paths are typically short (~1 mile) and provide ample opportunities for rest and education with stations or stops next to points of natural or cultural interest. Coordinate with educational programming.	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Long-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, VYCC	Trail design	\$\$\$	RTP, RD, TAP, BPP, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, PBCG, RWJF, TCPN	-Sustainable Trail Standards
New backcountry/glade skiing opportunities	Explore opportunities for expanding backcountry/glade skiing in combination with sustainable forest management activities.	Steering Committee	Long-Term	County Forester, Richmond Mountain Trails, local skiers	Trail design	\$	RTP, LF	-Silviculture with Skiing in Mind Toolkit
Groom trails for cross-country skiing and fat biking	Groom wider trails for public cross-country skiing and fat biking.	Steering Committee, Richmond Trails	Long-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, local skiers	--	\$	RTP	-Sustainable Trail Standards

# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Trail markers and signage	Add signage in the forest for wayfinding, information, and trail etiquette. Ensure it communicates town ownership and/or steering committee management.	Steering Committee	Short-Term	Richmond Trails, VYCC, Richmond Mountain Trails, Conservation Commission	Signage design	\$\$	RTP, RTC	-Trail Markers and Wayfinding Toolkit
Partner with local trails groups	Partner with Richmond Trails, Richmond Mountain Trails, and others to develop a trail system that fits the existing opportunities in Richmond and for volunteers for trail building and maintenance.	Steering Committee	Short-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, Richmond Trails, Fellowship of the Wheel	--	\$	RTP, NPCB	-Volunteer Development and Recruitment Toolkit
<b>3. Other Facilities and Structures</b>								
Outdoor Classroom/Learning Lab	Create a small gathering space with log benches, earthen mounds etc. for schools and other groups. Coordinate needs with educational partners (RES, CHMS, MMU, UVM)	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	outdoor classroom design	\$\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	- Sustainable Facility Standards -Natural Resource Guidance toolkit
Pause Places	Develop a series of "Pause Places" along the trail system. These may be a rest stop, an informational stop, or both. All pause places should include a bench or appropriate rocks/boulders for seating and should capitalize on locations with the potential for views, sunsets, rest, and rejuvenation. Opportunities for natural and historical interpretation should also be explored. Larger ones may include a picnic table. Some could also include public art or a 'little free library.'	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	Historical and natural resource research, pause place design	\$\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	- Pause Places Toolkit -Bench Volunteer Designs -Interpretation Guidance Toolkit
Create and maintain locations for birding and viewing wildlife.	Build more locations to sit and observe wildlife. Benches are encouraged in a variety of locations. Coordinate with Pause Places.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	Natural resource research, pause place design	\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	- Pause Places Toolkit -Bench Volunteer Designs -Interpretation Guidance Toolkit
Restroom facilities	Provide restroom facilities at the trailhead and/or outdoor classroom.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Public Works Department	Restroom design	\$\$	LWCF, RD, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, AIG, BJF	- Sustainable Facility Standards
Sledding	Utilize grazing pastures or other hilly slopes as designated sledding hill.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Recreation Committee	Design	\$	LWCF, RFG	- Sustainable Facility Standards
Paddle/Watersports and swimming hole	Explore options in the broader community for paddle/watersports and a swimming hole.	Town	Long-Term	Recreation Committee	easements	\$\$	LWCF, RD, RFG	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
Community Garden	Explore locations for accessible community garden or orchard.	Town	Long-Term	--	--	\$\$	LWCF, RD, RFG	- Sustainable Facility Standards
<b>4. Education &amp; Programs</b>								
Host school group programs in the forest	Bring students to the forest for ecology programs, recreation programs, etc. Consider a high school mountain biking team.	Program and educational partners	Medium-Term	Steering Committee	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJF	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Kids Camps	Offer kids camps in the forest. Partner with Richmond Recreation Committee, churches and others operating camps in the area.	Program and educational partners	Medium-Term	Steering Committee	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJF	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Lessons, Skills Camps, and Clinics	Host lessons, skills camps, and clinics in the forest on mountain biking, trail running, or orienteering. Consider partnering with Richmond Mountain Trails, Richmond Trails, and Green Mountain Orienteering.	Program and educational partners	Medium-Term	Steering Committee	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJF	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Biodiversity Monitoring Program	Volunteer biodiversity monitoring program to study the affect of management on the forest. It could be part of research with a local higher education institution.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	UVM, Conservation Commission		\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJB	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Sustainable Forestry Demonstration Projects	Use the forest as a model and example of the value of healthy forests to the community, including promotion of educational demonstrations and tours.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	County Forester		\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJB, CCG, ERG	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Adult Ecology Programs	Host adult ecology programs (i.e., birding, plant identification) in the forest.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJB	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Interpretive signage	Develop interpretive signage that support educational programs and self-guided learning. Coordinate with development of Pause Places	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	Historical and natural resource research, pause place design	\$\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	-Interpretation Guidance Toolkit
Species identification lists	Bird, plant and mammal species identification checklists could be developed and made available at the trailhead kiosk. Should also be utilized in education experiences.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Conservation Commission, Audubon	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJB	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Story Walk	A Story Walk is an innovative and delightful way for children – and adults! – to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. Laminated pages from a children’s book are attached to wooden stakes, which are installed along an outdoor path. As you stroll down the trail, you’re directed to the next page in the story.	Library	Medium-Term	Steering Committee	--	\$\$	VCF	- Story Walk Toolkit
<b>5. Events</b>								
Races in the forest	Hold small-scale mountain bike or trail running races in the forest. Consider race series or local-serving adventure race (GMARA) as well .	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Richmond Mountain Trails, Richmond Trails, GMARA	Event and parking plan	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJB	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
<b>6. Maps, Outreach, &amp; Promotion</b>								
Develop and disseminate trail maps	Create maps that show all trails in the forest and make these maps readily available both online and in print. Explore opportunities to engage local businesses in sponsoring map printing. Ads from local businesses can not only fund map printing, but can also help connect forest use with economic activity in the region.	Steering Committee	Short-Term	Richmond Trails, VYCC, Richmond Mountain Trails, Conservation Commission	Graphic Design, Cartography	\$\$	RTP	-Mapping and Promotion Toolkit
Town Forest Business Roundtable	Host a Town Forest Business Roundtable to share "trail friendly business" ideas that can help support trail use in the community, connect forest visitors with local businesses, and help support Town Forest efforts.	Steering Committee, Town	Long-Term	Local businesses, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce	--	\$	VCF	-Trail Friendly Business Toolkit
Leave No Trace	Include "Leave No Trace" messaging in maps, signage, social media, and other communications to encourage stewardship of resources, protect the user experience, and minimize the costs to the town for clean-up and restoration.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Conservation Commission	--	\$	--	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
User group outreach	Hold dialogue programs with different groups with an educational focus. These programs should inform forest users about the ecological, recreational, educational, and agricultural values of the forest.	Steering Committee	Ongoing	All	--	\$	RTP, NPCB	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit - Meeting Facilitation Toolkit
Hunter Engagement	Convene hunters to begin an on-going dialogue around hunting activities and to establish a framework for collaboration and coordination in the future.	Steering Committee	Ongoing	Local Hunters, Conservation Commission	--	\$	NPCB	-Volunteer Development and Recruitment Toolkit - Meeting Facilitation Toolkit



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Richmond Trails Collaborative	Convene mountain bikers, hikers, and other user groups to begin an ongoing dialogue around trails and to establish a framework for collaboration in the future. Include both Richmond Trails and Richmond Mountain Trails and coordinate with trail system design and maintenance strategy.	Steering-Committee	Medium-Term	Richmond Trails, Richmond Mountain Trails, Richmond Rough Riders, Fellowship of the Wheel	Meeting facilitation	\$	RTP, NPCB	-Volunteer Development and Recruitment Toolkit - Meeting Facilitation Toolkit
<b>7. Administrative Actions</b>								
Adopt formal process for proposing and reviewing new trails and facilities	Process will include ecological concerns and will provide all stakeholders and user groups an opportunity to propose new trails and facilities.	Steering Committee	Short-Term	Conservation Commission, Town, VLT	Review, adjustment and adoption of model process	\$	RTP, RTC, VHCP, ERG	-Model Proposal Process -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Management plan	Develop a forest management plan with provisions for partnerships and revisions. Plan should also have objectives to guide future management decisions. Consider management zones of the forest to consider and plan for all uses. Designate areas more suitable for wildlife habitat, hunting, or mountain biking, for example.	Steering Committee	Ongoing	Conservation Commission, Town, VLT	--	\$\$	CCG, MPG, ERG,VCF,VHCP,BJF	-Management Zones Toolkit -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit -Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
Cultural Resources studies	Conduct cultural resource studies to provide an improved understanding of human influences on the landscape.	Steering Committee	Ongoing	Conservation Commission, Town, VLT	--	\$\$	--	
<b>8. Partnerships</b>								
Partner with VYCC	Explore opportunities to partner with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps	Steering Committee	Ongoing	VYCC	--	\$	--	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Learn from other forests	Visit and meet with committees of other forests (i.e., Hinesburg) for ideas.	Steering Committee	Short-Term	Hinesburg and other nearby towns	--	\$	--	-Town Forest Stories
Grazing	Work with Maple Wind Farm to continue grazing on existing pasture lands (possible revenue source for the forest).	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Maple Wind Farm	Grazing Plan	\$	--	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Agricultural use	Work with Maple Wind Farm to continue agricultural use on the property. Include agricultural education programs when possible.	Steering Committee	Medium-Term	Maple Wind Farm	Operations Plan	\$	--	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Work with adjoining landowners	Work with adjoining landowners on access, connections, and management.	Steering Committee	Ongoing	Maple Wind Farm, VYCC, other adjacent landowners	--	\$	--	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
<b>9. Conservation and Natural Resources</b>								
Remove invasives	Develop a plan for managing non-native and invasive plants and work to remove invasive plants that are growing in the forest.	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	VLT	--	\$	ERG	-Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Detailed habitat and natural resource surveys	Conduct detailed habitat and natural resource surveys to guide future management of the forest. Use these assessments to manage for future levels of use.	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Ongoing	Conservation Commission, Vermont Land Trust	Detailed habitat and natural resource surveys	\$\$	UVM, VHCP, LF, BJF, VCF	-Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Wildlife Habitat	Protect critical wildlife habitat, including the heavily used deer wintering area (DWA)	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Ongoing	VLT, UVM, neighbors, other natural resource partners	Detailed habitat and natural resource surveys	\$\$	UVM, VHCP, LF, BJF, VCF	-Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Support Biodiversity	Protect the uncommon Dry Oak Forest to benefit statewide biodiversity	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Ongoing	VLT, UVM, neighbors, other natural resource partners	Detailed habitat and natural resource surveys	\$\$	UVM, VHCP, LF, BJJ, VCF	-Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Wildlife Corridors	Maintain state significant corridor connections between and alongside Camel's Hump State Park and Mt. Mansfield State Forest	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Ongoing	VLT, UVM, neighbors, other natural resource partners	Detailed habitat and natural resource surveys	\$\$	UVM, VHCP, LF, BJJ, VCF	-Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Forest Blocks	Conserve contiguous forestland (riparian zones) around significant surface water resources including vernal pools, streams, and wetlands to protect water quality and aquatic habitat.	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Ongoing	VLT, UVM, neighbors, other natural resource partners	Detailed habitat and natural resource surveys	\$\$	UVM, VHCP, LF, BJJ, VCF	-Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Forestry Management	Manage the forest to encourage a diversity of species and age classes which will result in resiliency. Plan for periodic timber harvesting to maintain working landscape and support the maintenance of healthy, intact ecosystem. Practice whole system approach that includes management for wildlife habitat.	Steering Committee/ Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	VLT, UVM, County Forrester	Forest Management Plan	\$	UVM, VHCP, LF, BJJ, VCF	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit



## Chapter 6: Implementation

### Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit

The Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit has been developed in concert with this plan and the nine other town forest recreation plans currently underway through the overall US Forest Service grant. The intent behind the toolkit was to build up a replicable process and a set of tools that could be used for both the professionally-facilitated process with the first ten communities, of which Richmond is one, and for other towns to do their own recreation plans after this project has ended.

Perhaps more importantly for Richmond, the toolkit includes a number of guidance documents, designs, case studies, best practices, and standards the Town can use to implement strategies identified in this plan. The action plan table and detailed project pages identifies the most relevant toolkit resources for each strategy. In addition, the full list of toolkit resources is described below.

The toolkit is organized through six (6) specific “pods.” These include an existing conditions and assessment pod, a public engagement pod, a natural resource pod, a plan development pod, an implementation pod, and a stories pod. Each are described below.

The Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit is available on Urban and Community Forestry’s website at: <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Existing Conditions Pod

The existing conditions and assessment pod provides a checklist to communities to identify background information and municipal plans that should be considered in developing their plan. This pod also includes trail counting forms and extrapolation sheets modified for Vermont from the National Bike and Pedestrian Documentation Project materials. Trail and facility assessment checklists are also included, so the baseline conditions of the town forests can be well understood. Information about available resources such as VT UCF and the county foresters are also provided. Instructions on how to use the VT Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) interactive map viewer to produce basic maps is also included in this pod.



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Public Engagement Pod

The public engagement pod provides a series of promotional material templates, such as flyers and press releases, and public meeting materials, like informational boards and handouts, that communities can use to explore concepts and constraints with the public. Informational board templates provide opportunities to both present information and gather feedback through write in questions, dot exercises and similar interactions. Survey's and visioning materials that allow towns to identify their priorities for use of their forests are an integral part of this pod. Finally, guidance and best practices on how to facilitate steering committee and public meetings round out the range of materials available in this pod.





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Natural Resources Pod

The natural resources pod, developed by Arrowwood Environmental includes guidance for using ANR's Natural Resource Atlas for general resource mapping, a process for inventorying natural resources in the forest, workshop and survey questions for natural resources, and a model process for proposing and evaluating new trails or facilities. Most importantly, the natural resources pod also includes the Natural Resources Guidebook and associated activities and resources matrix. The guidebook includes information and links to relevant regulatory documents and contact information at both the State and Federal level for each of the following natural resource areas: Vernal Pools, Deer Wintering Areas (DWA), Ledges/Cliffs/Talus, Mast Stands, Interior Forest, Significant Natural Communities, Wetlands, Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species, Floodplain Forests, Streams/Rivers, Early Succession Forests, and Lakes and Ponds. The guidebook also includes an activities matrix for each of these resources that provides compatibility, management information and recommended buffers for a range of activities and facilities, including: Hiking Trails, Biking Trails, X-C Ski Trails, ATV Trails, Snowmobile Trails, New Access Roads, Structures/Buildings, Parking Lots, Forestry/Logging, Camping, Sugaring, and Extraction (gravel, sand).



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Example Content from the Natural Resources Guidebook

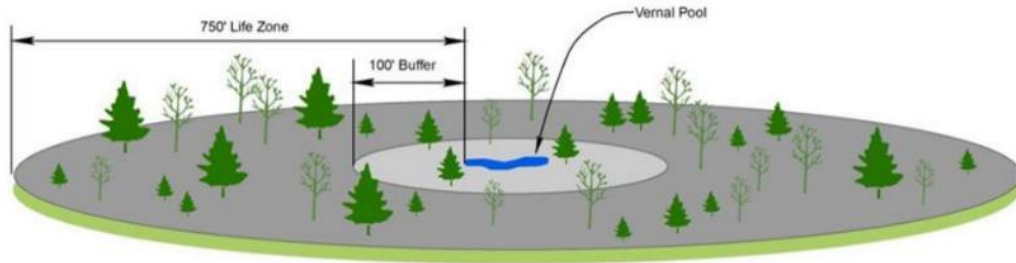


Figure 1. Vernal Pool management zones

### Vernal Pool Management Matrix

Activity	Compatibility in Pool*	Compatibility in 100' Buffer*	Compatibility in 750' Buffer*	Comments (seasonal restrictions, buffers, mgmt.)
Hiking Trails	N	Y	Y	Avoid creating ruts or standing water
Biking Trails	N	Y	Y	Avoid creating ruts or standing water
Ski Trails	N	Y	Y	Avoid creating ruts or standing water
ATV trails	N	N	Y	Avoid trails through wet areas. Avoid creating ruts or standing water. Close trails during spring migration period.
Snowmobile Trails	N	Y	Y	Avoid trails through wet areas. Avoid creating ruts or standing water. Close trails during spring migration period.
New Access Roads	N	N	Y	Avoid roads through wet areas. Avoid creating ruts or standing water. Close roads during spring migration period.
Structures/ Buildings	N	N	Y	See guidelines in text and links provided. Only appropriate if most of buffer remains forested.
Parking Lots	N	N	Y	See guidelines in text and link provided. Only appropriate if most of buffer remains forested. Runoff needs to be managed.
Forestry /Logging	N	N	Y	Some forestry activity compatible with vernal pools, see text and links provided.
Camping	N	N	Y	Camping may be compatible in larger buffer zone. See general guidelines in text.
Sugaring	N	Y	Y	Refer to forestry guidelines in text and links provided.
Extraction (gravel, sand)	N	N	N	Extraction can disrupt local hydrology and negatively impact nearby pool. See development guideline in text and links provided.

\* In many cases, an activity is deemed compatible only if the management recommendations listed in the comments, text and links provided are adhered to.





# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

### Plan Development Pod

The plan development pod can help facilitate the development of a Town Forest Recreation Plan by other interested communities, or update this existing recreation plan. The pod includes templates and guidance on crafting a vision statement for a town forest as well as case studies of each of the 10 selected communities and their plans highlighting the process they undertook. The plan development pod also includes a recreational improvements strategy database that allows communities to search sample implementation actions based on resources, topics or activities. This database includes all strategies contained in the 10 established plans, and their relative cost. Template action plan tables and bubble diagram map guidance is also included.



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Implementation Pod

The implementation pod contains a number of tools for to aid in implementation of this plan. In addition to a list of available grant, funding and support resources relevant to town forests, the pod also includes grant writing best practices to help make sure you get the necessary funds to move forward. Design guidance and standards for building sustainable trails and facilities for a wide range of user types is also provided. Guidance on acquiring additional lands or easements is also included. Volunteer designs, materials lists, and construction instructions are also provided in this pod.





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## Town Forest Story Pod

The town forest story pod includes personal narratives and how-to webinars from participants in the 10 town forest process on what it actually takes to be a volunteer managing a town forest in your community. The stories share tips, tricks, and pitfalls to help keep you on course, as told by others on the same role!



# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

### Grants and Funding Sources

For most of the strategies and projects in this plan, moving them forward will require financial resources. Luckily, Richmond and the town budget do not have to go after it alone. There are many grants and alternative funding sources that can help providing the necessary funding. Perhaps the best approach to move a project forward is to select a project with strong community support, secure grant funding, and leverage local resources and volunteers.

The description of each grant below suggests the types of projects the grant funds, the required match from the town if necessary, and a link for more information. Some grants have been identified in the Implementation Matrix using their respective abbreviation.

### Federal and State Grants and Programs

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund State and Local Assistance Program (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state assistance program provides matching grants to help local communities enhance the outdoor recreation resources on public land. LWCF funding has benefited nearly every county in America, supporting over 40,000 projects. The grants create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Eligible projects are acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation or development and/or renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation. This 50:50 matching program is the primary federal investment tool to ensure that families have easy access to public, open spaces. In Vermont, LWCF is administered by Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

<http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/grants/lwcf>

#### Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)

The State Surface Transportation Program (STP) is the main program of Federal Transportation Funds, managed by VTrans, for transportation improvements on state highways. Possible projects include recreational trails, pedestrian and biking enhancements, sidewalks, and signed routes.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>

#### USDA Rural Development Loan and Grant Assistance (RD)

USDA Rural Development (RD) forges partnerships with rural communities (defined as towns and villages with less than 20,000 inhabitants), funding projects that bring housing, community facilities (including trails and active transportation facilities), business guarantees, utilities and other services to rural America. This program provides funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community. Relevant to this plan, possible projects include transportation facilities, parks, and community gardens





# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

## National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTC)

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTC) program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. Their national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals can partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, conserve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create recreation opportunities. Current projects include trail rehabilitation, interpretive trails, connector trails, trail master plans, trails collaboratives, and rail trail connectors. No monetary grants are made.

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>

## FHWA Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to communities for development and maintaining recreational trail projects. Grants are awarded to well-planned projects that help to develop, protect, and maintain trails and trail systems that improve connections in the community, livability, user-ability, and are maintained for public recreational use. RTP funds support a wide range of trail activities including hiking, mountain biking, walking, running, cross-country and backcountry skiing, nature-based interpretive trail use, equestrian, snowmobiling, and off-road motorized recreation. Funds can be used for the following types of projects: construction of new trails or trail connections; construction of new trailhead areas/parking facilities; construction of trailside facilities; maintenance, renovation, or restoration of trails; improvements to signage or trail structures along the trail; assessments of existing trail conditions for accessibility and improvements; equipment; and trail-related educational projects (i.e., information about trail safety, appropriate trail use, environmental protection, etc.). The program is administered by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in the Agency of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

<http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/grants/rtp>

## Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a grant program administered by VTTrans that provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure. These funds will cover a maximum of 80% of the project with the remaining portions most likely coming from the project-sponsoring organization or town. The FY 2019 funds are reserved for environmental mitigation projects.

<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/transport-alt>



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (BPP)

The Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (BPP) provides funds managed by VTrans for scoping, design, and construction of bike and pedestrian facilities, sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bike lanes. A local match is required but varies based on the type of project.

<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped>

## Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP)

The Vermont Community Development Program provides Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to all Vermont towns and cities, aside from Burlington. The grant provides financial and technical assistance to identify address local needs in housing, economic development, public facilities, public services, and handicapped accessibility modifications. The four types of grants are Accessibility Modification Grants (AM), Implementation Grants (IG), Planning Grants (PG), Scattered Site Grants (SS). These grants must primarily benefit persons of low and moderate incomes.

[http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp)

## State Grants and Programs

### Vermont Community and Urban Forestry Council Grants (Caring for Canopies Grants, CCG)

These Caring for Canopies Grants (CCG) are awarded to municipalities to aid in taking the necessary actions to developing and sustaining a community-wide tree program, including tree plantings, inventories, maintenance, and planning. There are two grant categories, Caring for the Canopy and Canopy Mini. Caring for Canopy is for projects that help move a community's tree management program towards a sustained level while Canopy Mini is for smaller projects to help move a tree management program forward. The grants range in size from \$500 to \$5,000 and require a 50% match.

<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/programs-0/financial-assistance/caring-canopy-grants>

### Municipal Planning Grant Program (MPG)

The Municipal Planning Grants (MPG) are Vermont State grants for a wide range of municipal planning projects including land use plans, zoning and subdivision bylaws, trail networks and walking and biking improvements, resiliency planning, economic plans, and village and neighborhood planning. The range of the grants is from \$2,500 to \$20,000 with a required 10% match.

<http://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>





# Vermont Town Forest

## Recreation Planning

### Recreational Facilities Grants Program (RFG)

The Recreational Facilities Grants (RFG) program provides matching state grants for capital costs associated with the development and creation of community recreational opportunities. This program provides last gap funding for shovel ready projects and does not support any ongoing fundraising initiatives. The program requires a 100% match and awards are capped at \$25,000.

<https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>

### ANR Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program (ERG)

The ANR Ecosystem Restoration grant program gives grants for design and construction projects that target nonpoint sources of pollution that cause or contribute to the state's surface waters.

<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/grants#Ecosystem%20Restoration>

### Northern Border Regional Commission Grants (NBRCG)

The Northern Border Regional Commission invests in community and economic development projects in economically distressed counties in Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, New York. In Vermont, the eligible counties are Essex, Orleans, Caledonia, Lamoille, Franklin, and Grand Isle. Projects must focus on the following program areas: transportation infrastructure, basic public infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure, workforce develop, entrepreneurship and business and technology development, resources and open space conservation, recreation and tourism, and renewable and alternative energy.

<http://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/funding-incentives/Northern-Boarder-Regional-Commission>

### Better Connections Program (BCP)

The Better Connections Program seeks to align state and local investments to increase transportation options, build resilience, and strengthen economic vitality in Vermont's community centers, through an annual grant program administered by Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). Municipalities annually compete for approximately \$200,000 in projects funds. A 10% local cash match is required. The program supports implementation-focused, municipal planning initiatives that: provide safe, multi-modal and resilient transportation systems that supports the Vermont economy; support downtown and village economic development and revitalization efforts; and lead directly to project implementation. The program has been used for trails and active transportation master plans, village connection planning and other multi-modal planning efforts.

<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>



# Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

## State Organizations

### Vermont Community Foundation – General Grants (VCF)

A variety of grants are available to support projects to improve environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, social justice, historic preservation, and vitality of Vermont communities. The different types of grants offered include: Place-Based Grants, Arts Endowment Fund, Special and Urgent Needs, and Nonprofit Capacity Building (see below). Each place-based grant is only available to a specific region of the state. For information about which grants are available for your community, please see the website below.

<http://www.vermontcf.org/Nonprofits/AvailableGrants.aspx>

### Vermont Community Foundation – Nonprofit Capacity Building (NPCB)

The Nonprofit Capacity Building program is small grants to support the cost of consultants to facilitate discussions related to strategic planning, financial sustainability funding, or facilitating a merger. These grants are meant to supplement other funding. This grant is available to both nonprofits and municipalities.

<https://www.vermontcf.org/NonprofitsGrants/AvailableGrants/NonprofitCapacityBuilding.aspx>

### VHCB Local Conservation Projects (VHCP)

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board provides funding to conserve natural areas, recreation lands, and historic properties. For public outdoor recreation projects, VHCB provides loans to enable the project to leverage other funds or grants in cases where local efforts to obtain sources of funding have been exhausted. The available funds vary based on whether the parcel has statewide significance. For conserving locally-significant land, other sources must provide 1/3 of the project funding. VHCB also provides funding for feasibility analysis, project-specific capacity (i.e., engineering work, historic preservation analysis, and hazardous materials analysis).

<https://vhcb.org/our-programs/conservation/apply-for-funding>

### Lintilhac Foundation (LF)

The foundation's central purpose is to support organizations that are making sustainable, positive change for Vermont's environment and its people. Grants are available in three core giving areas, water quality, energy, and conservation. The conservation giving is primarily to backcountry recreational access to lands and integrative land use planning.

<http://www.lintilhacfoundation.org/application-guidelines/>





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### Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure Grant (AIG)

The Animating Infrastructure Grant (AIG) funds projects that integrate public art into existing or proposed infrastructure improvements, which could include buildings, recreational paths, parks, bridges, small-scale renewable energy projects, and water treatment facilities.

<http://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants-and-services/organizations/animating-infrastructure>

### Ben & Jerry's Foundation (BJF)

The Ben & Jerry's Foundation funds multiple grants programs to help communities in Vermont. The Vermont Economic Justice Program gives grants to non-profits working to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of poverty. The Vermont Community Action Team Grant is a small grant awarded to non-profits, schools, and municipalities. The Community Action Teams provide general or project support. The CATs fund the following types of community programs: social services organizations, cultural, recreational, arts programs, and community celebrations.

<https://benandjerrysfoundation.org/vermont-grant-programs.html>

## National Organizations

### PeopleforBikes Community Fund (PBCG)

The PeopleforBikes Community Grant Program (PBCG) provides funding for important and influential projects that build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S. These projects include bike paths and rail trails, as well as mountain bike trails, bike parks, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives. PeopleforBikes will fund engineering and design work, construction costs, and reasonable volunteer support costs. The maximum grant award is \$10,000 and the grant cannot make up more than 50% of the total project budget.

<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants>

### Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grants (RWJF)

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provides grant funds to improve the health and health care of all Americans. For town forest projects, RWJF awards grants for projects creating healthier communities. This funding has gone towards walking and bicycling facilities and upgrading underutilized green space.

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/how-we-work/grants-and-grant-programs.html>

### Trails Connecting People with Nature: A program of the Sierra Club's Nearby Nature Initiative (TCPN)

Trails Connecting People with Nature is a Sierra Club initiative that works to ensure that access to the outdoors is increasingly equitable and available to all communities. The Sierra Club Foundation



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awards one year trail grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 towards trail creation or maintenance projects that engage new leaders and provide opportunities for communities to connect with nature.

<https://content.sierraclub.org/ourwildamerica/nearby-nature>

