Community Forest Management Plan Committee April 10th Meeting Minutes

The Town of Barre Community Forest Management Plan Committee held a Public Meeting on Monday, April 10, 2023, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room #3 at the Municipal Building, 149 Websterville Road. Committee members present included: David Rouleau, Lori Bernier (remotely), Josh Howard (remotely), Patty Meriam (remotely), Jim West, Dean Preston, and Larry Rogacki. Also present at the meeting: Recreation Director/Committee Administrator Johnny Crossley, Washington County Forester Robert Nelson, Millstone Trail President Kevin Spaulding and representative Mark Martin, Selectboard Chair Paul White (remotely), UVM Intern Aidan Rowley (remotely), and guest Lisa P (remotely).

- 1. Call to Order: Chair Larry Rogacki called the meeting to order, 6:04pm.
- 2. **Consider Approving Meeting Agenda**: Chair Larry Rogacki proposed a motion to add input from Mr. Paul White, selectboard chair, in between items 4 and 5. Josh Howard made a motion to approve the meeting agenda with this update. David Rouleau seconded the motion. Committee approved 7-0.
- 3. **Consider Approving March 27th Meeting Minutes**: Jim West proposed one change to the March 27th minutes. Additionally, Patty Meriam proposed two changes to the minutes. Josh Howard made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with these three changes. Patty Meriam seconded the motion. Committee approved 7-0.
- 4. Receive Public Input (for non-agenda items): No committee input at this time.
- 5. **Update from Selecthoard Chair**: Mr. White provided thoughts on committee progress following an email sent to the committee prior to the meeting. Mr. White's letter is contained within the Meeting Minutes. Extensive discussion occurred regarding the June 1st completion deadline for the committee's review of the Community Forest Management Plan and subsequent draft document proposal to the Selectboard.
- 6. Updates from the Recreation Director:
 - a. UVM Intern Aidan Rowley's Town Forest Mapping Project Update: Aidan is currently in the middle of updating the Barre Forest Trail Map using ArcGIS. He will keep the committee updated as he progresses. Additionally, he invited committee members to his UVM Internship class presentation on Tuesday, April 25th.
 - b. Public Survey Distribution Update: Johnny Crossley provided an update regarding survey distribution. Johnny, with assistance from committee members, will work to distribute the survey to the public in three ways: First, a poster containing a survey QR code and link will be distributed at local businesses and stores. Second, physical copies of the survey will be distributed at various locations. Third, Johnny will share the survey to the public on the Town of Barre Recreation Facebook page, as well as on Front Page Forum. All three of these distribution methods will take place at the same time.

c. Need for Committee Review of Documents: Johnny's availability is going to change drastically with the change in weather as he shifts outdoors to maintain the playing fields and playgrounds. Committee members were asked to volunteer to review the outstanding CFMP Issues listed on the whiteboard in Conference Room #3 (CFMP Issues contained within Meeting Minutes).

7. Continue Review of Community Forest Management Plan:

- a. The review of the CFMP began on page 17, *IV. Infrastructure*. The committee reviewed up to section *V. Geology Soils* with updates. The committee proceeded to skip to page 43, *X. Recreation and Education*, as pages 18-42 will be updated as a part of Robert Nelson's review. The committee's review ended on page 44. Revisions are contained within the Meeting Minutes.
- 8. *Tentative Agenda for April 17th Meeting*: The committee will continue review of the Community Forest Management Plan on April 17th. Committee members who volunteered to address one of the CFMP issues will provide an update at this meeting.
- 9. 'Round the Table: No input from the committee at this time.
- 10. *Adjourn:* David Rouleau made a motion to adjourn. Josh Howard seconded the motion. Committee approved 7-0. *7:55pm*

Re: Barre Town Forest Management Plan Committee

Dear Committee members:

The Selectboard's decision last year to establish an ad-hoc committee for the decennial review of the Community Forest Plan for the Barre Town Forest was intended to help expedite the review process. Our objective was to have the review completed and recommendations provided to the Selectboard within a 6-month period as stated in the committee solicitation ad. The anticipated timeframe was early August, 2022 through February, 2023.

The Selectboard acknowledges that the Committee was not convened and meetings did not begin as early as planned due to various extenuating circumstances, through no fault of the Committee itself. However, we do intend to maintain the 6-month timeframe, or as close as possible, to bring this work to completion. To that end, we are requesting the Committee's recommendations to be submitted to the Selectboard by June 1, 2023.

Town staff have spent a significant amount of time working with and for the Committee, and now need to shift their focus to other obligations. With his impending retirement on April 28th, the Town Manager has many details to finalize before his departure. Our Recreation Director, Johnny Crossley, is entering the Recreation Department's busiest season and will have many added demands on his time as he oversees the work crew and numerous seasonal activities. The Committee will need to work more efficiently and effectively in consideration of these circumstances. We are also concerned about committee fatigue as we originally led you all to believe that your obligation to this Committee would be complete in February.

Additionally, the Washington County Forester, Robert Nelson, will be developing an updated Forestry Plan, subject to approval by the Grantees (the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board) as stated in the Conservation Easement. This forestry plan document is not subject to approval by the Committee and therefore should not be an impediment to the abovementioned completion date.

The Selectboard has great appreciation for the time and effort that all members have devoted to the work of this Committee. We look forward to receiving the Committee's recommended plan which will then be subject to review by the County Forester, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, prior to being considered for final approval by the Selectboard.

Sincerely,

Paul White, Chair, on behalf of the

Barre Town Selectboard

CFMP ISSUES

Forestry management/logging

2 Term of Plan

Websterville Fire District property

4. Designated "Fruit Tree" AREA

Hunting & Trapping

"6. Safety

~7. Sugaring Operation

Administration of the Forest

Horse Trails-Rauli Run-Single Track

Annual Reports (MA-Formalize

11. Clarify amenoment approved process

12. Manual - hunting season closure related to disc golf, 13. Number of vernal pools. "Several?



- Promote a variety of forest types.
- Restore native ecosystem elements.
- Discourage or eliminate exotic elements invasive species.
- · Maintain the existing trail network during forest management operations.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE

(see also Baseline Documentation Report)

General Topographic Description

The overall project areaForest consists of hilly to moderate terrain with some areas of ledge and steep slopes and several ravines. Elevation ranges from 1180 to 1640 feet. The proposed-Barre Town Forest is greatly impacted by the human history of use onto the history of human use of the site; mining of granite resulted in ponds, removal of soils and bedrock, and the formation of impressive talus piles. The intensive extraction of granite from the Property stopped over 100 years ago. In that time, natural communities have established on the human-altered landscape. The majority of the Property is forested, except for 25 abandoned quarries and a few cleared areas totaling 4.5 acres as shown on Map C: Aerial map. One headwater stream, one wetland, and three vernal pools are also on the Property.

Scenic Values

The Barre Town Forest has numerous lookouts which provide terrific views of the Green Mountain Range, Camel's Hump, Barre City, and the forested hills to the east. The maples and birch on the property provide a stunning colorful display in the fall.

Roads

There are a limited number of forest roads and abandoned rail beds that are also used as snowmobile and mountain bike trails on the Property (see Map C: Access and Recreation Map and Appendix B: Survey). A private road off Violette Street that accesses the Websterville water plant crosses the Property.

Pedestrian access to the Property can be gained through frontage along the following town roads:

- Littlejohn Road
- · Church Hill Road
- Violette Street
- · Casanova Street
- · Graniteville Road
- · Barclay Quarry Road
- Donahue Road
- Park Street
- Waterman Street

Two access points/parking areas have been built. Two access points/parking areas are planned. See the Proposed Action Schedule section and see Map C: Access and Recreation Map for potential parking and access areas.

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Road maintenance objectives for interior forest roads include:

- ensuring safe conditions for a variety of uses, including logging and passive recreation;
- minimizing erosion and runoff;
- preventing illegal trespass by unauthorized motor vehicles;
- preventing the spread of invasive plants along trails and roads;
- minimizing increased avian predation and nest parasitism by minimizing the width, number, and extent of new access and skid roads; and
- · minimizing disruption of wildlife habitat and recreation trails.

For information pertaining to trails, please see the Recreation Section of this Community Forest Plan.

Boundary Lines

Town roads bound a significant portion of the Barre Town Forest. Portions of the Property are bounded to the southwest by Graniteville Road, to the south by Barclay Quarry Road, to the northwest by Church Hill Road, to the northeast by Donahue Road, and to the west by Violette Street. A portion is also bisected by Littlejohn Road. The Barre Town Forest boundaries have been marked with "Leaving Town Forest" signs to help keep forest users from entering adjoining private property. The Town should replace the signs as needed and keep inventory of existing boundary signs:

V. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock and surficial geology help determine the location of aquifers, wetlands, and forests. Bedrock constituents have the potential to impact water quality, types and depth of soils, topography, vegetation, and potential for various uses. The materials that comprise bedrock vary in density and permeability. Water "pools" in some areas, while running quickly through other areas, creating aquifers (water-saturated areas underground) and wetlands. Fractures in the bedrock also provide sources for water supplies.

The Property lies in the Vermont Northern Piedmont bioregion, which is predominantly made up of limestone, schist and granite. The Property sits over a large intrusion of igneous rocks and their metamorphosed equivalents, including the granitic rock for which the Barre area has become famous. The Property also contains a category of bedrock described as calcareous clastic and metamorphosed rocks. This bedrock category leads to richer soils, characteristic of the Northern Vermont Piedmont biophysical region.

Soils

Soil types are important in managing timber due to differences in productivity and management limitations. Some soils are more fertile than others and thus, more productive. Productivity standards define which species will compete best on any given soil type and are useful when developing silvicultural prescriptions for specific stands. Also, certain soil types have management limitations that must be considered. Limitations are typically defined by a soil's

characteristics, such as wetness and erodibility. For instance, an area with wet soils should be harvested in the winter when the ground is frozen to avoid damage. Conversely, drier soils can usually be safely harvested in the summer without negative disturbances. These considerations are also important in defining management and silvicultural decisions.

There are 12 soil types on the Property, most of which are characterized as stony, very stony, very rocky, or bouldery. Soil types of the Barre Town Forest are shown in Map F: Barre Town Forest Soils. The majority of the site is mapped as pits, quarry dumps, and mine complex. The bedrock and soil types, as well as the human history of the site, influence the vegetation found here. Important forest soils are those soil map units with a relative value of 74 or higher according to the Soil Potential Study and Forest Land Value Groups for Vermont Soils. These forest soils consist of map units in Forest Value Groups 1, 2 and 3 (out of a total of 7). Statewide, soils in Forest Value Groups 1, 2 and 3 cover approximately 40% of Vermont's total land area. Detailed information on all of the soil types found on the Property can be found in Appendix H: Vermont Soil Fact Sheets from NRCS.

Table 1. Soil Types of the Barre Town Forest

Map Symbol	Map Unit Name	Forest Soils Group	Prime Agricultural Soil	Area (acres)
92C	Buckland silt loam, 8-15% slopes	3	Statewide	11.4
93C	Buckland silt loam, 8-15% slopes, very stony		Statewide	11.7
66D	Vershire-Dummerston complex, 15-25% slopes, rocky		2	4.6
67C	Glover-Vershire complex, 8-15% slopes, very rocky	4	~	53.7
72C	Tunbridge-Lyman complex, 8-15% slopes, very rocky		~	33.7
18B	Cabot silt loam, 0-8% slopes, very stony	5	2	8.0
18C	Cabot silt loam, 8-15% slopes, very stony		~	8.2
78E	Peru gravelly fine sandy loam, 35-60% slopes, very stony		~	7.1
72D	Tunbridge-Lyman complex, 15-35% slopes, very rocky		~	5.6
67D	Glover-Vershire complex, 15-35% slopes, very rocky		~	100.9
67E	Glover-Vershire complex, 35-60% slopes, very rocky		~	5.2
102	Pits, quarry-dumps, mine complex	7	~	118.7
W	Water		~	10.6

VI. Forest Ecosystem TIMBER MANAGEMENT

The overarching goal is to manage the Barre Town as "healthy forest," which is defined as "resilient forest ecosystems that possess the long-term capacity for self-renewal of their ecological productivity, diversity, and complexity" (Sustainable Forestry Task Force, Field Staff Report, October 2007). Management activities will promote a forest that reflects a diversity of stand ages and naturally occurring forest types in the majority of the forest. Special attention will be given to the conservation of rare and exemplary natural communities, and the conservation and enhancement of native plant and animal species and their habitats, including the establishment and retention of a range of sizes and types of downed woody debris, snag trees, cavity trees, occasional very large or old trees, and a small amount of early successional habitats.

In order to improve and manage wildlife habitat, at least 80% of the landscape will be maintained as mid-late successional forest, while also promoting early-successional (scrub/shrub or regenerating forest) conditions where opportunities exist. Combined, these areas of early successional habitat should comprise approximately 5% of the overall property acreage at any given time. These openings will provide browse, dense cover, edge, and the quickly-changing stand dynamics of young forest that benefit and encourage some species of wildlife. Clearing will be conducted between September and November, once the majority of migrant birds have departed and the fruiting season has ended. Large clumps of mature residual trees will be left to serve as perch sites.

In general, uneven-aged silvicultural methods will be used, through single-tree and group selections of less than 5 acres. Harvesting during frozen ground conditions is preferred, but if summer harvesting is required, it will be scheduled before the start of the bird breeding season or after the second week of July. As a general rule, all dead snags and current "biological legacies" (old pasture trees, so-called wolf pines, old growth trees that have been spared in the past) will be retained for the benefit of wildlife and stand diversity, as well as for their educational and aesthetic value. The recommended goal will be to retain a minimum of six snags per acre, with one exceeding 18-inch dbh and three exceeding 16-inch dbh, with a priority of retaining hardwood snags. New "biological legacies" will also be encouraged by setting aside four trees per acre that are representative of the stand. This will add to the structural complexity of the stand and will also eventually create larger pieces of coarse woody material, providing shelter and food for numerous wildlife species. Where possible, slash will also be left on site to contribute to vertical structure and protect seedlings from being browsed by deer.

All activities on the Property shall be performed in accordance with then current, generally accepted best management practices for the sites, soils and terrain of the Property as described in "Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont", a Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation publication dated August 15, 1987 (hereafter "AMPs") and successor documents. Timber harvests will be focused in areas that can be managed easily, with simple access and few impediments due to site or topography. Areas with steep slopes, difficult access, or ecological sensitivity such as riparian or wetland ecosystems, will be managed in order to protect their ecological qualities and to limit any and all environmental impacts from timber harvesting. To accommodate market and climatic (and related soil) conditions, changes may be necessary over the lifetime of this Community Forest

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X. RECREATION AND EDUCATION

Outdoor recreation is very important to the quality of life of Barre Town's residents and to the region's tourist economy (Barre Town Plan, 20082018). Section 6.1 of the Barre Town Plan calls for the maintenance, preservation, development, and upgrade of recreational opportunities including skiing, fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, bicycle/pedestrian paths, and snowmobiling. In multiple public meetings in 2010 and 2011, Barre Town's residents have identified recreation as a long-term management priority for the Barre Town Forest.

Trails throughout the Barre Town Forest connect people to the landscape, to the local history of Barre, and to each other, by providing a place for year-round recreation and cultural education. Due to its proximity to residential areas, the Wilson Industrial Park, the Barre Town School, the Barre Town Forest is easily accessible to a large number of residents for recreation and draws visitors from around central Vermont, New England, and beyond.

Recreation and recreation management must be guided by the permitted and restricted uses set forth in the conservation easement (Appendix B) and also should adhere to several other guiding principles. Through the terms of the Easement, passive, non-commercial public access is granted to the Property, provided it does not conflict with the other purposes of the Easement. Public access will benefit the local and regional tourist economy, provide educational and cultural opportunities, and provide health benefits for residents and visitors alike.

Passive Pedestrian Recreation

In accordance with the Easement, the Property shall be available to the public for all types of non-commercial, non-motorized, non-mechanized, non-equestrian, dispersed recreational purposes, including hiking, hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife viewing, skiing, snowshoeing, and environmental education.

Equestrian, Mechanical, and Motorized Recreation

The following activities will be permitted provided that user groups can maintain trails consistent with the objectives of the Easement and the goals of this Community Forest Plan. Recreational uses such as snowmobiling, mountain biking, horseback riding, and ATV use are permitted only on designated trails and only at the discretion of the Town of Barre in accordance with the Easement. The current status of these forms of recreation is listed below.

Three snowmobile trails, operated by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), and currently locally managed by the Barre Town Thunder Chickens, cross the Property (see map C: Access and Recreation Map). Snowmobile trails can provide access to the Property to those who are disabled, elderly, or otherwise physically challenged. Snowmobiling will be limited to designated trails. The Town Recreation Board will work with the Barre Town Thunder Chickens (and VAST) on any maintenance or management issues relating to these trails or future snowmobile trails. As required by State Law, snowmobiles must be registered with the State. The Town of Barre does not intend to create any additional snowmobile trails at this time.

Mountain biking is allowed on designated trails only (see Map C). Mountain biking trails have been created for three abilities: beginners, intermediate and expert. Expert trails may contain

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bridges, steep descents, and challenging terrain (See Appendix E for an inventory of Structures on the trails). Bikers are required to wear a helmet, ride in control and yield to other trail users. To minimize trail erosion, riding in muddy conditions is prohibited.

Currently there are no designated horseback riding trails but the Town Recreation Board will consider any proposals for the creation of such trails and will coordinate with designated Trail Corridor Managers, the Vermont Land Trust, and VHCB on the creation and location of any new designated trails for these uses. Single-track trails used by mountain bikers will not be considered suitable for horseback riding; horseback riding trails will be considered only on wider multi-use trails. Occasional riding on multi-use trails will be permitted until horseback riding trails are designated as use increases. See Horse Back Riding Map (Appendix TBD).

The Conservation Easement allows recreational use of ATVs and motorbikes only at the discretion of the Town and only on a designated connector trail that connects existing, legal networks of ATV trails. Such a connector trail will need to be reviewed and approved by Easement holders and may not have a significant, negative impact on the conservation values of the property. A local ATV club would need to be responsible for management and enforcing responsible use. Currently there are no designated trails for this use. See Appendix J for more details on the standards under which ATV use may be allowed.

Other motor vehicles may not be operated on the property except for uses specifically permitted under the Easement such as wildlife and habitat management, timber management, trail grooming, maintenance, handicap access, safety, or emergency purposes. Class 1 e-bikes are allowed on the Forest trail network.

Trails

Historically, old logging roads and quarry roads were used by hikers, skiers, hunters and mountain bikers. The current single-track trail network was built by the Millstone Trail Association over the past 17 years. Trails have been located to minimize effects on streams and ponds (i.e. water-filled quarries). No additional trails are planned at this time. Any new trail construction will need to be approved by the Selectboard, Barre Town Recreation Board, and the Vermont Land Trust. Trails may be rerouted from their current location to decrease erosion and avoid hazards, wetlands, riparian areas or other sensitive natural features, or to create a larger buffer between trails and adjacent private land.

Multi-use trails: Allowable uses are hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking, or other such approved use.

Single track trails: Allowable uses are hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and mountain biking.

Dogs are allowed on the Property in compliance with the Town ordinance (Town of Barre Animal Nuisance Control Ordinance, effective March 7, 2007). Dog owners or handlers must remove their dogs' waste from the Barre Town Forest.

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Out of respect for abutting landowners, trails will be a minimum of 10 feet from property lines, or 25 feet if requested by abutting landowner. With landowner permission, trails may be closer than the minimum distance and also connect and continue on to private land.

The Town will coordinate with the Websterville Fire District regarding the use and maintenance of the private road that leads to the Websterville Water Plant in the interior of the Property.

All users of the Forest are required to abide by the Leave No Trace ethic (See Appendix F). Users must confine their activities to durable ground, carry out all trash, respect other users, respect wildlife and wildlife habitats, avoid protected areas, and minimize impact on natural resources.

Trail Corridor Managers

Designated Trail Corridor Managers (TCMs) will be required to obtain written permission from the Selectboard prior to using any existing trails within the boundaries of the Town Forest. Corridor Management Agreements will be created between the town and Trail Corridor Managers (see Appendix G for example Agreement.) These will be renewed annually after evaluation by the Recreation Board and Selectboard to ensure TCMs are fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in the Agreement. TCMs will be required to monitor trail use to ensure users abide by the rules outlined in this Community Forest Plan. TCMs will reference the Barre Town Forest in marketing and publicity materials for events that take place on the Barre Town Forest.

Trail Corridor Managers will be responsible for overseeing any repairs or improvements to existing trails and coordinating with other TCMs or other interest groups as necessary. Trails will be routed to avoid any adverse impact on wetlands, springs, riparian areas, vernal pools and other sensitive natural features. To prevent increased predation of birds and nest parasitism, trails will be less than 25 feet in width and, if possible, a forest canopy closure of greater than 70% will be maintained. Bridges, culverts, and other trail amenities will be installed and maintained as needed to minimize impacts on soil, water, and other resources, with approval by Barre Town Recreation Board. The Easement prohibits manipulation of natural water courses or other water bodies. All trails will be maintained in a manner to minimize environmental impact, be compatible with other uses in the forest, and be in accordance with the Easements, the VT Trails and Greenways Manual (2007), and other appropriate trail standards established by recognized recreational groups.

Organized user groups of a particular activity can petition the Barre Town Selectboard to consider additional recreational activities, if they are consistent with the purposes of the Easement. However, activities more suitable to open, non-forested land and with recreation facilities that currently exist elsewhere in Barre town (such as volleyball courts or community gardens) are not considered appropriate in the Town Forest.

If there is an interest in developing other uses, enthusiasts of a particular activity could request a license from the Town to develop this activity, assuming it is consistent with the Conservation Easement. The cost of establishing these activities and the responsibility of maintaining them rests squarely on the groups interested in these activities and not on the town taxpayers. User

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groups must provide proof of insurance which names the Town as additional insured. If the Selectboard or Recreation Board is not satisfied with the way these activities are being managed, they could withdraw the license.

The Recreation Board will annually monitor the forest, particularly the trails, for evidence of abuse or damage to natural systems due to recreational activities and will modify management recommendations and actions appropriately.

Trail Signage

Trail Corridor Managers are required to clearly mark designated trails in coordination with the Barre Town Recreation Board. Trails that continue onto private property will have signs that indicate a user is leaving the Town Forest. All signs are subject to approval by the Recreation Board. Trail maps of the Barre Town Forest can be obtained at the Town office and the Town of Barre's website.

Trail Fees

Trail Corridor Managers who wish to charge a fee for use of any trail located within the Barre Town Forest must get Town approval. The TCM applicant will apply for fee schedule approval from the Barre Town Recreation Board, which will make a recommendation to the Selectboard. The applicant will seek final approval from the Selectboard. See Appendix I for more details.

All trails on the Town Forest will be open to all hikers, snowshoers and dogwalkers, without cost.

Hunting, Trapping, Fishing and Collecting

Hunting is permitted in the Town Forest in compliance with the laws of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. A valid state hunting license is required. Hunting and other recreational and educational uses of this property do not need to conflict. Prudence dictates that precautions are exercised both by hunters and by non-hunting users, especially during rifle season for deer. Except for pedestrian use, trails will be closed from the beginning of rifle season until the end of muzzle loader season for deer. All tree stands are prohibited. Carry in-carry out ground blinds may be permitted within the Town Forest, but must be dismantled after use, following the Leave No Trace Guidelines, and requires written permission from the Barre Town Recreation Board. No live growth shall be cut or damaged to construct blinds or to create shooting lanes.

Trapping is allowed, as permitted and as directed by the Selectboard. (State law requires all trappers to get landowner permission.)

The killing of non-game animals or permanent removal of nests or plants, including wildflowers, is prohibited. Activities such as the limited collection of tree leaves, fern fronds, berries, fungi, fruits, algae, and lichen specimens are permitted for non-commercial, educational, and individual use. The Town may require a special use permit if there is concern for depletion of the resource, or if uncontrolled harvesting may have an adverse impact on the health of the forest.