

Barre Town Community Forest Management Plan Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2022

The Town of Barre Community Forest Management Plan Committee held its fourth meeting on Monday, December 19, 2022, starting at 6:30pm. The meeting was held in Conference Room #3 in the Municipal Building at 149 Websterville Road. Committee members present included: Patty Meriam, Lori Bernier (remotely), Josh Howard, Dean Preston, Larry Rogacki, and Jim West. Also present at the meeting: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Washington County Forester Robert Nelson, and Caroline Earle, Esq., ~~Counsel~~ for the Committee.

Facilitator

- 1) **Call to Order: 6:30pm:** Chair Larry Rogacki called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.
- 2) **Consider Approving Agenda:** Josh Howard made a motion to approve the agenda with modification. Dean Preston seconded the motion. Agenda approved 6-0 with the modification of moving Agenda item #7 (Discuss Public Input) to #5.
- 3) **Consider Approving December 12th Meeting Minutes:** Jim West noted the opening paragraph of the minutes improperly labeled the meeting as the Committee's second meeting, however, it is actually the third meeting. Josh Howard made a motion to approve of the minutes with the amendment. Jim West seconded the motion. Minutes approved 6-0 with amendment.
- 4) **Receive Guests (non-agenda items):** There were no guests to receive.
- 5) **(Formerly #7) Discuss Public Input:** The Committee would like to utilize the Town's newsletter to receive input. Means of receiving input: Front Porch Forum, Barre Town Recreation Facebook, and the Town Website. The Committee discussed a Public Input Agenda item possibly following "Receive Guests."
- 6) **(Formerly #5) Review Pages 1-19 of Barre Town Community Forest Management Plan:** Chair Larry Rogacki has asked that Caroline Earle act as the facilitator of the Plan review. Jim West provided the Committee with a handout of his suggested changes. The Committee's review was ended at the top of page 7.
- 7) **(Formerly #6) Review List of Topics needing Additional Discussion:** The Committee utilized Conference Room #3's whiteboard to create an ongoing topics list. At this time the list consists of: 1) Forestry Management/logging, 2) Term of Plan, 3) Websterville Fire District Property.
- 8) **Discuss Tentative Agenda Items for January Meetings:** The Committee discussed creating a timeline and deadlines to reference moving forward through their process. The Committee agreed to continue reviewing pages 7-19 of the CFMP.
- 9) **"Round the Table:** Jim West asked if it was necessary for the Committee to have a budget. Rogers stated that a budget would not be necessary, expenses can be added to the Recreation Budget. However, if there is a major expenditure a proposal to the

Selectboard will be necessary for funding. Robert Nelson appreciated Caroline keeping the meeting moving forward. Patty Meriam expressed an interest in adding an "allocated minutes" note to each agenda item to be more efficient and get done by 8:00pm. Lori Bernier expressed a good job on the first 7 pages of review. Dean Preston expressed it is not necessary for the Committee to repeat the same comments. Caroline Earle stated it is good to be assertive in her role to facilitate an efficient meeting.

10) Adjourn.

L. Rogach

D. Preston

[Signature]

Dean A. Rodden

Patty Meriam

James H. Met

Community Forest Plan for the Barre Town Forest

A municipal forest for the Town of Barre made possible with significant funding from the federal Community Forest Program, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Open Space Institute.

*Barre Town
Washington County, Vermont
February 2013*



**Submitted by:
Barre Town Selectboard**

Prepared by:

The Barre Town Forest Management Plan Committee

Larry Rogacki (Chair), Lori Bernier, Josh Howard,
Patricia Leahey Merriam, Dean Preston, David
Rouleau, James West, Cate Cattier, Marc Bernier,
John Hameline, Thomas Koch, Cynthia Fitzgerald
(Chair),

Stephan Mayr and Lionel Cyr and

Robert Nelson and Barrett, Washington
County Forester and

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Barre Town Forest Management

Caitlin Cusack Kate Wanner, The Trust for
Public Land

22/27

**THIS COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN MUST BE UPDATED
AND APPROVED BY FEBRUARY 2023**

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Commented [CE1]: Discussion about whether this should be changed to Ecosystem

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Conservation Easement
- Appendix B: Composite Sketch by American Survey Company, March 11, 2013
- Appendix C: Forest Bird Habitat Assessment and Management Recommendations, by Steve Hagenbuch, Audubon Vermont, 2011
- Appendix D: Natural Communities of the proposed Barre Town Forest, Barre VT, by Rose Graves, University of Vermont Ecological Planning Program, 2011.
- Appendix E: Inventory of Trail Structures
- Appendix F: Leave No Trace Guidelines
- Appendix G: Trail Corridor Manager Agreement
- Appendix H: Vermont Soil Fact Sheets from NRCS
- Appendix I: Trail Fee Process
- Appendix J: Memorandum of Understanding for ATV Use

MAPS

- Map A: Barre Town Forest Locus Map
- Map B: Barre Town Forest Topographic Map
- Map C: Barre Town Forest Access and Recreation Map
- Map D: Barre Town Forest Timber Stands
- Map E: Barre Town Forest Geology Map
- Map F: Barre Town Forest Soils Map
- Map G: Barre Town Forest Soil Site Class Map
- Map H: Barre Town Forest Land Cover Map
- Map I: Barre Town Forest Conservation Map
- Map J: Barre Town Forest Natural Communities and Wildlife Habitat Map
- Map K: Forest Bird Habitat Assessment Map

Special Thanks to

Robert Nelson Barrett, Washington
 County Forester Carl Rogers, Barre Town
 Manager

Kevin Spaulding ~~Mike Frasier~~, Millstone Trails Association
 Board President and the Barre Town Forest Management
 Plan Committee: Larry Rogacki (Chair), Lori Bernier, Josh
 Howard, Patricia Leahey Merriam, Dean Preston, David
 Rouleau, James West, Cate Cattier, Mare Bernier, John
 Hameline,
Thomas Koeh, Cynthia Fitzgerald (Chair), Stephan Mayr
 and Lionel Cyr

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I. OWNERSHIP and CONTACT INFORMATION

Easement Names: Barre Town Forest Conservation Easement

Location: Barre Town
Washington County, Vermont

Abutting Roads: Waterman Street, Websterville Road, Graniteville Road, Violette Street,
Littlejohn Road, Church Hill Road, Casanova St, Barclay Quarry
Road, Donahue Road, Brook Street

Landowner: Town of Barre
Address: Town of Barre Town Offices
149 Websterville Rd
Websterville, VT 05678
Contact: Town Manager Carl Rogers
Phone: 802-479-9331
Email: officeserogers@barretown.org

Easement Co-Holder: Vermont Land Trust
Address: 8 Bailey Avenue
Montpelier, VT 05602
Contact: Caitlin Cusack Dan Kilborn
Phone: (802) 478-6089
Email: caitlinden@vltr.org

Easement Co-Holder: Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
Address: 58 East State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Contact: Kris Hammer, Conservation Stewardship Coordinator
Phone: (802) 828-5068
Email: khammer@vhcb.org

Commented [CE2]: Need to obtain updated information.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Introduction

This Community Forest Plan for the Barre Town Forest is submitted on behalf of the Town of Barre, Vermont. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) helped the Town of Barre obtain 5 forested properties totaling 355 acres, to be combined with 25.7 acres owned by the Town, to become a new municipal forest (hereafter "the Property") in Graniteville, ~~and Websterville and East Barre~~, Vermont. This project was completed as part of the Trust for Public Land's Community Forest Program and the Vermont Town Forest Project. Funding was provided by the Town of Barre, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Vermont Recreation Trails Grant Program, the Open Space Institute, the federal Community Forest Program, the Millstone Trails Association, and many other foundations and private individual donors. A conservation easement over 355 acres was conveyed to Vermont Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to protect the Property from development and ensure it is open for public use in perpetuity. The 25.7 acres previously owned by the Town (see Map B: Topographic Map) are part of the Town Forest, and included in this Community Forest Plan, but are not restricted by the easement.

The scenic vistas, recreational opportunities, timber production, wildlife habitat and water protection that this Town Forest provides are important assets to the Town (Barre Town Plan, 202008.) Section 10.4 of the Town Plan states that "The Town should acquire property when it is in the public interest for such things as: strips for highway connectors, parcels abutting Town owned property, parcels along significant water resources, recreational uses, and preservation of natural resources." The Property contains four out of the five values noted for acquisition.

Commented [CE3]: Citations will need to be updated.

The Town of Barre will manage the Property as a municipal forest for wildlife habitat, timber ~~harvesting and management~~, public recreation, education, and water quality protection. Protection of the land as a conserved Town Forest also ensures public access, safeguards drinking water resources, supports the local timber, recreation, and tourism economies, provides occasional timber revenue to the Town, and restores and protects connectivity by assembling parcels with fragmented ownership. The property's extensive network of trails is a regional destination for mountain biking and other human-powered recreation, providing unique economic and health-related values to the people of Barre Town and surrounding communities.

Commented [CE4]: Larry: This should be reorganized to reflect the priorities of the Easement.

The purpose of this Community Forest Management Plan is to identify known information relative to the Property, present the goals of the Town of Barre for the Town Forest, and put forth prescriptions for management and conservation activities ~~for the next ten (10) years~~. Completion of a Community Forest Plan is a requirement of the federal Community Forest Program and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. This plan shall be updated at least every ten years.

Commented [CE5]: Time period TBD by the Committee.

History

The historic quarry area of Millstone Hill was once the heart of Barre's boomtown economy and played an important role in shaping this area with a cross section of cultural and ethnical backgrounds not found anywhere else in Vermont. What was a virtual industrial wasteland was reclaimed by nature and is today a unique landscape that highlights Barre's history. The 7 parcels

that make up the Barre Town Forest were home to some of the first granite quarries in Barre, established in 1790. The parcels were purchased from the Rock of Ages Corporation, the Graniteville Fire District, and 3 private owners. Two abutting parcels (25.76 acres) owned by the Town of Barre will also become part of the Town Forest.

The properties have not been quarried for over a hundred years. Since then, the forest has grown back to stands of sugar maple, mixed hardwoods, spruce and fir. Portions of the Property have been managed with selective timber harvests, under the supervision of a forester and in compliance with Use-Value standards. The Property has also been used for pedestrian recreation and hunting, and recently for mountain biking and cross country skiing on trails created by the Millstone Trails Association. Two parcels (33 acres) are managed for source water protection, as they contain the water supply for the former Village of Websterville Fire District #3, now owned by the Town of Barre.

Effective July 1, 2003, the Town of Barre and the East Barre Fire District #1 merged per action by the Vermont Legislature and signed by the Governor. The Town of Barre is the surviving entity, and it acquired all the East Barre Fire District's assets, including two parcels of land along Littlejohn Road. One parcel is on the south side of the road; the other parcel is on the north side of the road. There is one old quarry hole, filled with water, on each lot. One parcel is 15 acres; the other is 11 acres. Since the town assumed ownership, no timber management has been done on the parcels, and there is no physical evidence the fire district had the lots logged in the recent past. The Barre Town Selectboard has committed these two parcels to become part of the Town Forest, managed according to this Plan but not subject to the Conservation Easement.

Commented [CE6]: Is this last clause still accurate?

In 2008, the non-profit Millstone Trails Association (MTA) was contacted by Rock of Ages and informed that a substantial part of the old quarry lands would soon be put on the market. As it was one of the goals of the MTA to preserve this unique property, the Board of Directors approved a motion to achieve that goal to work to find a way to purchase the property for preservation through recreation. It was at this time that the MTA connected with The Trust for Public Land, and together with the Town of Barre they have worked to secure the funding and create the Town Forest.

In August 2010, the Selectboard appointed a Barre Town Forest Study Committee, which included representatives from the Selectboard, MTA, Barre Town Recreation Board Committee, and a member of the community. For three months, the Committee studied the benefits and costs of a potential town forest, which resulted in a strong recommendation to the Selectboard and town citizens that the town take advantage of this special opportunity to own and manage such a unique recreational and cultural resource. The citizens of the Town of Barre showed support for this acquisition in November on election day, 2010, when they voted 63% in favor of acquiring the property and contributing \$100,000 towards the acquisition. MTA also committed \$100,000 to the acquisition. The Trust for Public Land and the Town of Barre successfully secured a \$400,000 grant from the new federal Community Forest Program, one of the first ten grants in the country from this fledgling program.

After approval by the Selectboard and the voters, a Barre Town Forest Management Plan Committee was created in April of 2011 to work with citizens, town staff, the county forester, the easement holders, and elected officials to create a management plan and make decisions

about the new town forest. The Committee drafted the first Community Forest Management Plan in the summer of 2011 and finalized this plan for submission to the Selectboard in fall 2012.

Local and Regional Significance

The most direct beneficiaries of the Barre Town Forest will be the 8,000 citizens of Barre Town, who treasure this property for its historic quarries and recreation offerings.

Protection of the Property as a Town Forest will contribute to the overall health of local residents by providing a close-to-home destination for outdoor recreation. Less than 2% of Barre Town is conserved land with public access, compared to 15.2% of the State. Residents of nearby towns and cities will also benefit from the open space and healthy recreation opportunities.

Spaulding High School cross-country team practices and holds meets on the Property. Because of the interconnected trail network, it is one of the few cross-country courses in the region that does not have to cross any roads or worry about safety or delays related to traffic. Websterville Baptist School uses the forest for biology classes, trail walks and other educational purposes.

Proper management of the proposed Barre Town Forest will also help to ensure the water quality and safety of two drinking water supplies:

- 179 acres (69%) of the Source Water Protection Area for the Websterville Fire District #3, that supplies drinking water to 420 people in Websterville; and
- 27 acres (39%) of the Source Water Protection Area for Barre Town Water System that supplies drinking water for 1,210 people.

Master Plan of the Town of Barre

One of the policies in The Barre Town Master Plan (2008) states, "*Ground and surface waters (for drinking and recreation), open lands, forests, farms, natural recreational areas, archaeologically sensitive areas and wildlife habitats should be recognized as valued resources; and their preservation should be balanced with other considerations in making planning decisions.*" It also states "*The Town supports the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources.*" The Town Plan also includes, "*Scenic vistas, recreational opportunities, timber production, wildlife habitat, and water protection are important assets that forest lands provide. The Town encourages careful and long-term management for the multiple uses of our forest resources.*" The Proposed Barre Town Forest will provide all of these important assets to the Town and citizens of Vermont. Lastly, the Town Plan states, "*The Town should promote the development and preservation of public scenic areas such as trails, ponds, swimming areas, picnic areas and railroad beds for continued public use. The Town may wish to acquire these properties if a change of use is contemplated in the future.*"

Regional Significance

The Barre Town Forest is rich in recreational and tourism opportunities, important wildlife habitat, productive forestland, and historic and cultural value. The numerous lookouts on the property offer scenic views of the surrounding region, including views of Camel's Hump and a significant stretch of the northern Green Mountains.