

Community Forest Management Plan Committee

February 20, 2023, Meeting Minutes

The Town of Barre Community Forest Management Plan Committee held its ninth meeting on Monday, February 20, 2023, starting at 6:00 pm. The meeting was held in Conference room #3 in the Municipal Building at 149 Websterville Road. Committee members present included: David Rouleau, Lori Bernier (remotely), Josh Howard, Patty Meriam, Larry Rogacki, Jim West, and Dean Preston. Also present at this meeting Town Manager Carl Rogers, Recreation Director/Committee Administrator Johnny Crossley, Committee Intern Aidan Rowley, Facilitator Caroline Earle, Millstone Trails Representative Mark Martin, and Selectboard Members Norma Malone (remotely) and Chair Paul White. Two members of the public attended remotely: Lisa and Andrea (last names unknown).

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Larry Rogacki called the meeting to order, **6:02pm**.
2. **Consider Approving Agenda:** James West made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Patty Meriam seconded the motion. Committee approved 6-0. (Josh Howard was not present at this time).
3. **Consider Approving February 13th Meeting Minutes:** Patty Meriam made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes. James West seconded the motion. Committee approved 6-0 (Josh Howard was not present at this time).
4. **Receive Public Input**
 - a. A member of the public, Andrea (remotely attending), presented thoughts to the Committee. Andrea stated that she has lived in Barre Town since 2003. She is an active user of the Town Forest. She stated that she enjoys taking friends skiing in the forest during the Winter. Andrea wished to speak to the Committee in regards to logging that has taken place in the Town Forest and its impact on her own recreational use of the Town Forest. Andrea was not against logging, however, she described collateral damage from stumps and fallen trees while skiing off trail. Andrea expressed concern over potential dangerous conditions in the forest as a result of poor logging practices. Informally, she requested to see a logging operation on a smaller scale.
5. **Updates from Recreation Director:**
 - a. UVM Intern Aidan Rowley was introduced before the Committee. Aidan will be assisting Recreation Director Johnny Crossley with Committee efforts to survey the public and recreational groups, in addition to fact checking elements of the Community Forest Management Plan.
 - b. Recreation director addressed Committee's Documentation Requests. Corridor Management Agreements will be distributed to the

Committee before next Monday's meeting in order to provide members time to review them prior to inviting the Corridor Managers before the Committee.

c. James West requested an update on the mapping project Washington County Forester Robert Nelson had approved by the Selectboard. If there were any maps contained in the 2013 CFMP that won't be updated, Jim suggested updating those maps as a potential intern project (increasing accuracy and visual appeal).

6. Discuss Organizational Input

a. Review and approve list of groups/individuals to advise the Committee

1. 10 User Invites (not finalized): *Vermont Tradition Coalition, Barre Fish and Game, Millstone Trails Association, Thunder Chickens, Disc Golf, Runners (Spaulding XC Coach Don Singer and Central Vermont Runners), Rock Fire, Weed Warriors, and Educators from local school districts who utilize the Town Forest.*

2. Selectboard Chair Paul White expressed Barre town residents being the ^{only ones} primary concern with respect to ^{receive} input from the public. Dave Rouleau mentioned intern's survey as a good way to receive input from the public. Committee discussed input from members of the public. Committee discussed including a survey question, "Are you a resident of Barre Town?"

3. The three groups who hold Corridor Management Agreements, Thunder Chickens, Millstone Trails Association, and Quarries disc Golf, will be the first groups invited to present before the committee on or after March 13th. These groups are the Millstone Trails Association, Thunder Chickens, and Disc Golf. A draft invitation will be presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

b. Review and approve questions to be provided to groups/individuals in advance

1. Committee reviewed draft survey questions from the last meeting and discussed additional questions to add. The following survey questions were discussed and will be presented to the committee at the next meeting:

1) What do you like about the forest?

2) What are your priorities/concerns in relation to the forest?

3) In what capacity do you use the forest?

4) Is the management of the forest satisfactory to you?

5) What do you believe works, and what do you believe could be better about the forest?

6) What are your future use plans?

7) Do you have any additional thoughts or concerns to express?

c. Discuss potential presentation dates

1) The committee will first invite the three user groups who hold Corridor Management Agreements to present before the Committee during the March meeting schedule: March meetings will occur on the 13th, 20th, and 27th.

7. Continue Review of the Community Forest Management Plan

a. *The Committee began their review on page 15 of the CFMP, under Heading **General Purposes**.*
[https://www.barretown.org/Final BarreTownForest ManagementPlan Full.pdf](https://www.barretown.org/Final%20BarreTownForest%20ManagementPlan%20Full.pdf)

a. **General Purposes:**

1. Committee discussed the definition of "low impact." The committee will revisit this term when Washington County Forester is present.

b. **Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resource Goals:**

1. Committee discussion on "Protect existing and potential deer wintering areas." The CFMP does not include any resources related to where deer wintering areas are located. Committee will revisit when Washington County Forester is present.

c. **Recreation, Educational and Cultural Goals:**

1. Committee further discussed the definition of "low impact."

d. **Timber Management Goals:**

1. Committee discussed the phrase "Allow visual access." Committee will consult with Washington County Forester on definition.

8. **Tentative Agenda for February 27th Meeting**

1. Before the next Meeting, survey questions and invitations for the three groups discussed will be finalized.
2. Recreation director and intern to work on survey and have questions prepared by next week.
3. Chair Paul White provided his thoughts and feedback to the committee in regards to their progress on the forest plan.
4. Committee will meet three times in March: March 13, 20, 27 from 6:00 – 8:00pm.

9. **Adjourn: 8:05pm** Josh Howard made a motion to adjourn. Committee voted to adjourn 7-0.

L. Rogach

D. a. R.

D. Preston

Patty Merison is amended

- 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 area 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 on 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 area 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

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

Barre Town Forest Community Forest Plan

2/27/13

- Protect water resources, wetlands, and riparian zones.
- Enhance biological diversity on a local level.

Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resource Goals:

- Maintain and protect native biodiversity and ecological integrity.
- Conserve rare and exemplary natural communities.
- Preserve and conserve the quality and quantity of ground water and surface water.
- Protect or enhance water quality, forested and non-forested wetlands, vernal pools, and aquatic habitats.
- Protect and enhance a variety of habitats for native species through ~~timber-~~forest ecosystem management.
- Provide a healthy mix of natural communities throughout the Property.
- Protect existing and potential deer wintering areas.
- To the extent possible, prevent the introduction or spread of invasive plant and animal species.
- Manage ~~both to each~~ of the wildlife habitat and natural resources goals by following established current best practices as defined by pertinent State, Federal, and private entities.

Recreation, Educational and Cultural Goals: (Move entire section above Wildlife Habitat)

- Promote and encourage traditional forest uses including low-impact outdoor recreation from novice to expert for residents and visitors.
- Maintain the tradition of public forested land available for low-impact recreation.
- Maintain public access to hunting and fishing, within State regulations.
- Allow Education opportunities to the citizens of the Barre Town region about natural communities, biodiversity, the working forest, and good stewardship practices.
- Preserve the unique cultural and historical legacy of the quarries.
- Develop and maintain parking facilities for access to the Barre Town Forest.
- Manage any recreational uses in accord with the wildlife and natural resource goals of the Community Forest Management Plan.

Forest Ecosystem ~~Timber~~ Management Goals

- Establish or maintain a tall, continuous canopy. Consult WCF R. Nelson on first two bullet points
- Maintain a closed overstory canopy with a dense understory.
- Minimize disturbance.
- Create new openings in the forest.
- Allow visual access Consult with R. Nelson on language/interpretation
- Leave many big trees.
- Promote vegetation that displays colorful foliage or fruit in autumn.
- Promote vegetation that ~~displays attractive flowers~~ that supports pollinators.
- Promote vegetation that maximizes a variety of foliage.
- Receive income as a byproduct of Forest Management ~~Generate periodic income from timber production.~~
- Increase the richness of wildlife species.
- Maintain existing water yields.

III. TOWN OBJECTIVES

The creation of the Barre Town Forest is an effort by the Town to protect this land from development, put it into open public ownership, and manage it for timber, wildlife habitat, and public recreation and education. The Town of Barre values the complex suite of both monetary and non-monetary benefits that forests provide including timber revenues, non-timber forest product revenues, tourism and recreation, water supply and water quality protection, carbon sequestration, open space protection, education, wildlife habitat protection, and a sense of community and increased civic pride.

Administration of the Barre Town Forest

The Barre Town Recreation Board will take the lead role in managing the Property and the implementation of the goals established by this Community Forest Plan. The Barre Town Selectboard will have ultimate decision-making authority over the Property after receiving recommendations from the Recreation Board. The Selectboard may appoint a separate Town Forest Management Committee if deemed necessary in the future. The Recreation Board will handle all day-to-day management decisions and will submit annual action plans and budgets to the Selectboard for approval. Washington County Forester Russ Barrett (or successor Washington County Forester), who prepared the Timber Management section of this document, will provide assistance and advice pertaining to forest treatments. The Town plans to hire a private forester to plan, mark and manage timber harvests. Overall management will be done in accordance with the Easement and this Community Forest Plan approved by the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

General Purposes

- Preserve and conserve 381 acres of forested land and scenic and historic vistas, in perpetuity under Town ownership, for the enjoyment and education of the general public.
- Provide for the continuation of traditional forest uses including sustainable forest management and outdoor recreation.
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitats, rare and exemplary plants and natural communities, and the ecological processes that sustain the natural heritage of the Property.
- Preserve cultural resources, including historic granite quarry sites.
- Provide public pedestrian access on the Property which will allow the general public to hike, hunt, snowshoe, observe wildlife and participate in other low impact outdoor recreational activities. (move up to #2 bullet point)
- Provide for mountain biking and snowmobiling on designated trails of the property.