


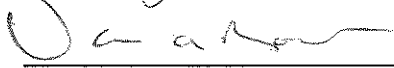
Community Forest Management Plan Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2023


1. **Call to Order: 6:30pm:** Chair Larry Rogacki called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.
2. **Consider Approving Agenda:** Josh Howard made a motion to approve the agenda as is. Jim West seconded the motion. Committee Approved 7-0.
3. **Consider Approving December 19th Meeting Minutes:** Town Manager Carl Rogers stated that Caroline Earle's title needed to be changed to "Facilitator," as opposed to how it was written in the draft minutes as "Counsel" to not create confusion over her role. Josh Howard made a motion to approve the minutes. Patty Meriam seconded the motion. December 19th Meeting Minutes approved with the amendment.
4. **Receive Guests for non-agenda items:** At the time of this Agenda item there were two members of the public present, one in person and one remotely. Mark Martin was present in person at the meeting to represent the Millstone Trails Association. The remote member of the public, Janice Beach, had their microphone muted and did not respond when spoken to by the Committee.
5. **Discuss Public Input:** Chair Larry stated that he has introduced this Agenda item to allow a space during the meetings to discuss public input that may have been received between meetings. At this time, there was no public input to discuss.
6. **Continue Reviewing Pages 1-19 of the Community Forest Management Plan:** Chair Larry Rogacki passed the leadership to The Committee Facilitator, Caroline Earle, to lead the group through the review process. Patty Meriam expressed an interest in revisiting the section of the CFMP reviewed at the previous meeting, pages 1-7, to address additional edits. The Committee Members took turns addressing additional edits for pages 1-7. After each member had a chance to share their thoughts, Caroline picked up the review where the Committee left off last meeting. The Committee began reviewing at the top of page 7, paragraph titled: "Local and Regional Significance." It was determined that The Town Master Plan, Central Vermont Regional Plan, and Vermont State Wildlife Action Plan Priorities, listed on pages 7 and 8, were not the most up to date versions of each respective Plan. In order to make the proper changes related to these sections, the Committee will need to reference the latest version. Recreation Director Crossley will locate up to date copies of these Plans. In the interest of time the Committee stopped their review at "Vermont State Wildlife Action Plan Priorities," starting at the bottom of page 8 and continuing on to page 9. Edits of the CFMP are attached to the Meeting Minutes to maintain transparency with the public throughout the Committee's review process.
7. **Review DRAFT Committee Planning Calendar:** Chair Larry Rogacki drafted a Planning Calendar for the Committee to review and discuss. The Committee discussed how certain sections of the review may need to wait until after Washington County Forester Robert Nelson has concluded his field research in the Spring. In addition, Patty Meriam pointed out that pages 43-56 may not require Robert Nelson. The Committee further


discussed a timeline and what elements of the review are dependent on other areas of review happening first. Additionally, the Committee spoke on the appropriate time(s) to bring in the public. Caroline Earle asked the in person member of the public present, Mark Martin, how he may perceive the most appropriate time to bring in the public. Mark Martin shared that the Committee needs to do their due diligence inviting the public, and if the public takes advantage of the invite, great. However, if the Committee is putting forth effort to invite the public and they are not taking up the offer, it is what it is. Mark Martin further added, complete your draft of the CFMP and then give the public time to review it said draft. Any additional edits from the Public will then become a part of the final version.

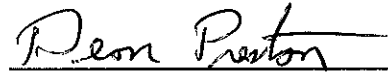
8. **Tentative Agenda for January 23rd Meeting:** Chair Larry Rogacki discussed continuing the CFMP review at the next meeting, in addition to creating a list of community groups and organizations to invite before the Committee.
9. **'Round the Table:** Members articulated the review was going smoothly. Jim West gave notice he would not be able to attend any meetings scheduled August 14th or 21st.
10. **Adjourn:** Josh Howard made a motion to adjourn. Patty Meriam seconded the motion. Committee voted to adjourn 7-0. Time: 8:05pm.











Community Forest Management Plan for the Barre Town Forest

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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
2023*



**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
With support from Robert Nelson, Washington County Forester
Robert Nelson, Washington County Forester

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**THIS COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN MUST BE UPDATED
AND APPROVED BY _____ 202**

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Commented [CE2]: Discussion about whether this should be changed to Ecosystem

Commented [CE3]: Robert - He would call this section a forest ecosystem management plan to replace the former Timber Management Plan title.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Conservation Easement (App. 1- App. 20)

Schedule A: Title (App. 17- App. 20) Titled

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

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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

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Special Thanks to

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

Kevin Spaulding, 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

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With support from -Caroline S. Earle, Esq.,-Facilitator for the Committee

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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, Graniteville Road, Violette Street, Littlejohn Road,
Church Hill Road, Barclay Quarry Road, Donahue Road, Brook
Street

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

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

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

Commented [CE11]: Need to obtain updated information.

II. 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, 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.

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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, 2020.) 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.

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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 [CE13]: First page of easement - put in this language here in same order as language of 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. 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.

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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 (25.7 acres) owned by the Town of Barre will also become part of the Town Forest.

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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 Websterville Fire District #3, now owned by the Town of Barre.

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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, 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.

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. It was at this time that the MTA connected with The Trust for Public Land, and together with the Town of Barre they 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, 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 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.

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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 2011-12, which was adopted by the Selectboard in 2013.

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Local and Regional Significance

The most direct beneficiaries of the Barre Town Forest are the 7,923 citizens of Barre Town, who treasure this property for its historic quarries and recreational offerings.

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Protection of the Property as a Town Forest contributes 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 benefit from the open space and healthy recreation opportunities.

Commented [CE15]: Check percentages.

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.

Commented [CE16]: Verify if still true?

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

- 179 acres (69%) of the Source Water Protection Area for the former 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.

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Commented [CE18]: These are accurate - according to Carl.
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Master Plan of the Town of Barre

One of the policies in The Barre Town Master Plan (June 2020) 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 Barre Town Forest provides 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."

Commented [CE20]: Carl - check that in 2020 plan

Commented [CE21]: Carl - check that quote in 2020 plan

Commented [CE22]: Patty - Keep in mind do we want to add to the own Forest to keep this forest contiguous?
Commented [CE23]: Carl - check if this language is in updated 2020 Plan.

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.

The benefits of the Barre Town Forest go far beyond the town limits. Thousands of visitors from Vermont, New England, Quebec, and beyond have come to Barre Town to experience the unique trail network on the Property and the surrounding area. The area is extensively used by educators, hikers, bikers, skiers, hunters, and other recreational users; all of these uses would have been lost if the land were sold and developed. Permanent protection of the land in Town ownership attracts new businesses and homeowners to Barre Town and also ensures that the land remains in active forest management, supporting local resource-based jobs and providing occasional timber revenues to the Town.

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Within five miles of the property is a landscape-scale block of conserved land that includes the 28,000-acre Groton State Forest and 4,500 acres of private conservation land. (See Map A: Locus Map.) The property itself provides important habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, and also acts as a "stepping stone" of habitat between the 43,000-acre core forest and protected land around Groton State Forest and an 8,000-acre biodiversity hotspot in Williamstown and Brookfield (identified by the Vermont Biodiversity Project).

Regional Trail Network

The Barre Town Forest is located in the center of the 70-mile Millstone Hill Trail Network, which provides a place for year-round recreation and cultural education. The Millstone Trail Network, 20 miles of which are on the Town Forest, extends onto adjacent private land and connects to the Central Vermont Regional Bike Path, a 14.5-mile path being built that will connect Montpelier to Barre Town. The Path currently goes by the Rock of Ages Craftsman's Center and connects to the Barre Town Elementary School parking lot. This provides children a safe transportation corridor from Graniteville to the Barre Town School and also provides recreational opportunities to more than 900 students. By connecting to the Central Vermont Regional Path, the trail network on the Barre Town Forest is also connected to the Cross-Vermont Trail, a 30-mile multi-use, four-season path that is proposed to be expanded to 90 miles across the width of Vermont.

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The local non-profit snowmobiling club, the Barre Town Thunder Chickens, have used and maintained three snowmobile trails through the Property since 1971. These trails are part of the statewide Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trail network and are essential linkages between snowmobile trail networks in Washington, Orange, Groton, and Williamstown.

Central Vermont Regional Plan

The Central Vermont Regional Plan (2008) also recognizes the importance of conserving scenic areas, ecological systems, wildlife habitats, recreational opportunities, and Source Water Protection Areas.

Commented [CE27]: Robert - his section - he would call a forest ecosystem management plan would replace the former Timber Management Plan title.

Commented [CE28]: Check if updated.

Vermont State Wildlife Action Plan Priorities

Conservation of the majority of this Property will address multiple threats to Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as outlined in the Vermont Wildlife Action Plan (2005).

Commented [CE29]: Dean - anything to add for deer, for example? Robert - technically, apple trees are an invasive species. Dean - oak trees. Lori - some areas in current Timber Management that says should prune apple trees. When last logging done, a lot of apple trees taken out. Part of discussion whether should consider. At this point, apple trees are a naturalized invasive species. So would not consider problem to plant more of them. Dean - fruit bearing trees? Patty - maintain an orchard, like referenced in easement? Maybe a spot for education?

Commented [CE30]: Larry - is that action plan current or is there a new one? Robert - talk to Andrea Shortsleeves and she could share with us. Also Committee should look at website - Vermont Conservation Design that shows designs for forests. Robert will consult with this too.

- *Habitat Loss:* The 355 acres of this Property protected by the easement will never be converted for development, and will remain as habitat for forest-dwelling species in perpetuity. As a stepping stone between Groton State Forest and forestland in Williamstown, Brookfield and the Northfield Range, it serves as a wildlife linkage and additional habitat to species that travel widely through Washington and Caledonia County.
- *Impacts of Roads:* By conserving and consolidating ownership of 5 separately owned properties, further fragmentation and development of these parcels are prevented. Excluding temporary logging roads, no additional permanent roads will be created on the property.
- *Pollutants and Sedimentation:* The creation of a sustainable forestry plan for the Property, which will include appropriate buffers around streams and wetlands and will mandate best management practices, will protect water quality and decrease sedimentation in streams. The restrictions put in place by these Easements will restrict or control recreational off-road vehicle use on the property, which could cause erosion and sedimentation at stream crossings.

Conservation of the Property supports the following Conservation Strategies outlined in the Vermont Wildlife Action Plan:

Strategies for conserving Vermont's Birds of Greatest Conservation Need

- Slow the rate of fragmentation and development and maintain blocks of contiguous forest, grasslands, and early and late-successional habitats. (Chapter 4, page 14)
- (Encouraging) forestry practices that can enhance habitat suitability such as maintaining or increasing aspen stands or the retention of coarse woody debris and snags. (Chapter 4, page 14)
- Identify, prioritize and maintain existing contiguous forest blocks and associated linkages that allow for upward and northward movement in response to climate change (Chapter 4, page 14)

Strategies for conserving Vermont's Mammals of Greatest Conservation Need

- Maintain large blocks of undeveloped forests linked together by habitat corridors in order to provide a network of interconnected habitats throughout northeastern New England (Chapter 4, page 28)
- Maintain riparian buffers along streams (Chapter 4, page 28)
- Maintain and restore habitat connectivity and minimize fragmentation of forest blocks. (Chapter 4, page 28)

Strategies for conserving Vermont's Reptiles and Amphibians of Greatest Conservation Need

- Maintain habitat through appropriate management, direct habitat disturbance and site roadways away from sensitive sites such as breeding pools (Chapter 4, page 33)
- Work cooperatively with landowners, habitat management agencies, towns and communities to protect habitat and maintain connectivity. (Chapter 4, page 33)

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