

Town of Bradford, Vermont

TOWN FOREST RECREATION PLAN



Vermont Town Forest
Recreation Planning

Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
Acknowledgements	4
Project Team	4
About the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Community Assistance Program.....	5
Project Purpose and Scope	5
Project Process.....	6
How to Use This Plan	6
Community Benefits of Recreation in Town Forests	7
Conservation and Habitat Protection.....	7
Close to Home Recreational Opportunities	8
Economic Development	8
Health Benefits	9
Chapter 2: Existing Conditions	10
Community Profile	10
Summary	10
Town Forest Profile	12
Forest Overview.....	12
Land Ownership and Conservation Background	12
Chapter 3: Public Engagement Summary and Needs Assessment	17
Public Engagement	17
Kickoff Summit.....	17
Steering Committee Process.....	17
Visioning Workshop	18
Community Survey.....	18
Strategies Workshop.....	19
Plan Presentation Workshop.....	19
Implementation Summit	19
Needs Assessment.....	19
Chapter 3: Town Forest Vision Framework	21
Visioning.....	21



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Management Balance.....	23
Key Attributes	25
Chapter 5: Action Plan	26
Introduction	26
Action Plan Table	26
Detailed Project Pages	31
Parking Lot and Trailhead Development.....	32
Enhancements to Existing Parking Lots.....	33
Benches and Pause Places.....	34
Devil's Den	35
Education and Recreation Partnerships.....	36
Newbury Town Forest	37
Economic Impact Study.....	38
Volunteer Recruitment.....	39
Action Plan Graphic.....	40
Chapter 6: Implementation	42
Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit	42
Existing Conditions Pod	43
Public Engagement Pod.....	44
Natural Resources Pod	45
Plan Development Pod	47
Implementation Pod	48
Town Forest Story Pod	49
Grants and Funding Sources.....	50
Federal and State Grants and Programs.....	50
State Grants and Programs	52
State Organizations	54
National Organizations.....	55
How Bradford Intends on Using this Plan	56



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

- ❖ Nancy Jones, Chairperson
- ❖ Angela Wendell
- ❖ Randy Moore
- ❖ Rick Evans
- ❖ Emily Willems
- ❖ Rowe Williams
- ❖ Sean Ogle
- ❖ Jason Berard
- ❖ David Paganelli
- ❖ Erik Volk
- ❖ Tom Gray
- ❖ Monique Priestley
- ❖ Sandy Price
- ❖ Barbara Kulzyck
- ❖ Bob Clafin
- ❖ Ed Wendell

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 FRP'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 Bradford 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



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Project Process

Over the past year, Bradford 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.

For each strategy, the action plans identify:

- Project description
- Action responsibility
- Timing (immediate, short, medium, long-term)
- Partners involved
- Action or planning dependencies
- Available toolkit & support resources
- Funding & grant opportunities
- Magnitude of costs (\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$-\$)

Some of these 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.



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

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/>

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.



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

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.

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



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

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.

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.



Chapter 2: Existing Conditions

Community Profile

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

Summary

Bradford is a medium-sized town with a relatively young population for rural Vermont. The county, and Bradford in specific, do have significant tourism influences. However, Bradford households have a median income below the statewide average and 16% of the population is below the poverty line, compared to 11.6% statewide. The town has many parks and open space parcels and a large trail network, primarily within Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest.





Population: 2,771



Median Age: 41.1



of School Age Children: 415



50 % Male 50 % Female



Household Median Income: \$48,598



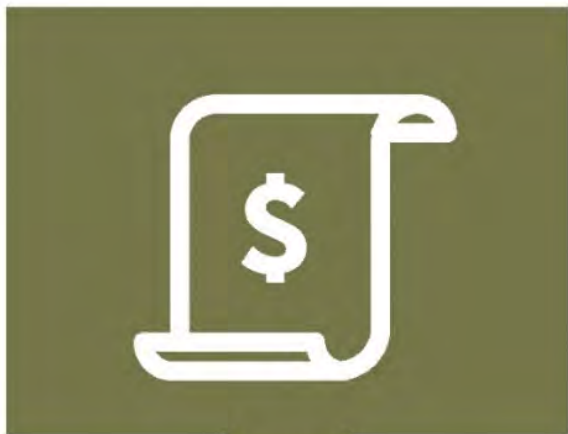
Residents Below Poverty Level: 16 %



8 % Residential Units in Seasonal/Recreational Use



23 % County Employment in Travel & Tourism



Grand List Assessed Value: \$18,217,500



Number of Parks and Open Spaces: 7



Miles of Trails: 11.5+



of Playgrounds: 2



Town Forest Profile

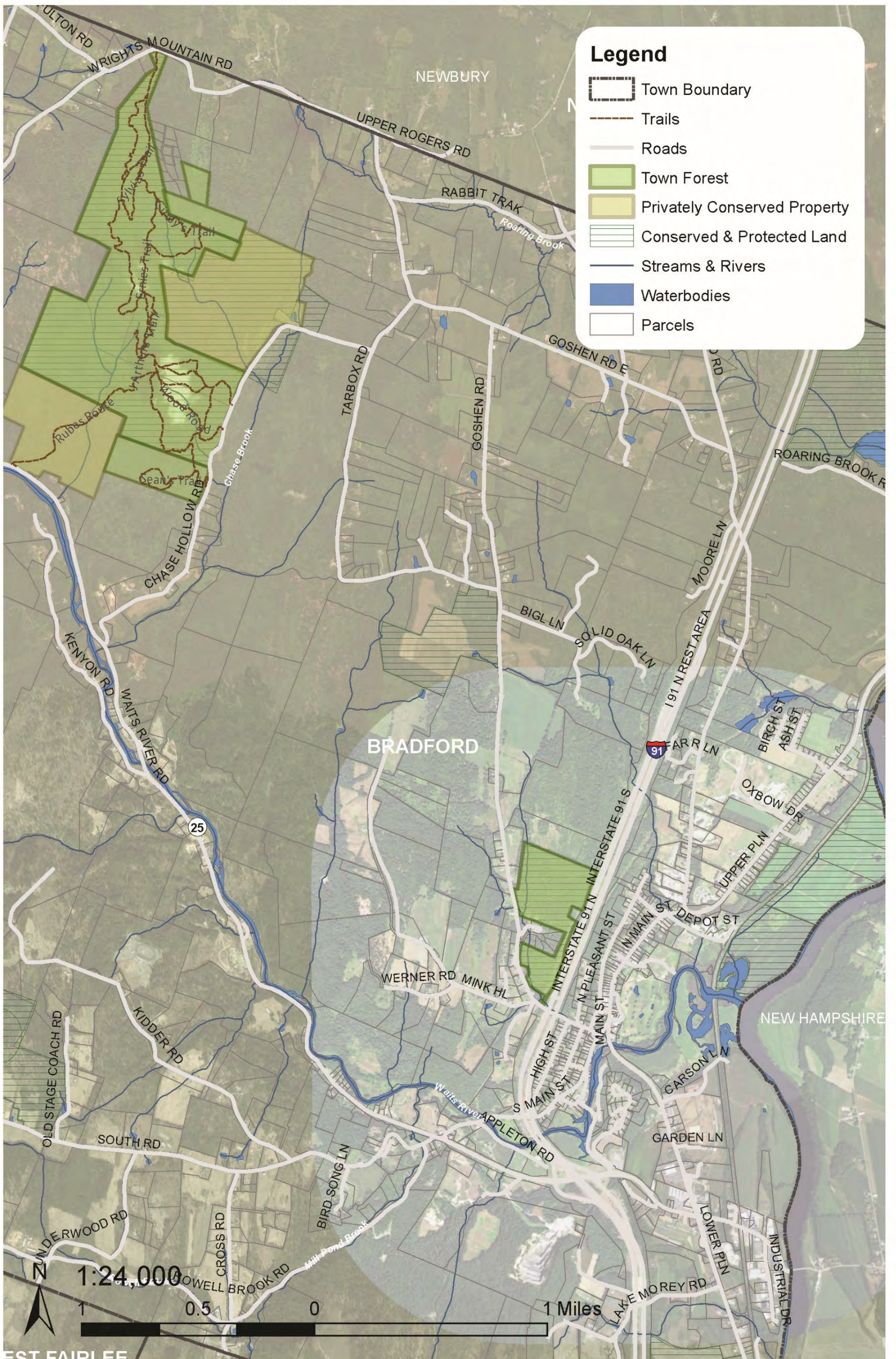
Forest Overview

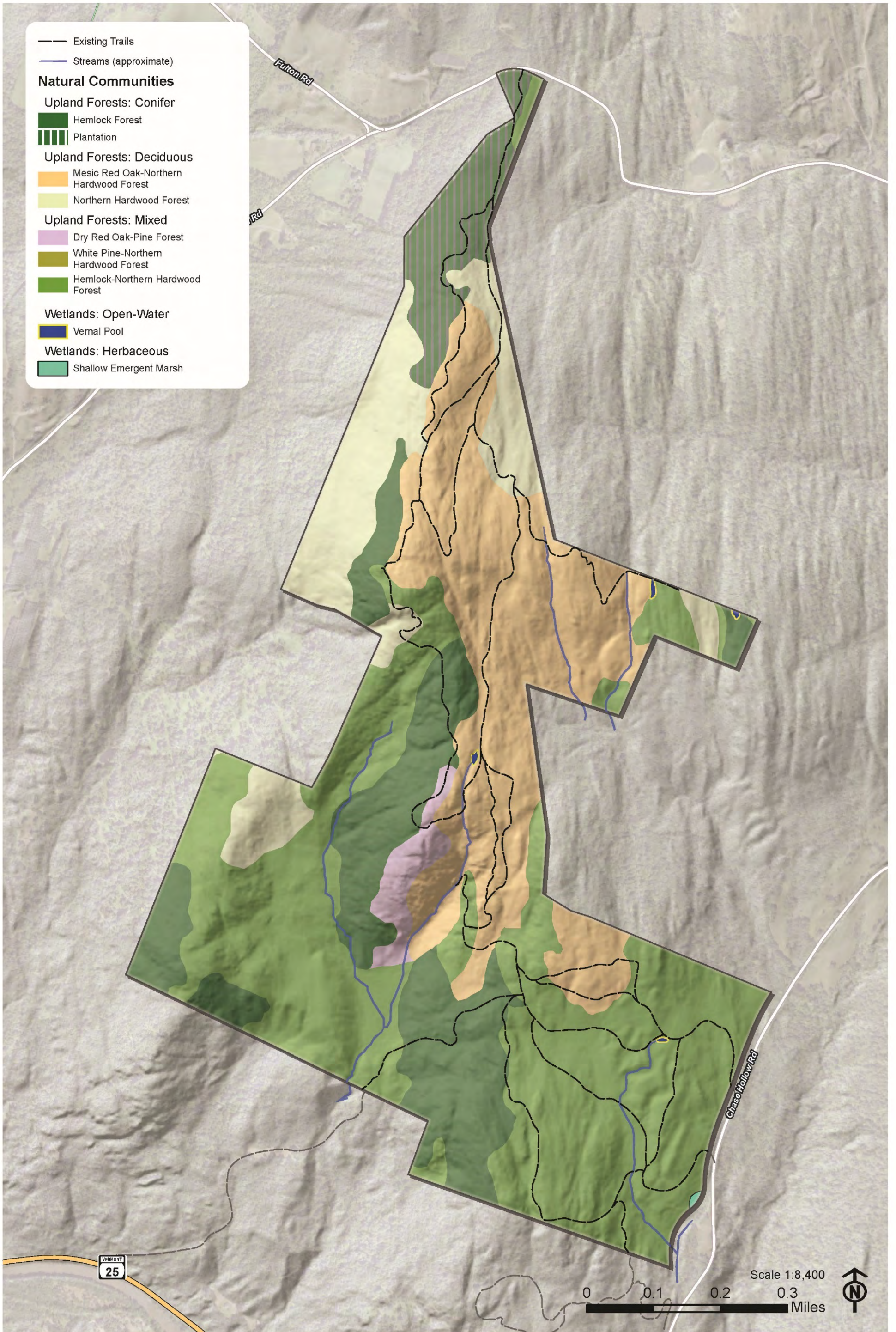
Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest is a 507-acre forest in the northwestern corner of Bradford. The forest has 11.5 miles of trail open to hikers, bikers, horses, skiers, and snowshoers. The trails can be accessed from three trailheads, although only one trailhead parking area is plowed during the winter. The forest trails lead to the top of Wright's Mountain, a scenic vista with a cabin, and Devil's Den, an interesting geologic feature of small caves within a ravine. The forest is frequently used by local residents, schools, and the national guard. School science classes visit to study the vernal pools, geology, hardwood forest, and other ecological features of the forest. The forest also plays host to community events such as races, campfires, outdoor concerts, and community service days. In 2015, the forest received a VT Public Places Merit Award from the VT UCF Program, VT Planner's Association, and the VT Association of Landscape Architects. In 2018, the Wright's Mountain Trails were designated as National Recreation Trails by the Department of the Interior.

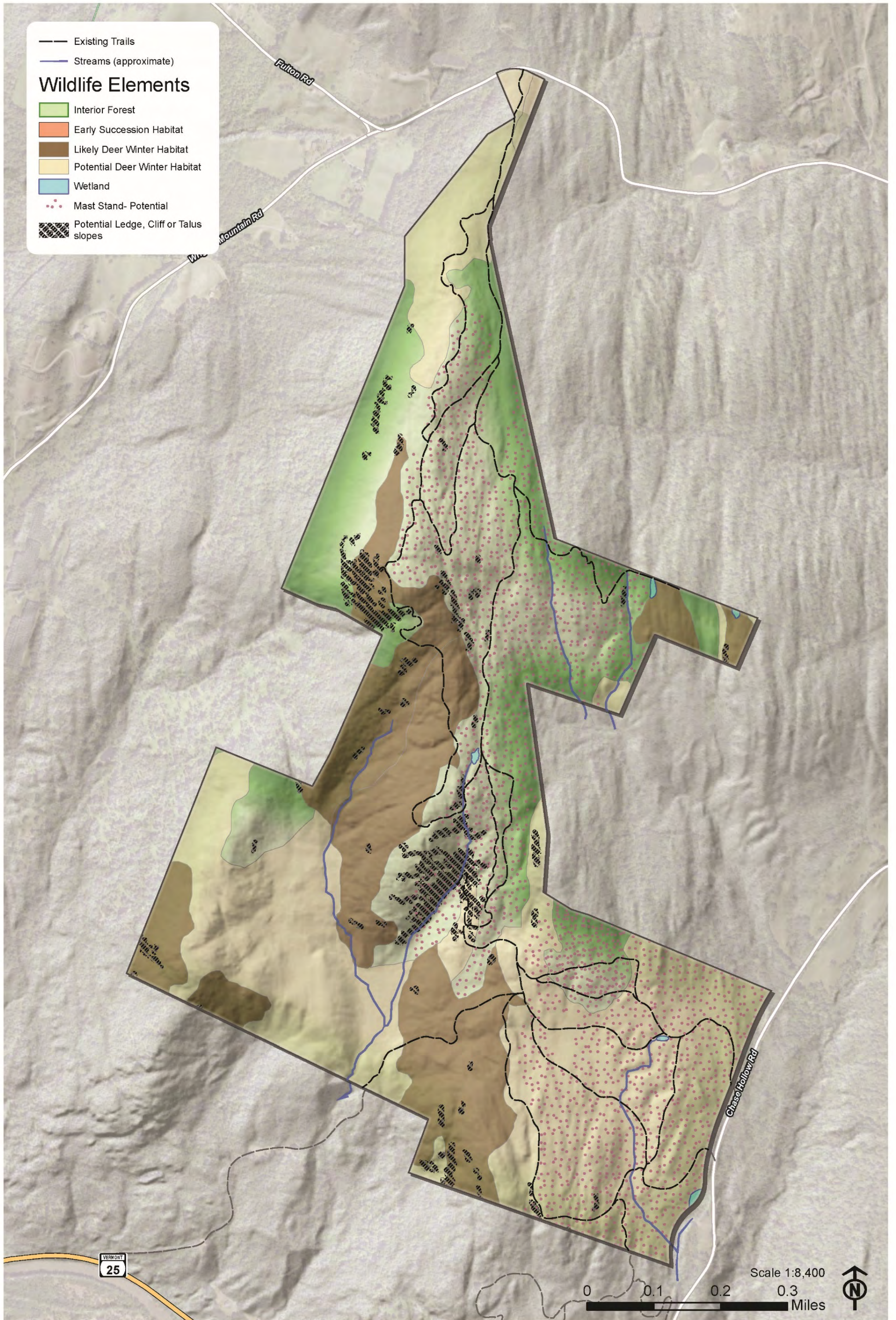
Land Ownership and Conservation Background

The forest is made up of multiple parcels that gradually came under town ownership. The original 218-acre forest parcel had previously been owned by Ernie and Sylvia Appleton who farmed and logged the land and opened it to townspeople to explore. In 1994, The Bradford Conservation Commission purchased that parcel through grants, private contributions, fundraising, and a voter allocation. In 2004, under the leadership of the Conservation Commission, the Town purchased the 60-acre parcel around Devil's Den and brought it under the same easement as the Wright's Mountain land. Over the years, the Conservation Commission and Town have acquired additional parcels and now the entire parcel is under a conservation easement held by the Upper Valley Land Trust. The easement establishes that the forest will be conserved as wildlife habitat and forest land that is open to the public for recreation, education, and enjoyment.









Chapter 3: Public Engagement Summary and Needs Assessment

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 Bradford, five people were in attendance.

Steering Committee Process

The steering committee, made up of members of the Bradford Conservation Commission and other 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 Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest was held at the Colatina Exit Restaurant on January 17, 2018. The meeting was a drop-in anytime, open house format with questions about an overall vision for the town forest; 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. 16 people signed in and an estimated 25-30 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 17, 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. Both online and hard copy surveys were made available. 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 74 responses—25 online and 49 hard copy.

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



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Strategies Workshop

A strategies workshop for Bradford was held at Colatina Exit Restaurant on June 26th, 2018. The meeting was a combination presentation and open house. First, the attendees learned about the project process, the toolkit, vision framework, and 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 10-12 people were in attendance.



Please see Appendix 2 for the Strategies Workshop Results.

Plan Presentation Workshop

The steering committee presented the plan to the selectboard and members of the public on October 25, 2018. In the presentation, the steering committee explained the project purpose and process and shared the vision framework and top priority strategies they developed. Representatives from Urban and Community Forestry and/or the Department of Forests Parks and Recreation were present to show support for the plan.

Implementation Summit

Representatives from our town attended the Town Forest Implementation Summit held on November 9, 2018 at the VYCC West Monitor Barn in Richmond, VT. The summit included representatives from all 10 pilot communities and provided opportunities for networking and information sharing. Attendees learned about commonalities and major takeaways across all ten town forests, the action plans developed by each of the towns, grant opportunities, and interpretive signage. The attendees heard from a panel about management and public decision making, received a sneak preview of the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit, and took a walking tour of Richmond's town forest and the VYCC trail infrastructure.

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



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

identified via site visits and natural resources assessments. The following issues and needs were identified:

1. No parking along Highway 25 and challenging winter/school bus access in existing lots
2. Limited visibility and awareness of forest
3. Limited funding source especially for trail maintenance
4. Local mountain bikers ride elsewhere
5. Lack comprehensive plan to balance recreation, ecological concerns, and timber management
6. Connectivity to Newbury Town Forest parcels
7. Interpretive signage lacking throughout the forest, particularly around Devil's Den



Chapter 3: Town Forest Vision Framework

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.

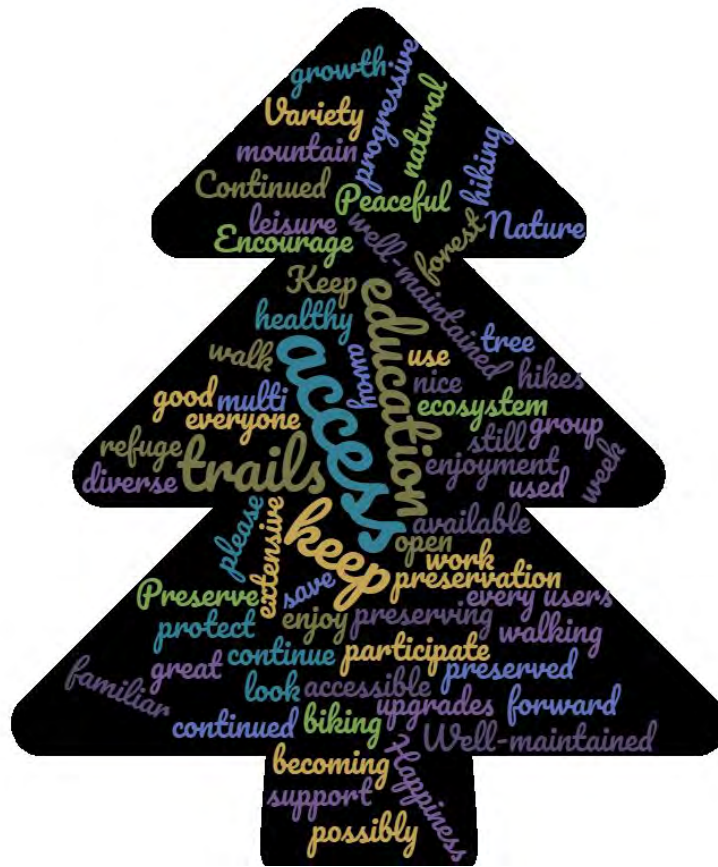
The management balance discussion and list of key attributes work together to communicate the community’s overarching aspirations for the forest. Both aspects of the vision framework should align, without repeating each other. The management balance describes the community’s management priorities for 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



The community's words to describe their desired future experience are about maintaining the existing experience. Popular words were "keep," "continued," and "preserved" or other forms of the word. Community members also mentioned "access," "education," and "trails" as desired future components of the forest.

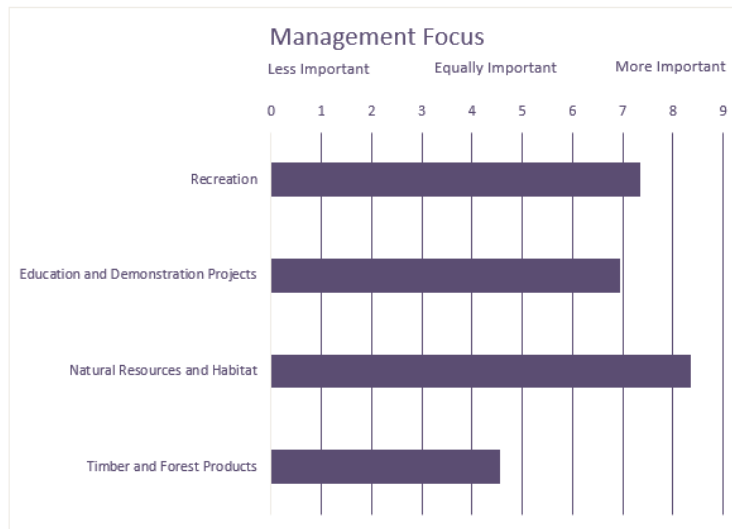
Management Balance

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 Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest, the project probed the steering committee throughout the Visioning Process (kick-off 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 Recreation, Education, Timber & Forest Products, or Natural Resources & Habitat?" Their responses are below:



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning



Through these interactions, the Bradford community expressed that “each of the four use areas are important in the management of the town forest, but a far greater emphasis should be placed on Recreation; Education & Demonstration Projects; and Natural Resources & Habitat than on Timber & Forest Products.”

The broader community, younger on average than the meeting attendees and survey respondents, would likely prioritize recreation more heavily.

The forest is a “working forest” where sustainable and infrequent timber harvesting occurs, under a management plan from the county forester. The current forest management program improves the wildlife habitat.



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. Multi-generational
2. Showcasing unique features such as Devil's Den
3. Protection of wildlife habitat
4. Protection of vernal pools and other water resources
5. Peaceful and quiet
6. Year-round recreation (hiking, biking, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, hunting, horseback riding, cross-country skiing)
7. Beautiful vistas
8. Clear and frequent signage and well-marked trails
9. Educational and recreational forest for school children
10. Easily accessible for both the community and visitors
11. Maintain healthy balance between stewardship and human uses
12. Community engaged in the future and maintenance of the forest
13. Generating economic activity in the town
14. Events that bring the community together
15. Sustainable, well-maintained trail system
16. Many non-motorized recreation opportunities
17. Low key and low intensity uses



Chapter 5: Action Plan

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. From a larger initial list of strategies, the steering committee has selected and edited the strategies to craft an action plan well-suited to the community's interest, needs, and capacity.

The Action Plan includes an Action Plan Table, detailed "project pages" for the highest priority strategies, and an Action Plan map to graphically display the highest priority strategies.

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 (i.e., 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 (i.e., 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 (i.e., 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 (i.e., 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
1. Parking & Access								
Parking lot and trailhead development	Build a parking lot on Highway 25 with a trailhead and work with the landowner for purchase.	Town/ Conservation Commission	Long-Term	Private landowners	Parking lot and trail design	\$\$\$\$	LWCF, RTP, RTC, RFG, TCPN	-Trailhead Kiosk Volunteer Designs -Parking Considerations Toolkit -Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
Winter access	Have the town road crew plow the Chase Hollow Road and trailhead in the winter to ease pressure on Wright's Mountain Road and provide a more diverse experience.	Town	Short-Term	Conservation Commission	--	\$	--	-Parking Considerations Toolkit
School bus access	Modify existing parking lots or construct new parking lot to accommodate school buses.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Town	Parking lot design	\$	LWCF, RTP, TAP	-Parking Considerations Toolkit
New trailheads	Place new trailhead signs at Devil's Den and Tillotson's Trek to alleviate confusion.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	--	Kiosk design	\$	RTP, RTC, VCF, AIG	-Trail Markers and Wayfinding Toolkit -Trailhead Kiosk Volunteer Designs
Vehicle wayfinding signage	Add and improve vehicle wayfinding signage from town and major roadways to the forest. Place signage on Route 25 and near the intersection of Corner Fairground Road and Route 5.	Town/ Conservation Commission	Short-Term	UVLT	Signage Design	\$	BPP, Vtrans Signage Program	-Trail Markers and Wayfinding Toolkit -Vtrans Signage Program
2. Trails								
Existing trail conditions assessment and review	Study existing trails, especially those following former logging roads, and evaluate for potential ecological harm and mitigate the site through necessary means. Decommission or reroute trails as needed.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	UVTA, UVMB, other trail builders	Trail reroute and redesign	\$	RTP, RTC, VHCP, ERG	-Trail assessment forms -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit -Sustainable Trail Standards
New mountain bike trails	If forest is expanded, build "bike-optimized" multi-use natural surface trails to expand recreational offerings and encourage new visitation to town and forest. Otherwise, consider rebuild or replacement of existing multi-use trails.	Conservation Commission	Long-term	UVTA, UVMB, other trail builders	Trail design	\$	RTP, RD, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, PBCG, RWJF, TCPN	-Sustainable Trail Standards
New ADA accessible path	If forest is expanded, build a graded, ADA accessible path for all ages and abilities to enjoy the forest.. 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.	Conservation Commission	Long-term	UVTA, other trail builders	Trail design	\$\$\$	RTP, RD, TAP, BPP, VCDP, RFG, VCF, LF, PBCG, RWJF, TCPN	-Sustainable Trail Standards
New educational boardwalk/wetland overlook	Build a short boardwalk or wetland overlook to provide educational opportunities about wetlands at the wetland on town land. Limit length of boardwalk and encroachment into wetland to minimum necessary for educational/interpretive needs.	Conservation Commission	Medium-term	Four Winds, program and educational partners	Boardwalk/viewing pier design	\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	-Sustainable Trail Standards -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit

3. Other Amenities and Facilities								
Pause Places	Develop a series of "Pause Places" or "mini-destinations" 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. Some could also include public art or a 'little free library.' Focus efforts on Wright's MT side which has fewer currently.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	History 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. Devil's Den is an ideal location for this.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Program and educational partners	History and natural resource research, pause place design	\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	- Pause Places Toolkit -Bench Volunteer Designs '-Interpretation Guidance Toolkit
Cabin Improvement	Explore opportunities to improve the cabin to better support day use, educational use, and potentially overnight use. Explore potential relationship with Vermont Huts Association.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Programming and educational partners, Vermont Huts Association	Potentially architectural, depending on level of improvement	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG	- Sustainable facility standards -Vermont Huts Association
4. Education & Programs								
Adult-centered activities/programs	Offer activities and programs in the forest geared towards adults such as bird watching or adult hikes and bike rides.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Program and educational partners	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJJ	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Kids camps	Continue to host kids camps in the forest by partnering with Bradford Parks and Recreation, churches and others operating camps in the area.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Bradford Parks and Recreation Department, Four Winds, program and educational partners	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJJ	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Lessons, skills camps, and clinics	Offer lessons, skills camps, and clinics for trail running.	Bradford Parks and Recreation Department	Short-Term	Conservation Commission	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJJ	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Ecology tours	Offer ecology tours (birdwatching, plant identification, etc.) for children and adults. Continue to work with VT Center for Eco-Studies, VINS, VT Fish and Wildlife, and Audubon. Explore opportunities to work with Four Winds as well.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Program and educational partners	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJJ	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Timber management education	Create awareness and education programs around the timber management of the forest.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	County Forester, UVLT	--	\$	CCG, ERG	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Interpretive signage	Develop interpretive signage that support educational programs and self-guided learning. Coordinate with development of the pause places and limit to avoid cluttering the forest.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Program and educational partners	History 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 and vernal pools. Should also be utilized in education experiences.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Program and educational partners	--	\$	VCF, VHCB, LF, BJJ	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit

Story Walk	A StoryWalk 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.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Library, Program and educational partners	--	\$\$	VCF	- Story Walk Toolkit
5. Events								
Regularly scheduled events	The Conservation Commission, in collaboration with Parks and Recreation, should host regularly scheduled events in the forest and post the events on the town calendar or other public calendar sites.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing	Parks and Recreation Department, program and educational partners, Town	--	\$	VCF, LF, BJF	-Programming Partnerships Toolkit
6. Maps, Outreach, & Promotion								
Online presence	Improve the online presence of the forest with a forest specific website. Work with Chamber of Commerce to coordinate activities and continue working with Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) to promote the forest.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	UVTA, UVLT, Town, Cohase Chamber of Commerce	Website design	\$\$-\$	RTP, VCF	-Mapping and Promotion Toolkit
Publicize events	Post forest events on town calendar and public calendar sites such as the Cohase Chamber of Commerce.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	UVTA, UVLT, Town, Cohase Chamber of Commerce	Website design	\$	RTP, VCF	-Mapping and Promotion Toolkit
Improve and better utilize maps of the forest	Make the forest 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 village. Add designated camping areas, outhouses, and snowmobile trails to future maps.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	UVTA, UVLT, UVMB, Cohase Chamber of Commerce	Cartography, Graphic Design	\$\$-\$	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.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Town, Cohase Chamber of Commerce, local businesses	--	\$	VCF	-Trail Friendly Business 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.	Conservation Commission	Medium-Term	Local hunters, residents	Meeting facilitation	\$	NPCB	-Volunteer Development and Recruitment Toolkit
7. Administrative Actions								
Connection to Newbury Town Forest	Explore recommissioning of Stagecoach Road as a trail connection with Newbury Town Forest.	Conservation Commission	Long-Term	Town, Town of Newbury, Newbury Conservation Commission, landowners	ROW research, trail plan/design	\$\$	BCP, BPP, STBG, TAP, MPG, RTP, RTC	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit
Economic Impact Study	Conduct economic impact study to determine the economic benefit the forest provides the town to gather resident support for the forest.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Town, Cohase Chamber of Commerce	Trail counting, economic impact assessment	\$\$	MPG, BCP	-Trail Friendly Business Toolkit
Expand Town Forest	Explore opportunities to expand the Town Forest with adjacent landowners, particularly at the top of Wright's Mountain.	Conservation Commission	Long-Term	Town, UVLT, VLT	Due diligence and land planning	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	LWCF, RD, VHCP	-Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit

Bradford Trails Collaborative	Develop a consistent volunteer force for trail maintenance and programs with members from Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association, UVTA, UVLT, and other trail groups.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	UVTA, UVMBA, trail users	Meeting facilitation	\$	NPCB	-Volunteer Development and Recruitment Toolkit
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.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	UVTA, UVMBA, trail users	Review, adjustment and adoption of model process	\$	RTP, RTC, VHCP, ERG	-Model Proposal Process -Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit
Management zones	Make public aware of existing management zones and continue to include in future management plans.	Conservation Commission	Long-Term	--	Management Plan Update	\$	--	-Management Zones Toolkit
Partner with Bradford Parks and Recreation	Partner with Bradford Parks and Recreation to utilize the Town Forest for Town recreation programs and to benefit from staff expertise.	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Bradford Parks and Recreation Department	--	\$	--	Programming Partnerships Toolkit
Partner with Little Rivers Health Care	Partner with Little Rivers Health Care to promote healthy lifestyle through recreation in the Town Forest	Conservation Commission	Short-Term	Little Rivers Health Care	--	\$	--	Programming Partnerships Toolkit

Detailed Project Pages

The following pages provide more detail on the strategies that are mostly likely to achieve the community's vision for the forest and that have been identified by community members and the steering committee as top priorities. These project pages include the key attributes and needs assessment items that the strategy responds to, a more detailed description of the rationale and process to carry out the strategy, and the other items included in the action table.

Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Parking Lot and Trailhead Development

Key Attribute #:

10

Need #:

1

2

Estimated Cost:

\$\$\$\$

Timing:

Long-Term

Currently, Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest is accessible via Wright's Mountain Road and Chase Hollow Road. During the winter, Chase Hollow Road is not plowed to the trailhead and Wright's Mountain Road is also not an easy drive in the winter. However, conserved land extends down to State Highway 25, a well trafficked corridor. A trailhead should be built on Highway 25 to give the forest greater visibility to both residents and passthroughs and improve the winter access to the forest.

In order to do so, the town will need to purchase a small parcel along Highway 25 to create the parking area. The parking area, once constructed, would be able to accommodate approximately 10 cars. A trailhead kiosk should be constructed with maps and other forest information.

To connect the new parking area and trailhead to the existing trail system, a trail would be constructed that connects to Rube's Route. An easement will need to be secured to pass through the short section of private property between the parcel identified for a potential parking lot and Rube's Route.

The new parking area creates convenient access for local residents and allows those passing through town to visit the forest without detouring off the main road. Therefore, the town should create additional signage that encourages tourists to stop at the forest and describes its location.

Responsibility:

Conservation
Commission/Town

Partners Involved:

Private Landowners

Planning Required:

Parking lot and trail
design

Funding Opportunities:

LWCF, RTP, RTC, RFG,
TCPN

Toolkit Resources

Parking Considerations
Toolkit

Vtrans Signage Program

Land Conservation and
Recreational Access
Toolkit

Trailhead Kiosk
Volunteer Designs



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Enhancements to Existing Parking Lots

Key Attribute #:

6 10

Need #:

1

Estimated Cost:

\$\$\$

Timing:

Short-Term

In the short-term, the Conservation Commission should focus on enhancing the existing parking lots and the access to them.

The Chase Hollow Road trailheads (Tillotsen's Trek and Devil's Den) are only accessible during the warmer months. In the winter, the town's plowing stops roughly 100' short of the Tillotsen's Trek trailheads, preventing winter access. The town should plow Chase Hollow Road just a bit further to allow winter access to the trailheads and the trails in that section of the forest.

The Wright's Mountain Road trailhead should also be expanded to accommodate forest visitors and school groups. Bradford Elementary School classes frequently visit the forest. However, there is no space for the school buses to park or turn around. The Wright's Mountain parking area should be expanded to accommodate a school bus, making the forest more accessible to local school groups. With that expansion, additional spaces should be added for cars as well.

At present, there is a drainage swale and then a steep grade to drive into the Wright's MT parking area. That area should be leveled out to create an at-grade entrance with improved sight lines.

Responsibility:

Town

Partners Involved:

Conservation Commission

Planning Required:

--

Funding Opportunities:

--



Toolkit Resources

Parking Considerations Toolkit



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Benches and Pause Places

Key Attribute #:

7 9

Need #:

7

Estimated Cost:

\$\$

Timing:

Medium-Term

The Conservation Commission should develop more pause places in the forest for visitors learn about the history and natural features of the forest and rest, relax, and enjoy the forest scenery.

At present, the forest has many benches scattered throughout the forest. Some are at beautiful vistas along trails, but others are scattered throughout the woods and hidden off trail. The Conservation Commission should work to increase utilization of the benches, either by marking their locations, relocating them, or creating short access paths to them.

These benches should also be paired with interpretive signage. The signage should share the history of the forest, of Benoni Wright and the Appleton Farm and the creation of the Town Forest. Other signage should explain the ecology of the forest. Signage should be placed at the vernal pools and interesting geologic features (Devil's Den) about those sites. At existing benches and beautiful vistas, signs can cover forest-wide ecology, such as forest succession and wildlife habitat. The cabin area, as the forest's main destination, should be the interpretation center of the forest with signs about both the cabin and the forest.

The Conservation Commission should partner with their educational and programming partners such as Oxbow High School, Bradford Elementary School, and Four Winds Institute to interpret the forest and develop the signage.

Responsibility:

Conservation Commission

Partners Involved:

Program and educational partners

Planning Required:

History and natural resource research, pause place design

Funding Opportunities:

LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG



Toolkit Resources

Pause Places Toolkit

Interpretation Guidance Toolkit

Bench Volunteer Designs



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Devil's Den

Key Attribute #:

2 8 10

Need #:

7

Estimated Cost:

\$\$

Timing:

Short-Term

Devil's Den is an incredibly unique and interesting feature of the forest. People of all ages enjoy exploring the two to three level cave system created by fallen boulders. The Conservation Commission should do more to instruct, prepare, and direct visitors to Devil's Den.

A headlamp is necessary to fully explore the caves. Signs should be posted at the trailhead kiosk, on forest maps, and online telling those interested in visiting Devil's Den to bring headlamps.

Better signage is needed at Devil's Den itself. The Devil's Den Trail simply ends in a boulder field and someone could easily miss the caves. The signage should also indicate the routes through the caves for those interested in exploring them.

Devil's Den is fascinating, both geologically and historically. Signage should explain the geological events that created Devil's Den. Other signage should explain how it got its name, the attempted 40-day fast of Benoni Wright, and the other history of the site.

These improvements would greatly enhance the visitor experience at Devil's Den.

Responsibility:

Conservation Commission

Partners Involved:

Program and educational partners

Planning Required:

History and natural resource research, signage design

Funding Opportunities:

LWCF, RTC, RTP, RFG, AIG



Toolkit Resources

Interpretation Guidance Toolkit

Trail Markers and Wayfinding Toolkit



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Education and Recreation Partnerships

Key Attribute #:

1 9 16

Need #:

2

Estimated Cost:

\$

Timing:

Short-Term

Bradford schools have a strong tradition of using Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest for educational purposes. The Conservation Commission should continue working with Bradford Elementary School and Oxbow High School, to expand that programming to include more recreational opportunities, and explore additional opportunities for programming and partnerships.

Bradford school students, facilitated by the school bus turnaround, should further engage with the forest and help others learn about the forest by creating the interpretive signage. The Conservation Commission should also work to provide more recreational programming for the students by partnering with the Bradford Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks and Recreation department could bring the day camp there or offer hiking, nature walks, or snowshoeing programs in the forest.

Throughout the visioning process, it came up that the town should provide more adult programming, both recreational and educational. The activity programs mentioned above should also be held for adults and the Conservation Commission should lead ecology tours of the forest geared towards adults.

The Conservation Commission should also work with new and existing partners focused on outdoor education such as Four Winds Institute, the Upper Valley Land Trust, VINS, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, VT Fish and Wildlife, and Audubon.

Responsibility:

Conservation Commission

Partners Involved:

Bradford Elementary School, Oxbow High School, Bradford Parks and Recreation Department, Four Winds Institute, VINS, Vermont Center for Eco-Studies, Audubon, Fish and Wildlife

Planning Required:

--

Funding Opportunities:

VCF, VHCB, LF, BJB



Toolkit Resources

Interpretation Guidance Toolkit

Programming Partnerships Toolkit



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Newbury Town Forest

Key Attribute #:

10

16

Need #:

6

Estimated Cost:

\$\$

Timing:
Long-Term

The Town of Newbury is in the process of purchasing and established a town forest on Tucker Mountain. The Tucker Mountain Town Forest is an exciting acquisition not just for Newbury, but for the larger region as well.

In the past, Bradford Elementary School has held school outings and events there, and the new town forest is close to the Bradford-Newbury town line. Directly across from the Wright's Mountain trailhead, a dirt road, Stagecoach Road, leads from Wright's Mountain Road to Tucker Mountain. That road has been utilized by the public but is entirely on private property. The Bradford Conservation Commission, along with the Newbury Conservation Commission, should reach out to those private landowners about securing an easement for public use of that road. If easements were secured, the road would not need significant enhancements. Signage should be posted at the Wright's Mountain trailhead, within each town forest pointing towards the connection, and along the dirt road itself.

Public access would create a connection between the two town forests, allowing bikers and walkers to go between Tucker Mountain and Wright's Mountain and enjoy the trail systems, scenery, and nature of both town forests.

Responsibility:

Conservation Commission

Partners Involved:

Town, Town of Newbury, Newbury Conservation Commission, landowners

Planning Required:

ROW research, trail plan/design

Funding Opportunities:

BCP, BPP, STBG, TAP, MPG, RTP, RTC



Toolkit Resources

Land Conservation and Recreational Access Toolkit



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Economic Impact Study

Key Attribute #:

13

Need #:

3

Estimated Cost:

\$\$

Timing:

Short-Term

The Bradford Conservation Commission should conduct an economic impact study about the Wright's MT/Devil's Den Town Forest. The study will determine the economic benefit the forest provides to the community. Completing the study will make the forest more competitive for grants, broaden and strengthen community appreciation for the forest, and provide strategies to further enhance the forest's economic benefits.

Economic impact analyses explain the role local trail systems play in the regional economy by looking at how trails draw additional visitors and tourist revenues to the region. Even if forest visitors don't pay a fee to use the forest, they typically buy goods, gas, and food during their visit. This spending will be tracked in a forest economic impact analysis.

The study is not merely a fiscal study, but instead looks at revenues for the community and the benefits and revenues that local residents receive. The study will help people understand the forest's economic value, drawing people into the fold who may be less interested in the forest's natural and recreational values.

To start, the town should pursue the grants listed on the right for project funding. Tips for connecting trails to economic activity is included in the Trail Friendly Business Toolkit.

Responsibility:
Conservation
Commission

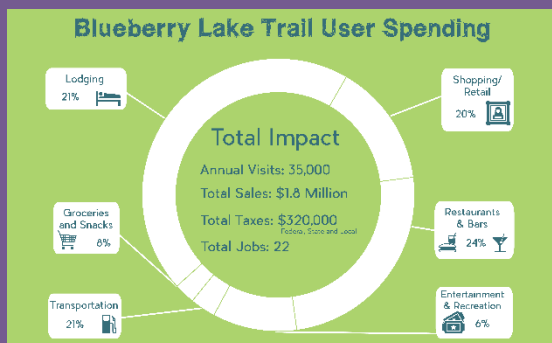
Partners Involved:
Town, Cohase
Chamber of
Commerce

Planning Required:
Trail counting,
economic impact
assessment

Funding
Opportunities:
MPG, BCP

Toolkit
Resources

Trail Friendly
Business Toolkit



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Volunteer Recruitment

Key Attribute #:

12 15

Need #:

3

Estimated Cost:

\$

Timing:

Short-Term

Bradford is incredibly fortunate to have a small group of extremely dedicated volunteers. However, the Conservation Commission should expand the volunteer base to engage the larger community with the forest and lighten the load on the existing volunteer corps.

In order to do so, the Commission should convene a Bradford Trails Collaborative. The Trails Collaborative will be responsible for trail maintenance and trails and forest user planning. The group should include members of all the different user groups of the forest (hikers, mountain bikers, snowshoers, etc.) and members of trail groups in the area (Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, etc.). This collaborative will ensure that all users have a voice in the management of the forest and feel a sense of ownership. This will inspire collaborative members to volunteer on the trail system. As members of trail groups in the area, the Collaborative members can call on these larger groups to help provide maintenance as well.

The Conservation Commission should also post calls for volunteers on the trailhead kiosks. A flyer should include photos of trail maintenance activities, statistics about the amount of required maintenance, and volunteering information and contacts. That way, as people begin or end their forest visit, they are thinking about the maintenance required to keep the trails pristine and hopefully considering volunteering themselves.

The Conservation Commission should continue to reach out to the Upper Valley Land Trust about holding corporate work days in the forest. In general, Upper Valley Land Trust has a strong network of volunteers and the Conservation Commission should look to them for volunteers and recruitment strategies.

Responsibility:

Conservation
Commission

Partners Involved:

UVLT, UVMBA,
UVTA, trail users

Planning Required:

Meeting facilitation

Funding

Opportunities:
NPCB

Toolkit Resources

Programming
Partnerships Toolkit

Volunteer
Development and
Recruitment Toolkit



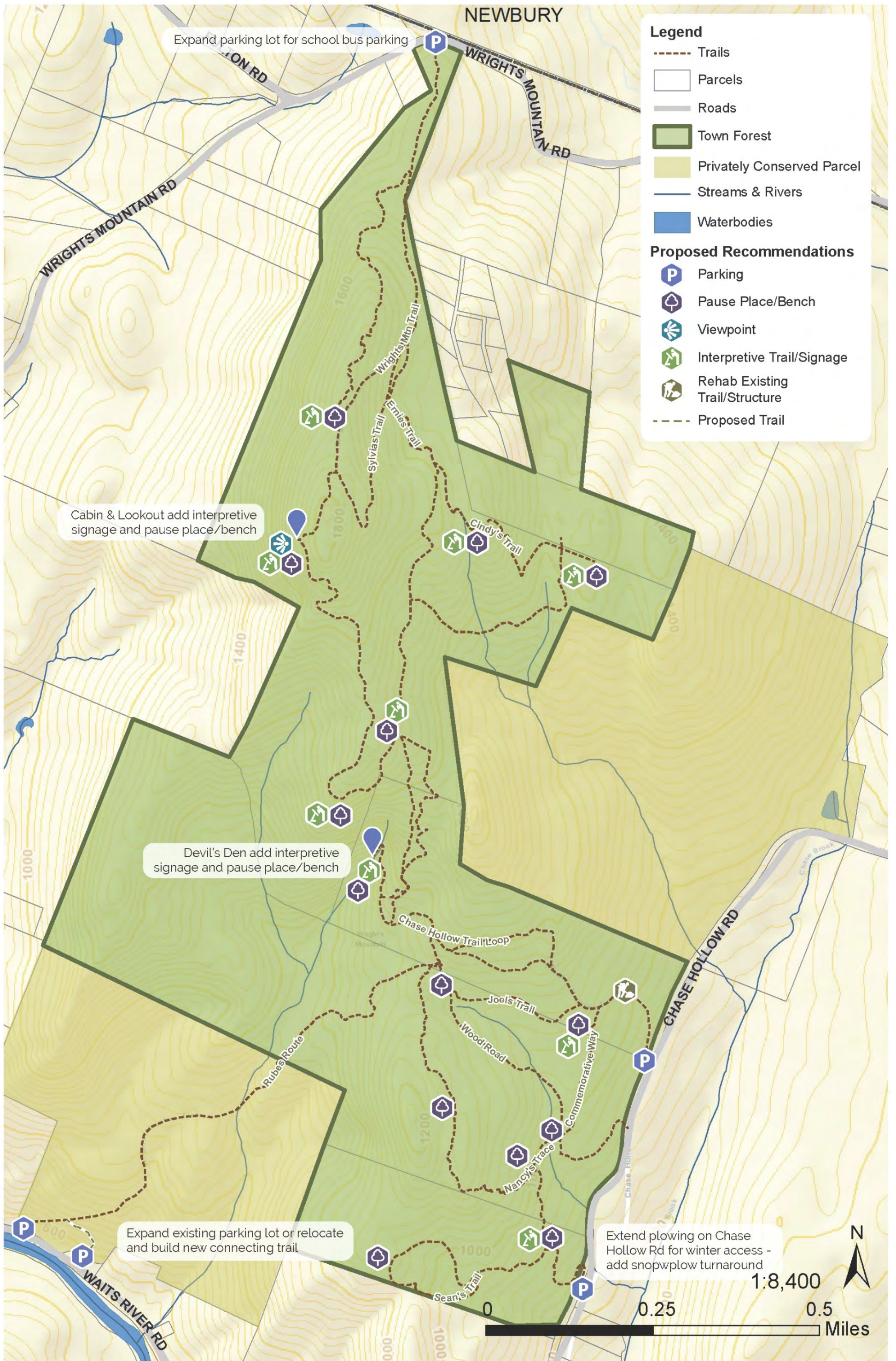
Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

Action Plan Graphic

The following diagram shows conceptual locations for the high priority strategies with a spatial component. These locations are based on the community's pinpointing of strategies at the workshop, the natural resources of the forest, the facilitated forest walks, and the project team's understanding of the right spacing and locations for these strategies. The locations on this map are generalized and, in most cases, further planning and design will be necessary before construction.





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 Bradford is one, and for other towns to do their own recreation plans after this project has ended.

Perhaps more importantly for Bradford, 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. Surveys 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

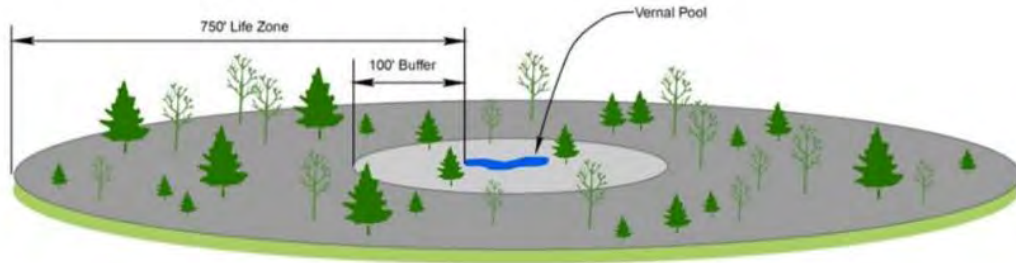


Figure 1. Vernal Pool management zones

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 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 in 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, Bradford and the town budget do not have to go after it alone. There are many grants and alternative funding sources that can help provide 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 (STPG) 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

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/>



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

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



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

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>

How Bradford Intends on Using this Plan

- Use it to guide our long-range plans/decisions/projects
- Use it to set priorities
- Use it to inform decision-makers, i.e. Selectboard, and help them understand community desires and decisions
- Use it as documentation when applying for grants
- Use it to seek grants specific to specific projects
- Use it to garner support from different community groups and individuals
- Use it to highlight things that have been done well in the past

