

4/15/24

## Andrews Community Forest

### Developing a Wildlife Stewardship Plan

1. Identify high-quality habitats that enable ACF's wildlife to thrive within the forest and its forest block
  - a) Consult with VT Fish & Wildlife biologist Andrea Shortsleeve for guidance in refining and implementing this plan
  - b) Review ecological assessments of the forest
  - c) Select natural communities of particular value to the ACF's ecological integrity and functions
2. Identify key attributes these natural communities provide to wildlife (food, water, denning sites, movement corridors, etc.)
  - a) Identify major challenges to the Forest's ability to continue meeting those needs and how the Committee can resolve those challenges
  - b) Draw upon wildlife stewardship practices of other town forests (Preston Pond, Raven Ridge, Hinesburg Town Forest, etc.)
3. Develop a wildlife stewardship plan that:
  - a) Focuses on maintaining and enhancing a large, connected landscape of intact, forested habitats, healthy aquatic and riparian systems, and physical features on which plant and animal natural communities depend
  - b) Is geared to Richmond's staff, volunteer and financial resources
  - c) Integrates with ACF's forestry, recreational and educational policies and activities
  - d) Leverages existing ecological assessments and updates them with ongoing expert and volunteer field observations
  - e) Provides opportunities for engaging the community in stewardship of the ACFC
4. Periodically review the Plan's effectiveness and revise as necessary.

## Plan Template

### Introduction

- Purposes of the plan
- Vision for the forest's future
- Concept of focusing on habitat quality, diversity and connectivity as central to maintaining the ACF's scope of ecological services (provision of clean water, clean air, climate resilience, recreational opportunities, educational resources, economic benefits, etc.)

### Key natural communities and associated wildlife

Describe the key individual and collective values of the natural communities in the ACF and its forest block, and challenges to their continued health and wildlife functionality (sources of food, shelter, refuge, nesting/denning, connectivity, etc.).

Natural communities<sup>1</sup>:

- Hemlock Northern Hardwoods Forest (313 of the 428 acres)
- Northern Hardwood Forest
- Hemlock Forest\*\*
- Dry Oak Forest\*\*
- Shallow Emergent Marsh
- Northern Hardwood Seepage Forest
- Seep
- Vernal Pools\*\*\*
- Red Pine Forest\*\*
- Dry Red Oak-White Pine Forest\*\*
- Alder Swamp
- Open Areas

### Management strategies

- Goals
  - Support high-quality, biologically diverse and resilient wildlife habitats and ecosystems
  - Allow the ACF to maintain its utility as a wildlife corridor and interior habitat block while fulfilling the other Purposes of the Conservation Easement
  - Control invasive species

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [Field Naturalist Natural Communities Map](#), Drafted by Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester, 2019. [NOTE: Upland community types are different from those in MP1. Those may be from Diamond, 2017.)

\*\*Rare and uncommon natural community recognized for special protection in the Conservation Easement, appearing on Arrowwood's and other maps under the collective term "Dry Oak Communities" (16 acres total)

\*\*\*Designated by the Conservation Easement as "Vernal Pool Ecological Protection Zones"

- Sustain a deer population that can contribute to the ACF's health and species diversity
- Engage the public in learning about the ACF and the values its wildlife and habitats provide to provide to people in Richmond and beyond

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