

## ACF Challenges and Questions

### Ecological and recreation imbalance

- Making ecological protections aspirational.  
*Question: Easement, Town Plan, zoning regs and MP-2018 provide a listing of desirable ecological protections based on scientific research: which if any human access requirements should supersede those protections? [specify]*
- Action vs legislation – tension about talking about it for a long time.  
*Questions:*  
*Are we ready to use the draft RFP as the basis for both an abbreviated version (by Town Admin) and an extended listing of materials/tasks for the writer [yes/no]?*  
*Will defining and answering these ‘challenges’ provide the writer with all the information they need to draft the Plan?*
- Mandating specific trail routes.  
*Question: Are there any trail ‘mandates’ to be included in the MP, if so which? [list]*  
*Should MP2 specify trail routes and destinations? [list]*
- Connectivity – connections with adjacent landowners (Wildlife connectivity and recreation connectivity).  
*Questions:*  
*(1) Wildlife: What provisions must be included in the revised MP to ensure adequate wildlife connectivity? [list management provisions to limit human interference, including trail routing with buffers and/or ZOI sizes; traffic limits, etc.]*  
*(2) Recreational (human): What must be included in the MP to ensure connectivity is compatible with landowner intentions on connected land (e.g. no-bikes on VYCC, posted on Kelly land, dawn/dusk rules, hunting, etc? [list]*

### Ecology

- Zones of influence and buffer zones.  
*Questions: For trail planning:*  
*(1) Should the MP specify buffers around sensitive zones or ZOIs around trails to protect ACF’s sensitive habitats and wildlife resources from human use of trails? (Can the MP use ‘one size fits all’ for buffers or ZOIs)?*  
*(2) Can any trails can be allowed within sensitive zones and why?*  
*(4) Can we use the principles of the NH Fish and Wildlife planning tool (adapted for use with Vermont’s mapping resources)?*  
*See (<https://www.wildlife.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt746/files/inline-documents/sonh/trails-for-people-wildlife.pdf>) for designing trail routes? [yes/no]*
- Mapping – how do we get useful without overwhelming ourselves and the public. Do we have the right layers to make a decision.  
*Question: Which 4 key maps (from our extensive collection <https://infoacf.wordpress.com/home/mapsacf/>) will show existing and proposed trails/roads on a map with (1) contours; (2) ecologically protected zones; (3)*

*ecologically sensitive zones; (4) slopes of terrain? [list and/or specify additional maps].*

- Monitoring for impacts, and Monitoring in the context of adaptive management.  
*Question: What provisions are required, in addition to that generated by the summer 2023 subcommittees agreeable? Which experts should be consulted?*

## **Process**

- How to honor public comment from the beginning to now (public comment burn out).  
*Question: What is required in addition to the existing 3 sources of documented public input (visioning 2017, trails 2023, MP2 2023) to provide sufficient input for the writer to use?*
- Cost and money.  
*Question: Should trail proposals include cost estimates for construction and stewardship? Should ACF have an annual Town budget allocation, (or continue to use the Conservation Fund as needed)? [yes/no]*
- Defining conservation.  
*Question: Can we use the definitions in the VT Conservation Strategy Initiative and VT statute H126 (Act 59) <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/H.126> and US Dept of Interior's America the Beautiful "30x30" proposal <https://www.doi.gov/priorities/america-the-beautifuland> [yes/no]*
- Selectboard approval.  
*Question: Can we expect that the SB will approve our revised MP after the two cycles of ACFC, RCC, RTC/public comment identified in the draft RFP? [yes/no]*
- How the MP might not reflect the current moment.  
*Question: Can we assume that revised MP after the two cycles of ACFC,RCC,RTC/public comment identified in the draft RFP will be adequately responsive to current science and public expectations? [yes/no]*
- Town plan and zoning for development  
*Question: Will the ACFC identify specific references to relevant sections of the Town Plan and Zoning Regulations for inclusion in the revised MP? [yes/no]*
- Criteria for creating a new trail or maintaining and existing farm and logging roads currently used as trails.  
*Questions:  
For example: should the MP list 'regulated' quadrants relative to powerlines, trail density in miles/acre or area (acres) of ZOIs, total distance of trails, include loops, trail distance from sensitive habitats, natural communities? Which 'compelling reasons' are acceptable outweighing ecological, construction or maintenance costs?*

- Criteria for creating a multiuse trail.  
*Question: What criteria should the MP specify for distinguishing between multi- and single-use trails?? [specify]*
- How to interpret the easement.  
*Question: Specify the main ecological values VLT seeks to protect within its designated 'protective zones.'?*
- How to incorporate other studies and documents about the ACF and other Vermont forests.  
*Question: Can the ACFC use the following resources to specify revisions to the MP?: Ecological Research on the Impacts of Trail Traffic on Wildlife. <https://infoacf.wordpress.com/literature-and-science/> and useful guidance in management plans for similar forests in nearby Towns - See <https://infoacf.wordpress.com/#OtherTowns> If not, which resources or consultants should be recruited to help?*
- Tension of starting over given the amount of work that has already went into the MP and other documents.  
*Question: Should the writer start with the 2018 MP, or the 2023 MP2, or both? [which option]*

## **Recreation**

- Mountain biking and the impact of mountain biking.  
*Question: See <https://infoacf.wordpress.com/literature-and-science/#Bikes> Can that be summarized into recommendations for the revised MP? [yes/no, and by whom]*
- Human experience – how we all think the forest should be experienced.  
*Question: Can the existing 3 sources of documented public input (visioning 2017, trails 2023, MP2 2023) provide sufficient input for the writer to use [yes/no]?*
- Sinuosity/Arrowwood plan.  
*Question: Should the proposed trails, specified as (1) accepted (2) rejected (3) or modified, be included in the Management Plan (? [list]*
- Much has changed with the new road system.  
*Question: Is this about VELCO easements or about roads providing recreational access, thus obviating the need for more trails in vicinity of those roads? [to be specified].*
- Convo around ACF is a proxy convo about a lack of a larger town vision regarding recreation.  
*Questions:  
Should the Town Plan along with the documented public comments (visioning 2017, trails 2023, MP2 2023) be used as the sole guides? [yes/no]  
Should ACFC suggest to the SB that Richmond needs a Recreation Plan to help all Town boards and committees guide their actions?*