

Andrews Community Forest

Western Gate Installation Timeline and Correspondence

Prepared by Wright C. Preston, December 3, 2020.

Fall 2020: Wright volunteers to repaint ACF boundary with red boundary line paint. Much of the boundary line has not been repainted in perhaps 20 years and it is therefore not easily identifiable.

10/27/20:

I email Ethan & Caitlin about walking the western boundary of ACF on Friday 10/30 because there is a small 300' section south of the old VAST Trail where the boundary line is hard to find.

From: Wright Preston <Wright.Preston@NSBVT.COM>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:58 AM
To: Richmond Town Forest <richmondtownforest@gmail.com>; Caitlin Littlefield <clittlef@gmail.com>; Tapper, Ethan <Ethan.Tapper@vermont.gov>
Subject: RE: ACF Western boundary w Kelly's at the sharp "V" just north of the power lines.

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Caitlin, Ethan: I was thinking about taking This Friday off. (Cool and possible rain.) Would you have time to walk to the western boundary of ACF on Friday? If its not pouring I'd stay and paint that section. A bucket of red boundary paint is \$25.00, plus shipping. I'd bill the town for the gallon, which is sitting in my barn.

Let me know. Thanks, Wright

10/29/20: Ethan contacts me by phone to discuss the logger's concern about ATV activity along the logging access road and at the log landing with possible logging equipment vandalism. The logger indicates that folks accessed the log landing with the use of a smaller ATV.

10/30/20: Ethan and I meet at about 11AM and walk much of the western boundary of the ACF. Ethan flags the old red blazed and much of it has old barbed fencing still visible in sections. We can't really resolve the small "V" boundary section south of the Old Vast Trail, so we skip painting that section. I notice and comment on fresh ATC tracks on old VAST Trail near boundary line.

11/5/20: Ethan Tapper emails the ACF committee about possible vandalism to the logger's logging equipment. Tyler comments on Ethan's note.



Tyler Merrill <tyler@almtgroup.com>

Ang Powers; Celia Littlefield; Celia Davis; Eben Kraft; Jesse Gray; Jim Nason; Rob Newmy; Robert Town Forest; Wright Preston; Tapper, Ethan

11/15/2020

Re: Potential Vandalism of Equipment at ACF

That's disappointing news Ethan. Is the worry that an anti-logging person might have put something in the fuel tank to break down the machine?

Tyler Merrill
tyler@almtgroup.com
www.almtgroup.com
802-233-0220

On Nov 5, 2020, at 8:12 AM, Tapper, Ethan <Ethan.Tapper@vermont.gov> wrote:

Hi all,
Just letting you know that Tim came back to the ACF after being away for 4-5 days and found his fuel tank to his forwarder open - obviously he's pretty freaked-out and concerned about someone putting something in the fuel tank of any of his machines, which could seriously damage them. We're filing a police report - fingers crossed that no real vandalism occurred. Please let me know if you hear anything about this!
Best,

Ethan Tapper
Chittenden County Forester
Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
111 West Street
Essex, VT 05452
(802)-585-9099
Ethan.Tapper@vermont.gov

VT Licensed Forester # 148.0122047

If you would like to be kept informed about forest and forestry-related events in Chittenden County, please let me know and I will add you to my email list.

11/16/20: Wright emails VYCC neighbor about ATV activity.



Wright Preston

Ethan.Tapper@vermont.gov; Joe Smith; Eben Kraft; Brock Knauth@VYCC.org; Bob Heiser

11/16/2020

ATV's on the Andrews Community Forest

You forwarded this message on 11/16/2020 11:13 AM.

Hi folks: Ethan recently shared with me that the Andrews Community Forest logger's skidder was possibly vandalized by person(s) who were on ATVs. Historically, ATVs have accessed the ACF property via the VAST Trail, either from the west off Valley View Road or from the east via VYCC. They have not / do not access the ACF from the NW, north or NE over the lands of Gifford, Sunshine or Pratico. I've spent portions of the last three week-ends repainting in red (over older red blades) the bulk of the ACF boundaries, including the joint boundary with VYCC. As of nine days ago I found no recent ATV activity coming from the VYCC property. I did place four no ATV's 4" signs on the VAST Trail at the ACF/VYCC boundary. This past Wednesday, Brad Elliott and I walked in from Rte 2 north to the VYCC, ACF, Maplewind Farm boundary corner and we did find freshly cut and removed trees that had fallen across the western VYCC old logging trail heading north. I'm not sure who I clearing this old logging road on VYCC.

There is recent and active ATV use onto the ACF coming in from the west over Valley View Road. The VAST Trail on the western side is open and clear because the power line utility contractors (currently ECI out of Williston) are using ATVs and trucks to bring material into ACF to rebuild the concrete foundations of the metal power poles. Yesterday I placed three no ATV signs on the western boundary line of the ACF. The ACF committee should work towards installing a lockable gate on the VAST Trail at its western boundary.

Thoughts?

Thanks, Wright

11/19/20: Ethan and I speak on the phone about the increased level of ATV activity around the log landing and on the main logging roads.

11/20/20: : I request support from the ACF committee about immediately installing a gate on the western boundary on the Old VAST to try and stop ATV access. Attachments include cost estimate, photo of gate style and a hand drawn map of the boundary sections painted to date.

Wright Preston | Wright Preston, Amy Powers, Eben Kraft, Tappin, Ethan, Cecilia Daniels, Nick Neversky, Jesse Olay, Jim Monahan, Bethwood Town Forest, Caitlin Littlefield, caitlinl@hobbes.com | 11/20/2020

ACF boundary painting and western boundary VAST gate

Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Printer.pdf | Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Printer.pdf | Open PDFs in Adobe Acrobat

Hi! As we get ready to have trail designers plan out ACF trails I felt the need to make sure that all parties know the location of the ACF boundaries. These boundaries, on the north and western side, were last painted in red about 20 years ago. That's my guess, any ways. It was hard to see the red blazes but fortunately some of the lines had old flagging and remnants of old barbed wire. I had repainted the eastern side with VYCC about 15 years ago. The attached rough map shows (with black lines) where I've repainted the lines over the last three weekends, using a gallon and half of red boundary paint. (Ethan helped me find and flag much of the western boundary.) I flagged the ACF / Sunshine boundary (noted in dashed line on the map) and I installed steel stakes next to each ACF / Sunshine survey pin so the pins can be easily found in the future. With your permission, I'll repaint the ACF / Prisco boundary. I repainted that boundary perhaps five years ago.

I think I've shared with you that we are currently having ATV issues and they appear to be originating from the west on VAST Trail. (The conservation easement does not allow the public's use of ATVs on the property.) There is no gate on the western boundary at the VAST Trail. There is a locked gate on the eastern boundary of the VAST Trail with VYCC. A couple of years ago I asked the power company if they would donate a gate and they said yes but they would have to install it just north of the power line ROW in the center of the ACF. A gate in the middle of the ACF did not seem to make sense, so the offer was declined. In my experience, the only way to slow down and perhaps stop ATV access is by installing locked gates with no ATV signs.

It's ideal if the gate is installed this fall before snow and while it is still warm. I have time tomorrow to do so. I can drive my tractor and trailer up the VAST Trail to the western edge. I've got two old 30' telephone poles sections for posts and the highway department is lending me a gas powered post hole digger. I've got all of the other parts and pieces. The attached bill that will be submitted for approval for boundary paint, gates, etc. and is for \$338.66.

Given covid-19 social distancing needs, I'm not seeking assistance. BTW, I'm happy doing this stuff.

Are folks okay with me installing the gate and seeking reimbursement? Sorry for the short notice.

Thank you, Wright 734-9279

11/20/20: I share with local Mtn Bike folks about his concern that a small portion of Sip of Sunshine trail was installed on the ACF without owner approval.

Wright Preston | Jack Brewer, Jim Monahan, Tye Nevitt | 11/20/2020

Sip of Sunshine trail: small section located on the Andrews Community Forest property

Hi folks: I've been walking, flagging and painting the ACF boundary lines. Last weekend I reflagged the surveyed boundary between Sunshine and the Town's ACF. The Sunshine / ACF line has not been blazed yet but it should be. I noticed at the very uphill, southern section of Sunshine (against the ACF) that a short section of the Sip of Sunshine Trail is actually on the lands of the ACF, near where the wooden sign is. I bring this up in private because of the issues I have with the location of the Sunshine trail at Prisco. GPS'd boundary lines may be off a bit from those on the ground and on the survey. I feel strongly, that as a trail group and as a municipal committee, the Richmond Trails Committee needs to reach out to neighboring landowners before a trail is established near a common boundary line. Both neighbors and a committee member should walk the proposed trail and agree on its location. I also feel that the Trails Committee and the ACF Committee should each establish policies relating to trails being proposed near boundary lines. A 25' boundary line setback is appropriate to me.

Thanks and have a good week-end.

Wright

11/20/20 -11/21/20: Caitlin, Jim & Amy send email supporting gate installation. I have received three email votes to install the gate, plus my vote, makes 4 votes to install the gate. No committee member replied that the gate should not be installed. The committee is comprised of 7 members. (I was reminded by a committee member on 12/8/20 that the ACF committee is comprised of 9 members not 7 members.)

Caitlin Littlefield <clittlef@gmail.com> | Wright Preston, Amy Powers, Eben Kraft, Tappin, Ethan, Cecilia Daniels, Nick Neversky, Jesse Olay, Jim Monahan, Bethwood Town Forest, caitlinl@hobbes.com | 11/20/2020

Re: ACF boundary painting and western boundary VAST gate

Hi Wright,

That sounds good to me! Thanks for your efforts.

Caitlin

Jim Monahan <jrjmonahan@gmail.com> | Caitlin Littlefield, Wright Preston, Amy Powers, Eben Kraft, Tappin, Ethan, Cecilia Daniels, Nick Neversky, Jesse Olay, Bethwood Town Forest, caitlinl@hobbes.com | 11/20/2020

Re: ACF boundary painting and western boundary VAST gate

Thanks, Wright for painting the boundary lines.

Jim



Amy Powers <amypowersvermont@gmail.com>

Jim Monahan, Caitlin Littlefield, Wright Preston, Ellen Kraft, Tappin, Ethan, Cecilia Danks, Rob Nessing, Jesse Cary, Richwood Town Forest >

11/21/20

Re: ACF boundary painting and western boundary VAST gate

Sounds good, Wright...helpful that you have such a clear history of the situation.

On Fri., Nov. 20, 2020, 5:33 p.m. Jim Monahan, <jmmonahan@gmail.com> wrote:

Thanks, Wright for painting the boundary lines.

Jim

11/21/20 PM: I install light metal, 12' steel (2, 6' sections) gate attached to two old, 10' telephone poles. The northern post was hand dug in to a depth of about 32" and is located slightly off the boundary line. The southern post was hand dug into to a depth of about 32" and is located about 10' on the ACF side of the line. The pedestrian public can walk around either side of the gate. The gate is chain locked in the middle with a combination lock dialed to the same combination as the Re 2 main gate.



Wright Preston <wpresto@hotmail.com>

Amy Powers, Jim Monahan, Caitlin Littlefield, Wright Preston, Ellen Kraft, Tappin, Ethan, Cecilia Danks, Rob Nessing, Jesse Cary, Richwood Town Forest >

11/21/2020

Re: ACF boundary painting and western boundary VAST gate

Here's the new western ACF gate now in service. Lots of ATV activity there this past week. Perhaps someone could post on the ACF FB page and on FPF that ATV's are not permitted in t today. I spoke with a hunter today who harvested an 8 pt buck under the powerlines near there this past Thursday.

Thanks,



11/22/20: Jesse supports gate installation



11/23/20: I have a 20-minute phone call with Larry Burritt of Richmond the local VAST Trail coordinator. He indicates that VAST will not be managing trail use on this Rte. 2 corridor trail because VAST groomer access has not been granted for several years by two land owners near Gov. Peck Road.

11/23/20: I email Peter Havorsen of Valley View to let him know that a gate has been installed on the old VAST Trail to try and keep ATV's off the ACF.

On Monday, November 23, 2020, 2:05:03 PM EST, Wright Preston <wright.preston@nsdvd.com> wrote:

Hi Pete: I trust your family and you are well. A few Saturdays ago I was repainting, in red, the western boundary of the ACF and I re-blazed the big corner line hamlock where you have a tree stand. I hope you are having good hunting season from the stand. I think you live on Valley View Road and as such I wanted you to be aware that the ACF committee has installed a locked steel gate at the VAST Trail on western boundary of the property. We've been experiencing an increase in ATV traffic on the trail from private users and perhaps some from the powerline contractors. Would you be willing to get the word out in your neighborhood that the trail now has a locked gate, as ATVs are not permitted on the ACF.

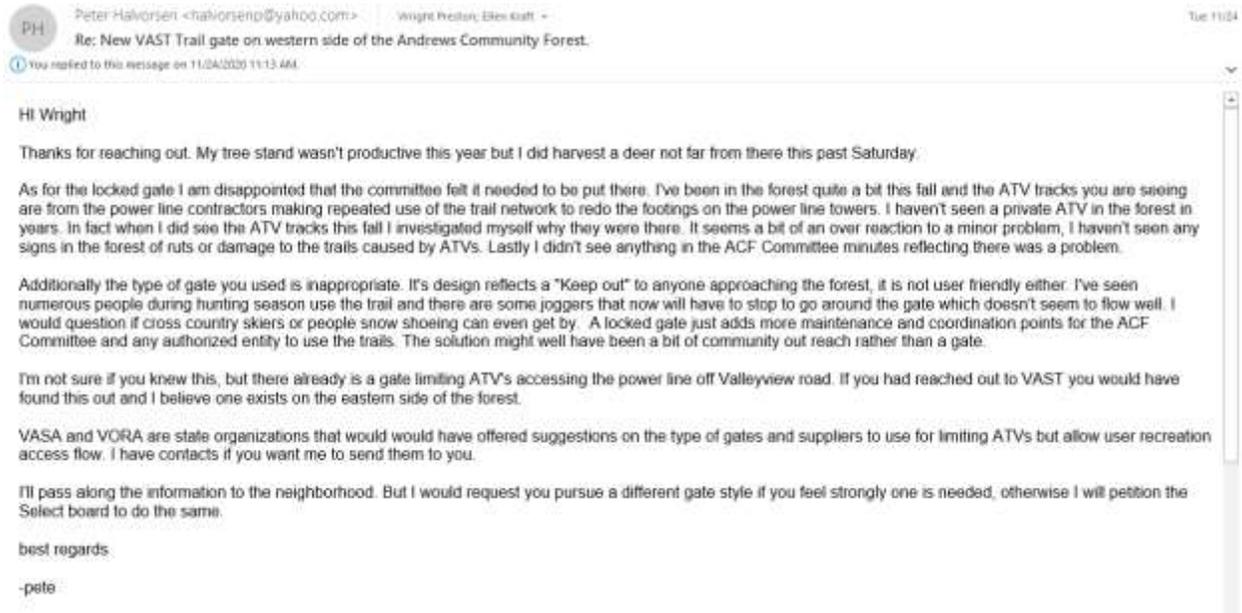
Thanks very much and stay well.

Wright 734-9279

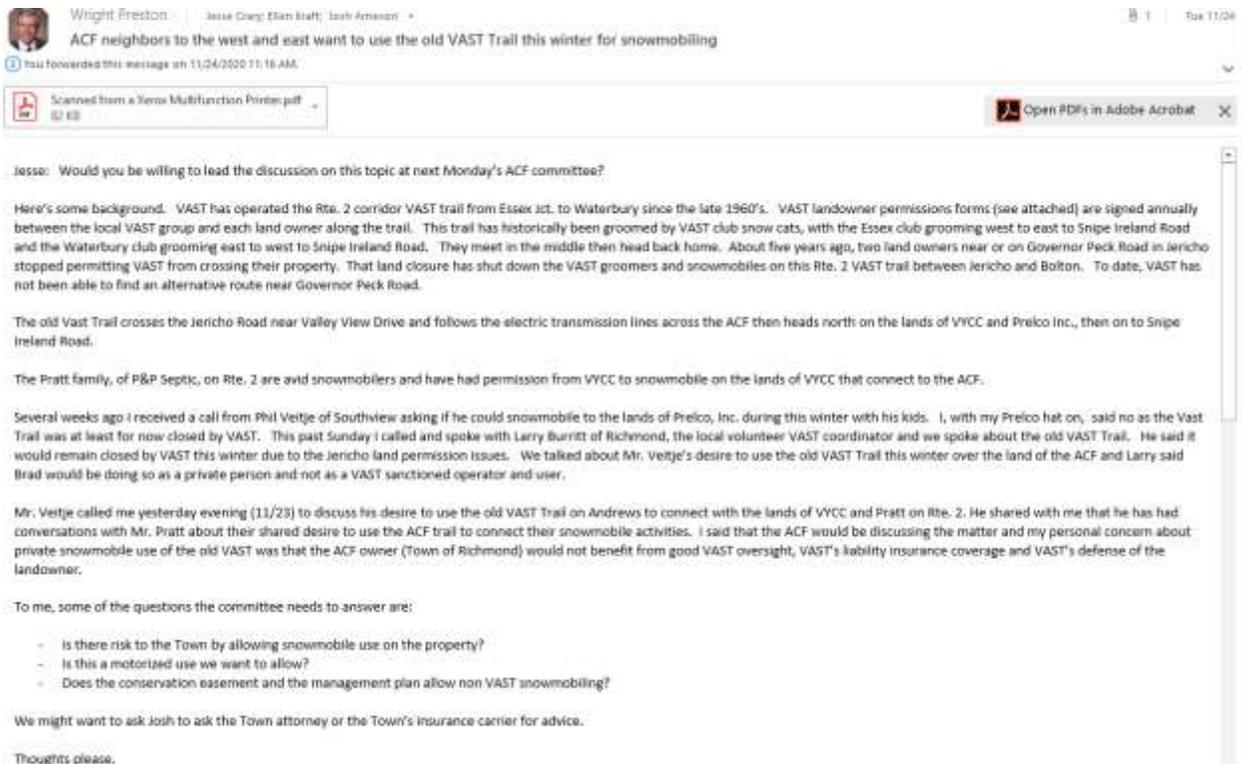


11/24/20: I inform the power company contractor that there is a new gate on the western boundary of the ACF and gives the lock combination to the contractor, ECI Construction. During the conversation the contractor indicates that they have not been on the site making repairs for two or three weeks.

11/24/20: Peter H emails back:



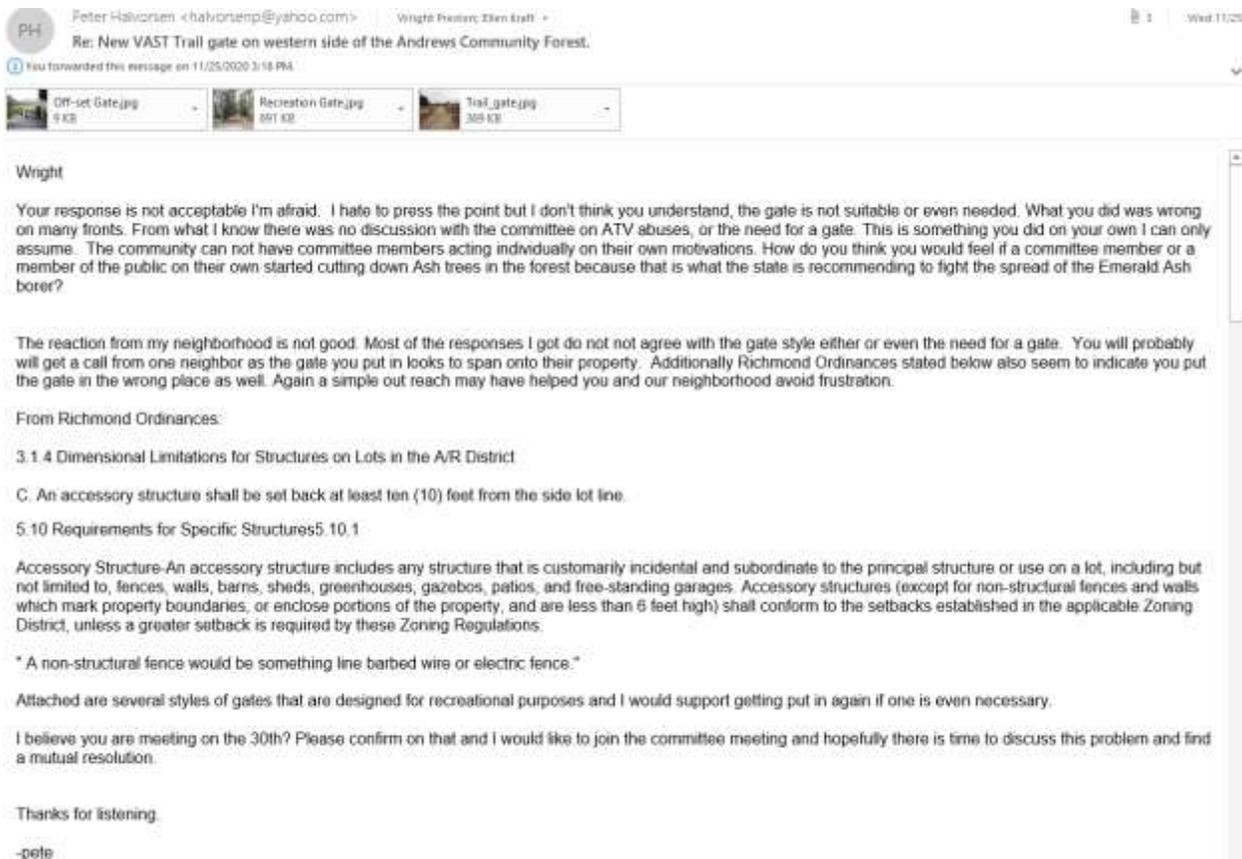
11/24/20 : I email Jesse asking him to lead a discussion at the 11/30/20 ACF meeting on the old VAST use.



11/24/20: I respond to Pete H.



11/25/20: Pete H. responds to Ellen and me.t



11/25/20: I share Peter H. email with ACF committee.



11/25/20: Note from Ethan:



11/25/20: Note from Wright to Pete H.



11/25/20: Wright email Pete H. to meet at gate.

On Wednesday, November 25, 2020, 5:25:10 PM EST, Wright Preston <prelco@hotmail.com> wrote:

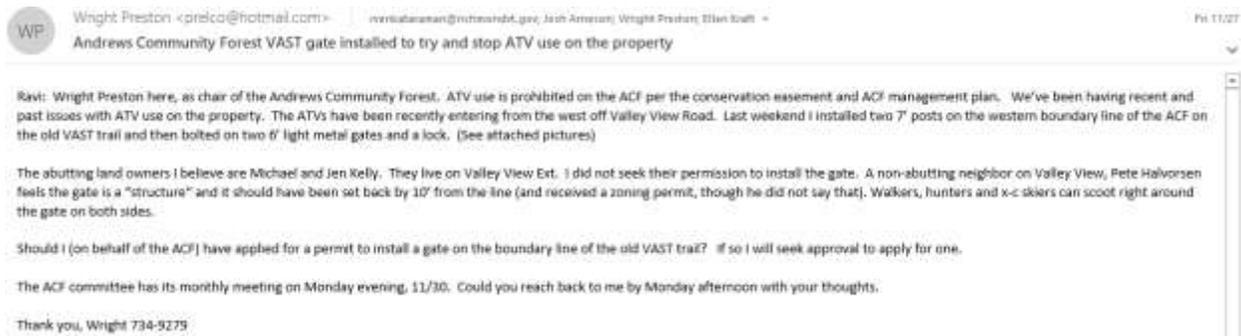
Pete. Got your email and I've shared it w the committee. We are meeting via zoom at 7pm on Monday 11/30.

Do you want to meet at the gate to discuss these matters on Friday, Saturday or Sunday? I'm generally available, except for Saturday morning.

Thank you, Wright 734-9279

Sent from my iPhone

11/27/20: I email Ravi town planner about gate.



11/27/20: Pete H. says he does not want to meet.

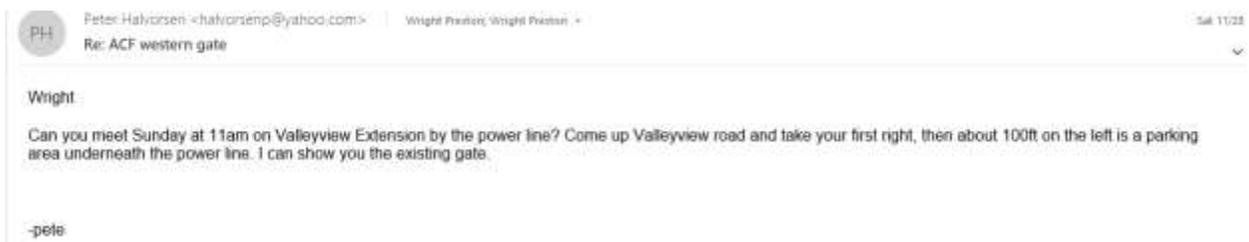


11/27: I reach back out to Pete H. to meet.



11/28/20: I reach out and speak with abutting land owner Mike Kelly about the western ACF gate. Pete H. ask spoken with Mike about the gate. Mike indicates that he is okay with the gate though he has not seen it yet. He says if it should be set back it should be set back.

11/28/20: Pete says he can meet Sunday.



11/29/20; 11AM. Pete H. and Wright meet under powerline at base of Valley View Ext. We meet for perhaps 25 minutes. I share with Pete that we are having ATV issues coming from Valley View over the old VAST Trail. I share with him that we are now also having ATV issues originating from the east portion of the property. We spoke about the possible vandalism that may have occurred to the logging equip at the log landing. I shared with him that the public's use ATV's and other motorized vehicles are not allowed on the ACF per the terms of the recorded conservation easement and the town approved management plan. Pete indicated that any ATV activity is coming from the power company employees. Pete indicated that he is the only person in the Valley View neighborhood who uses his ATV in the

power line area of Valley View. Pete indicated that the lower VAST gate at Valley View Ext. is an adequate gate to keep ATV users out of this area. I share with Pete that that gate was open all summer and fall until I placed it in the closed position couple of weeks ago. (Note; the lower gate is off its hinges and is unlocked. It rests against one gate post.)

11/30/20: I email the ACF committee gate photos that Pete provided and photos that I provide

 Wright Preston Wright Preston, Tyin Merritt, Nick Neversky, Caitlin Littlefield, Jim Monahan, Cecilia Davis, jessetony@gmail.com, Amy Powers, Wright Preston: + 3- 5 Mon 2:34

Examples of pedestrian friendly gates at vehicle access points

 Trail gate.jpg (30 KB)  Off-set Gate.jpg (12 KB)  Recreation Gate.jpg (655 KB)  linked trail gate (001)_11.jpg (1 MB)  orange steel gate.jpg (4 MB)

Hi: Pete Halvorsen sent photos of three gate styles that he likes and they are shown above. Two of the three gates depicted require the pedestrian public to walk, ski, snowshoe around the gates. For those two gates, I've drawn the walk around process in blue. (The brown and yellow gate appears to allow ATV's, but not large vehicles.) The Off-set gate above would be really hard to securely anchor the middle and make it lockable. The one depicted requires four posts and side fencing.

The gates in the photos below all allow and encourage the pedestrian public to freely access the property by walking around the vehicle gate portion.

I hope to receive an email from the interim zoning administrator later today on any permit matters relating to the gate installed last week end.

Thank you, Wright

ACF Utility Road Gate (below)

Pedestrian access is by walking around gate.



Replacement Wolfrun Natural Area pedestrian access / VAST Gate on Stage RD , Bolton (below)

Pedestrian access is by walking around gate.



11/30/20: The ACF committee held its monthly meeting at 7PM via zoom. Pete H. attended and made comments. It was agreed that Pete and Nick would meet at the gate to discuss gate location and gate styles. Ellen states in the meeting that the gate was installed without approvals. I as I was caught off guard by it .

12/1/20: Ravi Venkataraman emailed me to say a DRB permit application and approval was required:

 Ravi Venkataraman <rvenkataraman@richmondvt.gov> | Wright Preshers, Josh Ameyars, Wright Preshers, Ellen Kraft, Taylor Newton < > | Tue 8:37 AM
Re: Andrews Community Forest VAST gate installed to try and stop ATV use on the property
You replied to this message on 12/2/2020 12:15 PM

Hi Wright,

Thanks for your patience on this matter. After talking to Josh, I did a deeper dive and found that the gate would require DRB review as a Site Plan Amendment and then a Zoning Permit. Typically, gates are like fences and are not subject to setback requirements. But gates affect access and circulation, therefore triggering Site Plan Review requirements.

I've cc'ed Taylor Newton, the town's interim DRB Coordinator, add anything I may have missed and address any questions you may have about the DRB process. Here's a link to the Site Plan Review application: <http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Site-Plan-Application-2019-filable.pdf>. In addition to the completed form, you would need to provide:

- A site plan of the community forest showing the location of the gate
- A set of self-addressed stamped envelopes for each of the abutting property owners

I don't need multiple copies of the application. But if you could send me a PDF of the application form and the site plan, that would be great. I'm guessing that you don't have an engineer for this project, so please be sure to note that you would like a waiver from this requirement on the application form, under the brief description of the project. You can also attach a narrative or description if the brief description box is not big enough. Fees would not apply to your project.

If you're able to pull this all together and I receive it by December 18th, I can put this item on the January DRB meeting agenda.

Feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Ravi

Ravi Venkataraman, AICP (he/him)
Town Planner and Acting Zoning Administrator
Town of Richmond
203 Bridge St.
Richmond, VT 05477
802-434-2430
<http://www.richmondvt.gov/>

12/1/20: Abutting land owner Mike Kelly called me indicating that he would like the gate to meet Richmond DRB standards including necessary setbacks.

12/1/20: Ellen sends note that says:

I'm proud of how you Chair our committee and of all the things we have done. I apologize for "throwing you under the bus" with the gate thing by saying we didn't vote, but my thinking was if that the email chain to put in the gate served as a committee decision, then our ability to fix it could be agreed upon formally through email, and we can make sure that everyone actually reads the suggestions and has a chance to weigh in. The fix also should be timely due to the ground freezing. The last thing I want you to feel is as though we're on complete opposite sides or that I don't support the actions / decisions of the committee. It's actually a great opportunity to think about how we want to welcome people to the forest! I enjoy talking with you and learning from you and I'm glad to be on the Committee with you!

12/1/20: I email the committee ATV gate sizes so the correct pedestrian width can be discussed that keeps ATV's off the ACF.



Wright Preston
ACF Gate

Ellen Kraft, Nick Nevenly

Tue 8:47 AM

Good morning! Its really good that Pete is joining in to the proper gate solution because he shared with me that he uses his ATV on the land of his neighbors at and west of the ACF. In speaking with Pete last Sunday I'd suggested we look at a 30" opening on the right or left of the gate. He said he was looking for a wider width since his ATV has a width of 42". Dirt bike handle bar widths are about 30". Below is a chart of ATV widths. A 30" width seems like the proper width. Thanks,

List Of ATV Length And Width By Engine Size

Engine Size In CC	Length In Inches	Width In Inches
50cc	48-60	30-35
70cc	44-58	26-36
90cc	56-62	34-40
200cc	65-70	40-42
250cc	65-75	40-42
300cc	70-74	40-42
350cc	74-80	40-45
400cc	72-84	42-48
450cc	70-84	40-48
500cc	72-92	46-48
650cc	84-92	46-48
700cc	72-92	46-48
800cc	82-92	46-48
1000cc	84-94	46-48

12/3/20: Nick outlines topic points for meeting with Pete H. later today.

NN Nick Neversky <nickneversky@gmail.com> Wright Preston, Etes-Kraft, Tyler Herold, Caitlin Littlefield, Ise Monahan, Cecelia Davis, jrsociety@green.com, Amy Powers, Wright Preston + 2 - 6:46 AM
ACF: gate inspection today, communication plan for Front Porch Forum

Hi ACF committee,

I'm meeting with Pete this afternoon to look at the gate. My plan is to:

- Take measurements of the area to the sides of the gate. These may inform options for around-the-gate access, either with or without tree removal.
- Take photos of the gate and the areas on the sides of the gate. These may be useful references for us and as a communication tool with community members.
- Look for low-cost modifications (if necessary) for pedestrian passage beyond the gate.

Pete made a Front Porch Forum post yesterday (pasted below). This post expands the gate discussion to Front Porch Forum so I suggest the Committee joins the conversation there. I plan to make a post with the following information after my visit to the gate. Does the Committee object or advise modifications? This won't be the exact text, this is just an outline of what I'd write.

- A photo of the gate
- Measurements of the width of side access (e.g., distance between gate post and the nearest tree)
- A brief history of the gate which I understand to be: ACF Committee received reports of ATV use in ACF, ACF members found ATV tracks in ACF, one ACF member proposed to the Committee via email to install a gate on the west side, the Committee approved, a gate was installed.
- A link to the ACF management plan document which mentions that: ATV use is outside of that plan, this plan was developed with significant community input, top priorities identified via that community input were recreation (trails, hunting) and wildlife and these are what are being implemented by the Committee as per the wishes of the community (examples: some new trails already installed, hunting continues, ecological harvest in process which is enhancing habitat, new trail being planned with an ecologist).
- A statement that the ACF Committee is dedicated to ensuring equitable and safe access to ACF to all community members in line with the management plan.
- Thanks to community members for their ongoing support, use, and concern for ACF and its users.

Is this OK?

Nick

Pete's FPF post:

Richmond Community - Gates are being installed at entry points across the Andrew's Forest. These gates as you will see are impregnable by users of the forest. What's worse is one person on the ACF Committee made a decision to install gates without consulting or debating the merits of gates in the forest with the full committee.

The community needs to stay connected with the ACF Committee and ensure abuses like the above don't go unchallenged. Just as important, share your thoughts on uses for the forest and make your priorities count!

Please reach out to the ACF committee and Select-board members
<http://www.richmondvt.gov/government/town-officials-quick-reference/>

I'm doing my part to address this issue but need your support. Thank you

I, Wright C. Preston, resident of Richmond, Vermont and current volunteer chair of the Andrews Community Forest Committee do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Wright C. Preston 12/3/20

Wright C. Preston, date

