

# ACF TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PLAN v1

## 1. Trail routes and reroutes

- a. Existing trail reroutes
  - i. Urbanik Way should be re-routed to start higher in the parking lot past the large ash tree. The current route requires persistently wet ground, scramble up rock, and passing very closely to Rt 2.
- b. Proposed trail reroutes
  - i. The East Climb and Hemlock Valley trail will be rerouted to avoid wet areas and rare/sensitive plants, per Arrowwood fine-scale review late summer 2022.
- c. Proposed trail removals
  - i. Remove Ridgetop from the proposal, as it tracks too closely to the ravine that serves as a key wildlife corridor.
  - ii. Remove the Roadside Trail from the proposed network, as it is redundant to the road and passes through persistently wet areas thereby making trail construction “tricky” per Arrowwood and Sinuosity report, requiring bridges, ramps, punchon, etc.
  - iii. Remove the proposed central path between Cascade Trail and Rocky View; instead, connect the two where they are closest to one another towards the southern end.
- d. Existing logging roads and skid trails
  - i. Except where they coincide with the proposed trail network, existing logging roads and skid trails will not be maintained as trails by the ACFC and will not be shown on ACF trail maps (although during future forest management activities, they may be maintained by the forester and logger).
- e. Trail-free zones
  - i. Other than proposed trails, current connection to VYCC trails, and where present-day VAST trail connects, designate all other areas of the forest as trail-free

## 2. Allowable activities

- a. Biking is to be allowed only on established trail networks and not on pedestrian-only trails
- b. Pedestrians are allowed on all trails
- c. Dana’s Climb is to be pedestrian only
- d. Rocky View and Cascade are pedestrian only (Stream View, which is one access point for those two trails, will have both pedestrian and non-pedestrian traffic).
- e. Electric bikes are not allowed on the trail network. The ACFC acknowledges that allowing eMTBs may broaden access for individuals with physical limitations, as is consistent with our commitment to equity and inclusion. However, concerns regarding

eMTBs (eg faster speeds, safety, user conflict) and the non-motorized specifications within the Conservation Easement lead the ACFC to not permit eMTBs. Any ACF visitors with mobility disabilities who seek to use motorized personal assistive mobility devices (as permitted in the Conservation Easement, screenshot below) should reach out to the ACF Chair to notify the committee.

G. There shall be no operation of motor vehicles on the Protected Property except for uses specifically reserved in Section III below, such as agriculture, wildlife and forest management, education, trail grooming, maintenance, and for safety or emergency purposes, and for certain limited recreational uses as provided in Sections III(A), below. However, Grantors may permit motorized personal assistive mobility devices for use by persons with mobility disabilities on the Protected Property if consistent with the Purposes of this Grant, and as may be required by state or federal law.

**3. Trail use policy enforcement**

- a. Clear signage and map at kiosk, including permitted uses and guidance for users to access trail closure status (eg, QR code to trail conditions websites).
- b. Ropes across trail entrances when trails are closed for the season (but not on, for example, daily basis).
- c. Use current systems to indicate status (and describe allowable uses) working with existing trail groups (Richmond Trails Committee, RMT). ACFC member who is the Richmond Trails Committee member will be a designated point person on ACFC to ensure statuses are updated.

**4. Trail naming and signage**

- a. Trails will be named and signed with the goal of acknowledging Abenaki heritage and culture in the region where possible.

**5. Closures**

- a. Following state guidance for deer wintering closures, the trails will be closed above the power lines from December 15 - April 1 for reasons of protecting habitat and desirable game species. The ACFC recognizes that people may still recreate across ACF in a dispersed manner (eg x-c skiing) but trails will not officially be open.
- b. All trails above powerlines will be closed to non-hunting recreation during deer regular season for reasons of safety and minimizing interference with hunting by non-hunter presence. Dates will vary from year to year but will follow VT Fish & Wildlife specifications (2023 below).

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| October 21 - October 22, 2023   | <a href="#">Deer: Youth Weekend</a> and <a href="#">Novice Weekend</a>                          |
| October 26 - October 29, 2023   | <a href="#">Deer: Muzzleloader Antlerless</a> - in select WMUs if antlerless permits are issued |
| November 11 - November 19, 2023 | <a href="#">Black Bear: Late Season</a>   |
| November 11 - November 26, 2023 | <a href="#">Deer: Regular Season</a>  |
| December 2 - December 10, 2023  | <a href="#">Deer: Muzzleloader</a>  |

- c. If certain events for cultural or ecological reasons are needed, permission may be permitted.

6. **Monitoring**

- a. Install trail counters at base of each trail. Pull numbers periodically. Devise and commit to non-arbitrary decision-tree to guide what will happen when certain numbers of users are on trails.
- b. Seasonal visual inspection of trails for erosion and needs for maintenance will be conducted by the ACFC on an ongoing basis.
- c. Quantitative and qualitative data collected will be reviewed regularly and guide the committee in prioritizing trail maintenance and upgrades.
- d. Seasonal visual inspection for invasive species will be conducted by ACFC and removal / mitigation will be planned accordingly.
- e. Trail maintenance will occur seasonally and as needed and will be coordinated with the other local trail maintenance groups to best communicate with volunteers and take advantage of shared resources. The ACFC member who is the Richmond Trails Committee member will liaise between ACFC and said groups.

7. **Dogs**

- a. Dogs are permitted below the power lines, and not above them.
- b. Dogs are to be kept on leash at all times.
  - i. This is more stringent than the town dog ordinance, this rule is intended to protect wildlife and vegetation to the greatest degree possible, as well as other forest users.
  - ii. The ACFC acknowledges this may limit hunting with dogs, but that is a trade-off we are comfortable taking.
  - iii. All pet waste needs to be carried out.

8. **Horses**

- a. Horses are not allowed on any ACFC trails. They are a major vector of invasive species spread.

9. **Parking**

- a. Parking is limited to the allotted spaces at the Rt. 2 trailhead. Additional parking needs may be met by other Richmond Town designated parking areas, and users will self-transport to the ACF.