

Recreation

Outdoor recreation has long been and remains a highly valued tradition throughout the Andrews Community Forest. By blending thoughtfully designed trails with strong ecological stewardship the ACF can enable outdoor enthusiasts to continue enjoying the benefits of recreation and nature in the ACF with little or no detriment to forest health. The forest should continue to offer a wide range of recreational opportunities for hikers, bikers, hunters, walkers, runners, nature observers, skiers, snowshoers and others.

Objectives:

- Provide a connection to the past indigenous inhabitants of the area and their way of life.
- Maintain wildlife passages through the town forest and wildlife habitat on the town forest.
- Protect water quality.
- Provide educational opportunities for the community to experience the town forest and learn about its ecological function in the Chittenden County Uplands.
- Collaborate constructively with diverse user groups.
- Maintain rich opportunities for hunters.
- Minimize the potential for negative interactions between mtn. bikers and pedestrians.
- Seek opportunities for users to connect to neighboring properties.

Management Guidelines:

- Promote recreational use on existing trails/skid roads and limit the creation of new trails except as needed to 1) bypass wet, steep, ecologically sensitive or otherwise unsuitable stretches of existing trails, 2) connect trail segments interrupted by acts of nature or forest management activities, 3) to connect to trails on adjacent land.
- Trails will be built and maintained in keeping with the trail stewardship plan and will utilize the best practices from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Trail work will only be performed at the direction of the ACF committee.
- Maintain a permanent gate to block motorized access at the entrance to the forest.
- Keep a 300 ft buffer between any trail and adjoining properties that don't actively encourage trail connection or provide an established right of way.
- Collaborate with indigenous communities to incorporate their social, cultural, and spiritual goals into the management of the forest.
- Avoid trails in ecologically sensitive zones and ensure adequate buffers between human impacts and these areas.
- Designate trails North of the VAST trail to be pedestrian only. Limit dogs and mtn. bikers to South of the VAST trail.
- Bridges, culverts and boardwalks will be built and maintained in accordance with best practice to maintain water quality and prevent erosion.
- Minimize trail stream crossings and avoid encroachment on riparian buffers.
- Educate visitors on the ecological value of the town forest.
- Adapt management of recreational trails as dictated by user volume and their impacts.
- Create and maintain a positive working relationship with adjoining properties to align their land management goals with those of the town forest.

- Dissuade trail traffic during the busiest hunting periods by closing all Trails to non-hunting traffic from October 1 to April 30 to allow for hunting and also allow for wildlife wintering stress to be reduced.

Actions:

- Create and maintain trail signs that use Abanaki language and naming traditions
- Maintain an active ecological resource map.
- Inspect water/wetland crossings yearly and respond to changes caused by floods, sediment transfer, stream channel migration etc.
- Collaborate with community experts and members of the conservation commission to host occasional field naturalist classes in the town forest.
- Create and maintain signs that highlight various aspects of the forests ecological function
- Meet yearly with adjoining landowners to discuss user traffic volumes and flow of people across parcel boundaries.
- Collaborate with the Richmond Trails Committee to help steward the trails by scheduling volunteer work days.

Trail stewardship plan...