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# **Andrews Community Forest** **Draft Comprehensive Management Plan 2025**

*Including history, background, and important information about the forest  
that will both guide and inform management decisions*

Richmond, Vermont  
**2025?**



Revision to be presented to the Richmond Selectboard and  
Vermont Land Trust

# Table of Contents

1		
2		
3	<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>2</b>
4	<b>Part A: Introduction and Foundational Principles .....</b>	<b>5</b>
5	<b>A1. Introduction, Process History, Land Acknowledgement, and Governance Guidelines.....</b>	<b>5</b>
6	<b>A1.1 Introduction to this document.....</b>	<b>5</b>
7	<b>A1.2 Acquisition and Conservation of the Andrews Community Forest.....</b>	<b>5</b>
8	<b>A1.3 The Indigenous Land Acknowledgment .....</b>	<b>5</b>
9	<b>A1.4 Governance of the Andrews Community Forest.....</b>	<b>6</b>
10	A1.4.1 Purpose of the Committee	6
11	<b>A2. History, Background and Existing Conditions.....</b>	<b>7</b>
12	<b>A2.1 General Property Description and Background .....</b>	<b>8</b>
13	<b>A2.2 Geology, Topography, and Climate.....</b>	<b>8</b>
14	A2.2.1 Topography and Aspect	8
15	A2.2.2 Biophysical Region	9
16	A2.2.3 Bedrock Geology	9
17	A2.2.4 Surficial Geology	9
18	A2.2.5 Climate	10
19	<b>A2.3. Cultural History .....</b>	<b>10</b>
20	A2.3.1 Indigenous History (See Appendix D)	10
21	A2.3.2. Plants and Animals of Special Cultural Importance for Western Abenaki	11
22	A2.3.3. Abenaki language and the ACF	12
23	A2.3.4 History After European Settlement	12
24	A2.3.5 Remaining Historical Sites and Features	14
25	<b>A2.4 Ecological and Water Resources.....</b>	<b>14</b>
26	<b>A2.5. Forestry .....</b>	<b>14</b>
27	<b>A2.6. Recreation .....</b>	<b>16</b>
28	<b>A2.7. Agriculture.....</b>	<b>16</b>
29	<b>A2.8. Legal Agreements on the Property .....</b>	<b>17</b>
30	A2.8.1 Agricultural Lease	17
31	A2.8.2 Powerline Rights-of-Way: VELCO	17
32	A2.8.3 Powerline Rights-of-Way: Green Mountain Power	17
33	<b>Part B: Management Objectives and Actions .....</b>	<b>19</b>

1	<b>B1.1 Posting of Town Forest Rules.....</b>	<b>19</b>
2	<b>B1.2 Parking.....</b>	<b>19</b>
3	<b>B2. Comprehensive Management Plan: Process for Updates: Amendments and Revisions .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4	<b>B3. Timber Management and Forestry Activities.....</b>	<b>20</b>
5	<b>B3.1 Forestry Management Objectives and Actions.....</b>	<b>21</b>
6	<b>B4. Cultural History Management Objectives and Actions.....</b>	<b>22</b>
7	<b>B4.1 Potential partners regarding ACFC cultural history.....</b>	<b>23</b>
8	<b>B5. Wildlife and Natural Resources Stewardship.....</b>	<b>24</b>
9	<b>B5.1 Ecological Resources and Stewardship .....</b>	<b>24</b>
10	<b>B5.2 Landscape-Level Elements .....</b>	<b>24</b>
11	B5.2.1 Landscape-Level Objectives	25
12	B5.2.2 Landscape-Level Action Items	26
13	<b>B5.3 Community-Level Elements .....</b>	<b>26</b>
14	B5.3.1 Community-level objectives	28
15	B5.3.2 Community-level action items	28
16	<b>B5.4 Species-Level Elements .....</b>	<b>29</b>
17	B5.4.1 Species-Level Objectives	29
18	B5.4.2 Species-Level Action Items	30
19	<b>B6. Recreation Management.....</b>	<b>31</b>
20	<b>B6.1 Permitted and non-permitted uses.....</b>	<b>31</b>
21	B6.1.1. Dogs	31
22	B6.1.2 Snowmobiling	31
23	B6.1.3 Hunting	32
24	<b>B6.2 Recreation Objectives and Actions .....</b>	<b>32</b>
25	6.2.1 Management Guidelines:	33
26	6.2.2 Trail Development Parameters	36
27	6.2.3 Trail Approval Process	38
28	6.2.4 Trail Deviation Review Process	40
29	<b>B6.3 Trail Monitoring, Maintenance, etc.....</b>	<b>42</b>
30	<b>B6.4 Potential Recreation Partnerships .....</b>	<b>44</b>
31	<b>B7. Agriculture Management .....</b>	<b>45</b>
32	<b>B7.1 Potential Agriculture Partnerships.....</b>	<b>45</b>
33	<b>B7.2 Agriculture Management Objectives and Actions .....</b>	<b>45</b>

1     **B8. Environmental Education in the Andrews Community Forest ..... 46**  
2         **B8.1 Educational Objectives and Actions..... 47**  
3         **B8.2 Potential Education Partnerships..... 48**  
4     **B9. Legal Agreements on the Property ..... 49**  
5         **B9.1 Conservation Easement ..... 50**  
6         **B9.2 Agricultural Lease..... 50**  
7         **B9.2 Powerline Rights-of-Way: VELCO ..... 51**  
8         **B9.3 Powerline Rights-of-Way: Green Mountain Power ..... 51**  
9         **B9.4 Legal Agreements Management Objectives..... 51**  
10        **B9.5 Legal Agreements Management Actions..... 52**  
11     **List of Appendices..... 53**  
12         **Appendix A: Conservation Easement ..... 53**  
13         **Appendix B. Indigenous Land and People Acknowledgment and Land Use ..... 53**  
14         **Appendix C: Ecological Resources..... 53**  
15         **Appendix D: Recreation ..... 53**  
16         **Appendix E: Plan Development and Credits..... 53**  
17         **Appendix F: References..... 53**  
18         **Appendices from 2018 Management Plan ..... 53**  
19

# 1 **Part A: Introduction and Foundational Principles**

## 2 **A1. Introduction, Process History, Land Acknowledgement, and** 3 **Governance Guidelines**

### 4 **A1.1 Introduction to this document**

5 This document serves as the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Andrews Community Forest  
6 (ACF), revised and updated in 2025, to replace the document accepted by the Selectboard in November  
7 2018. Major changes include an Indigenous land use acknowledgment, a more comprehensive and  
8 updated description of the ACF’s ecological importance replacing the original recreational trail design  
9 concept with a new trails plan based on ecological assessments and practical considerations, along with  
10 textual reorganization, updates, clarifications and corrections.

### 11 **A1.2 Acquisition and Conservation of the Andrews Community Forest**

12 In 2018, the Town of Richmond, with the assistance of Vermont Land Trust and the Town’s Conservation  
13 Reserve Fund, purchased the 428-acre, largely wooded parcel from the Andrews family to create a new  
14 community forest. Simultaneous with the sale, a [Conservation Easement](#) ([Appendix A](#)) was conveyed to  
15 both the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to protect the property’s  
16 natural resources and ensure public access in perpetuity.

### 18 **A1.3 The Indigenous Land Acknowledgment**

19 [BE: Suggest moving the two paragraphs below to Section 10 with other “Legal Agreements”]  
20 [IS: While it appears that historical references can be specific to Abenaki people (recognized by the State  
21 of VT, though not Federally), current and future references could refer generically to ‘Indigenous People’.  
22 See [https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2025-02-21/statehouse-visit-abenaki-first-nations-press-  
23 vermont-lawmakers-denounce-state-recognized-tribes](https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2025-02-21/statehouse-visit-abenaki-first-nations-press-vermont-lawmakers-denounce-state-recognized-tribes) [IS: Advice has been sought from Town Manager.]  
24 Andrews Community Forest is located within Ndakinna (in-DAH-kee-NAH), the homeland of the  
25 Western Abenaki people, who have a unique connection to this land and have been its traditional stewards  
26 for millennia. For many generations before the European colonists arrived, the Abenaki people harvested  
27 animals, nuts, plants, berries, fiber, and timber in these forests, without degrading their ecological health.  
28 The Indigenous people who preceded the colonists created an extensive system of trails throughout the  
29 Green Mountains that attest to the extended relationships between the Abenaki people and other tribes,  
30 who also used these forests, and who took refuge here as the settlers drove them from their homes.  
31 The Town of Richmond acknowledges that we have access to this land because it was taken without  
32 consent and that our ability to make decisions about its management rests on this historic injustice. The  
33 Andrews Community Forest Committee therefore acknowledges the Abenaki people’s rights to use this  
34 land in perpetuity and welcomes the Abenaki people as partners in our forest management. We aim to  
35 honor and respect the Abenaki people through responsible forest management and sustainable land use.  
36 We will strive to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into our management practices to foster a  
37 healthy forest community and to restore a healthy balance between human needs and the needs of the  
38 nonhuman species in the forest ([Appendix B Indigenous recognition](#)). We say their name, and we name

1 trails using the Western Abenaki language, to remind us that the Abenaki people are the Original People  
2 of the Dawnland, Ndaakinnna, out of respect for their culture and special relationship to the land, and to  
3 acknowledge their historic and ongoing contributions to our community.

#### 4 **A1.4 Governance of the Andrews Community Forest**

5 The Town of Richmond Selectboard is ultimately responsible for the management and stewardship of the  
6 Town-owned Andrews Community Forest. The Selectboard has delegated to the Andrews Community  
7 Forest Committee (ACFC), charging it with meeting the priorities and goals outlined in the Town Forest  
8 Management Plan, or as directed by the Selectboard or Town Manager and subject to the Conservation  
9 Easement and [ACFC Bylaws](#).

10

11 The ACFC is a nine-person committee. The Richmond Conservation Commission and the Richmond  
12 Trails Committee each appoint a current member of their respective committee to sit on the ACFC.  
13 Additionally, the Conservation Commission and Trails Committee ~~shall~~ each recommend one person who  
14 is not a member of their respective committee for appointment to the ACFC. In order to incorporate  
15 Indigenous perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge into ACF management, the ACFC will seek  
16 to fill at least one of its seats with an Abenaki tribal citizen (see **Appendix B**: Indigenous recognition).  
17 ACFC will engage with the local ~~Abenaki~~ **Indigenous** community to identify potential ACFC members.  
18 **[SP: comment: When does this happen? Every time a seat opens? Have we been doing this?]**

#### 19 **A1.4.1 Purpose of the Committee**

20

21 The purpose of the Andrews Community Forest Committee is to:

- 22 • Serve as representatives of the Town in decisions related to the management of the Andrews  
23 Community Forest, with ultimate approval of the Selectboard.
- 24 • Oversee management of the Community Forest responsibly and in accordance with the  
25 Comprehensive Management Plan, the Conservation Easement, and the Forestry Management  
26 Plan.
- 27 • Act as a liaison with the Vermont Land Trust when input or approval is needed.
- 28 • Lead the management planning process whenever updates are needed to the Comprehensive  
29 Management Plan.
- 30 • Provide regular opportunities for public engagement with the Community Forest and in the  
31 planning/management of this community-owned property.
- 32 • Educate the public about the Community Forest.
- 33 • **Stay up to date on measures to maintain the ecological integrity and functionality of forests such**  
34 **as the ACF and provide the public with meaningful, sustainable recreational and educational**  
35 **opportunities.**

36

37 Furthermore, the ACFC agrees to strive towards the following guiding tenets by demonstrating an  
38 ongoing commitment to:

- 1 • Providing meaningful, sustainable public access and outdoor recreation opportunities while
- 2 simultaneously providing meaningful ecological protections and enhancements including **the**
- 3 **Forestry plan's design to boost biodiversity.**
- 4 • Learning more about the property and its natural history.
- 5 • Work together with all of the Town's residents as their representatives

6  
7 **VISION:** The Andrews Community Forest will serve Richmond as a thriving ecosystem where  
8 conservation, education, and recreation harmoniously coexist. Through sustainable management  
9 practices, we aim to preserve the forest's ecological integrity and contributions to its forest block, while  
10 providing opportunities for local community engagement, environmental education, innovative forestry  
11 practices, and outdoor recreation. Together, we strive to create a model of responsible land management  
12 where generations connect with and enjoy nature, share in the Forest's stewardship, and foster a deep  
13 appreciation for the rich biodiversity and cultural heritage of our region.

14  
15 **MISSION** (representing a concise form of the 'Purposes' spelled out in the Easement):

16 The ACFC's mission is to manage the Andrews Community Forest to uphold the Purposes and other  
17 directives of the Conservation Easement as well as those found in applicable local, state and  
18 federal policies and mandates. We will:

- 19 1. Protect its productive forestland, wildlife habitats, biological diversity, natural communities, riparian  
20 buffers, wetlands, soil and water quality, and native flora and fauna, along with the ecological processes<sup>1</sup>  
21 that sustain them.
- 22 2. Keep the ACF available for public use and enjoyment, including non-motorized, non-commercial  
23 recreational, educational, and other appropriate community uses.
- 24 3. Conserve the ACF's open space values and scenic resources for current and future generations
- 25 4. Guide the Forest's management through open, public discussions and decision-making.

## 26 27 **A2. History, Background and Existing Conditions**

28 Documentation about the ACF and its surrounding lands is available via State resources updated with new  
29 information provided by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) through its 2024 [Vermont](#)  
30 [Conservation Design](#) initiative and updated [BioFinder](#) web site (together with continuing updates by  
31 VGIS ([Link – Vermont Center for Geographic Information ?](#))). Specific ACF and local sources include  
32 Arrowwood's [Science to Action](#), the UVM [Field Naturalist Report](#) (Glynn, G., Hagen, E., & Naughton,  
33 M. (January 2019). Landscape Analysis and Wildlife in the Andrews Community Forest, Richmond,  
34 Vermont. University of Vermont). These provide appreciation of key landscape features and the wildlife  
35 and ecology. These resources also inform decisions regarding Forest uses in general and as stipulated by  
36 the Forest [Easement](#) (the [Richmond Town Plan](#) and other governing Documents (Richmond Zoning and  
37 State and Federal laws and regulations).

---

<sup>1</sup> Typical ecological processes for a Vermont forest include succession, carbon sequestration, natural disturbances, and the interaction of biotic (organisms) and abiotic (climate and soil) factors, all contributing to a dynamic and resilient ecosystem.

## 1 **A2.1 General Property Description and Background**

2 The Andrews Community Forest is a 428-acre, largely forested parcel just outside Richmond Village in  
3 Chittenden County. It is part of the State-designated, 72,000-acre Mt. Mansfield Forest Block, and abuts  
4 6,000 acres of forestland within that block. The State’s [Vermont Conservation Design](#) project, which  
5 prioritizes Vermont’s lands and waters for their contributions to landscape-level ecological integrity,  
6 gives the ACF its highest priority rankings for interior forest integrity and wildlife connectivity. The ACF  
7 is one of eight large parcels that inspired the Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project<sup>2</sup>, a  
8 landscape-scale conservation effort focused on safeguarding important forest blocks and habitat  
9 connectors between and alongside Camel’s Hump State Park and Mount Mansfield State Forest.

10  
11 The property is a diverse forestland with two small meadows, three headwater streams, at least two vernal  
12 pools and several small wetland areas. Among the natural communities<sup>3</sup> identified in the ACF are several  
13 areas of Dry Oak Forest, Dry Red Oak-White Pine Forest, and Dry Oak-Hickory-Hophornbeam Forest,  
14 which are uncommon natural communities in Vermont. The ACF’s oak and beech hard-mast stands serve  
15 as important food sources in the landscape for bears, deer, turkeys and other wide-ranging animals, along  
16 with fishers, porcupines and many birds and small mammals. Vermont Conservation Design ranks the  
17 quality of the ACF’s natural communities, generally clustered above the powerlines, “Highest Priority”  
18 and “High Priority” for their ecological integrity and functionality.

19  
20 Certain features of the ACF have special importance to particular species. For example, its low elevation,  
21 southerly facing hemlock stands are vital wintering areas for deer. **Unfragmented interior areas serve as**  
22 **foraging and nesting grounds for wood thrush and ovenbirds.** Recent timber harvesting and blowdowns  
23 have created patches of the Vermont’s increasingly scarce, early successional habitat, required by ruffed  
24 grouse, American woodcock, golden winged warblers and other species. The ACF’s vernal pools provide  
25 essential breeding areas for salamanders and frogs.

26  
27 *[BE: Good points below, but this early in the document it’s delaying getting to the meat such as other*  
28 *challenges ACF faces: invasive plants, insects and diseases, and the effects of changing climate.] [IS:*  
29 *Some of this has been done?]*

## 30 **A2.2 Geology, Topography, and Climate**

### 31 **A2.2.1 Topography and Aspect**

32 The Andrews Community Forest is mostly south-facing, with elevations ranging from 400’ to 1240’  
33 above mean sea level. Much of the terrain is steep but there are some flatter areas north of the parking lot  
34 and along the forest’s southeastern boundary.

---

<sup>2</sup> More information on CCUP is available [here](#) on page 35.

<sup>3</sup> **Defined** as “an interacting assemblage of organisms, their physical environment, and the natural processes that affect them.”

## 1 **A2.2.2 Biophysical Region**

2 The Andrews Community Forest is located within the **Northern** Green Mountains Biophysical Region,  
3 **bridging into** the Champlain Hills Region LR-1. This region is part of the Appalachian Mountain chain  
4 that extends from Alabama north to Québec. It includes Vermont’s highest mountain (Mount Mansfield at  
5 4,393 feet) and includes its coldest climate, and the greatest annual precipitation (72 inches). The bedrock  
6 is primarily acidic, composed of non-calcareous schists, phyllites, gneisses, and granofels. Northern  
7 hardwood forests blanket the region on the mountain slopes up to about 2,500 feet, above which yellow  
8 birch and red spruce are dominant. Spruce-fir forests occupy the higher slopes and summits, with alpine  
9 meadows above 3,500 feet. The extensive, unfragmented forests of this region provide habitat for many  
10 species of wildlife that thrive in remote, interior forest conditions as well as high-elevation forests. The  
11 heavy precipitation and deep snows in the mountains feed some of the state’s largest rivers.

## 12 **A2.2.3 Bedrock Geology**

13 The Andrews Community Forest contains both Underhill and Pinnacle bedrock Formations. The western  
14 part of the forest, from its northernmost point over is Underhill, and the eastern area is Pinnacle. Both  
15 formations are metamorphic sedimentary rocks, formed by sediments collecting at the bottom of an  
16 ancient sea, stacking on top of each other, then metamorphosing and compacting into rock during the  
17 Taconic Orogeny, the event that created the Green Mountains. As metamorphic rocks, they are typically  
18 dense and non-porous and have cracks and visible fractures.

19  
20 The Pinnacle Formation is made of schistose greywacke rock, metamorphosed from bits of rock, mud,  
21 and debris that had already broken down somewhat from their original state. It is gray to buff in color and  
22 the stripes of varying layers in the rock are generally visible. The minerals present are quartz, sericite,  
23 biotite, and chlorite. The formation dates back at least to the Cambrian Period, 500 to 630 million years  
24 ago.

25  
26 The Underhill Formation is a silvery-green color and a combination of phyllite and schist rocks. The  
27 minerals present are chlorite, muscovite, and quartz. Compared to the Pinnacle Formation, the Underhill  
28 Formation bedrock also dates back to at least the Cambrian Period but has coarser grains.

## 30 **A2.2.4 Surficial Geology**

31 Surficial geology refers to loose materials deposited above the bedrock layer by wind, water, or glaciers.  
32 Like much of the Green Mountain Region, the Andrews Community Forest is covered in rocks deposited  
33 when the glaciers receded at the end of the last ice age (roughly 14,000 years ago). Fine silt, pebbles,  
34 stones, and boulders of all sizes deposited by glaciers are known as glacial till. The glacial till covers the  
35 underlying bedrock surface to form the surface shape of the visible landscape. In addition to glacial till,  
36 soil particles deposited by the post-glacial Lake Vermont, which filled much of the Champlain and  
37 western Winooski River Valley following the retreat of the Laurentide Ice Sheet up to an elevation of  
38 about 600 feet above sea level, cover much of the southern portions of the Andrews Community Forest.

39

1 In the Andrews Community Forest, where the bedrock is not exposed, till covers the land and is the  
2 source of stones in the forest’s rocky soils. The glacial till is thicker in the valleys and thinner in the  
3 uplands. Many of the exposed uplands in the forest have experienced significant post-glacial erosion,  
4 leaving only rubble and scattered boulders on top of the bedrock. [IS: include mention of soil erosion due  
5 to post-colonial clearance and agriculture?]. Topography and soil types and depths may place limitations  
6 on recreational usage and development in some parts of the ACF.

## 7 **A2.2.5 Climate**

8 The Andrews Community Forest is part of the Northern Green Mountains and Champlain Hills LR-1  
9 biophysical regions, which have a cooler climate and more precipitation than other parts of Vermont. The  
10 ACF is also significantly influenced by the Champlain Valley biophysical region, which is warmer and  
11 features a longer growing season than most other parts of the state. Coupled with its southerly aspect, this  
12 produces a forest dominated by tree species adapted to warm, dry sites with poorer soils on upper  
13 elevations, and those adapted to slightly richer forest soils on lower elevations (due to the influence of  
14 Lacustrine deposits).

## 15 **A2.3. Cultural History**

### 16 **A2.3.1 Indigenous History (See Appendix D)**

17 *[BE Suggest shortening sections A2.3.1-3 consistent with neighboring material. Move deleted content to*  
18 *the Appendix.]*

19 Richmond is located within Ndakinna (in-DAH-kee-NAH), the homeland of the Western Abenaki people,  
20 also known as the Original People, who have a unique connection to this land and have been its  
21 traditional caretakers since at least the last Ice Age. For hundreds of generations before the European  
22 colonists arrived and applied their own borders and labels, the Western Abenaki people lived and worked  
23 on this land, stewarding resources in an ecologically sustainable way. Given that ACF lies along  
24 important east-west and north-south transportation and trade routes, other tribes are likely to have visited  
25 the forest as well.

26 Abenaki oral tradition and written accounts, historical resources, and archaeological studies of prehistoric  
27 sites in Richmond inform our understanding of how the ACF landscape has been stewarded and its  
28 continued importance to Indigenous people of our town and region. General resources include books such  
29 as those by Wiseman (1995, 2001), an Abenaki elder and scholar, and Haviland and Power (1994), as  
30 well as numerous online resources. Appendix 3 in Wiseman (2001) lists many written, video, and  
31 museum resources regarding Abenaki cultural history.

32 Specifically for the Richmond area, archaeological studies in the 1990s near the bridges in Jonesville over  
33 the Huntington and Winooski rivers have yielded valuable physical evidence of occupation and forest use  
34 by Indigenous peoples before colonization (Thomas et al. 1995; Doherty et al. 1996). These sites were  
35 radiocarbon dated to approximately 1040 AD (near Winooski bridge) and 1500 AD (near Huntington  
36 bridge), and thus considered to represent the Middle to Late Woodland period. The sites show that  
37 animals “including black bear, deer, beaver, porcupine, muskrat, fisher, mink, skunk, cottontail, red

1 squirrel, and chipmunks were taken for both meat and pelts. Various nuts, including butternut, hickory  
2 nuts, beech nuts, and acorns from red oak” were also collected and processed for consumption and storage  
3 (Thomas et al. 1995). Diverse tree species were used for firewood at the Huntington River site, including  
4 beech, maple, birch, red pine, eastern hemlock, elm, eastern hophornbeam, eastern cottonwood, red pine,  
5 and possibly alder. No evidence of maize was found at these sites, even as maize, beans, and other plants  
6 were being cultivated at that time along the Winooski River closer to Lake Champlain. Thomas (2008)  
7 surmises that these Jonesville sites were seasonal encampments occupied between September and late  
8 December/early January to collect and process forest resources. Such findings suggest that the forests  
9 where ACF is now located were largely stewarded and used for hunting and gathering, rather than  
10 agriculture. This pattern concurs with broader geographical accounts of Abenaki practices, such as  
11 Wiseman (2001:27), who stated that the Abenaki “... had smaller seasonal camps along most rivers eight  
12 thousand winters ago” and described gathering and hunting activities in the uplands.

13 The Jonesville archeological digs also uncovered the dramatic environmental changes that occurred as a  
14 result of forest clearing by European settlers (Thomas et al. 1995). The alluvial terrace on the Huntington  
15 River, which the Abenaki families occupied over 500 years ago, had developed slowly over thousands of  
16 years with minimal flooding evident in the analysis of sediments. In contrast, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early  
17 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, catastrophic flash flooding became more common as upland and riparian forests were  
18 cleared for farming. Thomas (2007:9) noted that “between roughly 1810 and 1880, four to seven feet of  
19 sand, gravel, and even small cobbles were deposited on the terrace surface.” These extraordinary floods  
20 covered or destroyed most evidence of precontact use and settlements. More recently, as abandoned  
21 farmland grew back to forest, flooding has declined. “Since the early decades of the twentieth century,  
22 less than eight inches of alluvium have been deposited on the terrace surface next to the Huntington  
23 bridge, and most of this was probably due to the great flood of 1927” (Thomas 2007:10).

### 24 **A2.3.2. Plants and Animals of Special Cultural Importance for Western** 25 **Abenaki**

26 A number of forest species were and continue to be of special cultural importance to the Abenaki people,  
27 and as such deserve special management consideration. Among tree species, these include black ash  
28 (*Fraxinus nigra*, also called brown ash and *maalakws* in Abenaki) used for basketry, and white birch  
29 (*Betula papyrifera*, also called canoe birch, its bark called *wigwa* in Abenaki) for canoes, homes, and  
30 containers. Unfortunately, black ash populations are currently highly threatened by the emerald ash borer,  
31 which is already present in Richmond. Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*, in Abenaki *pagon* or *bagon*) were  
32 among the trees highly valued for food, medicines, materials, and dyes (Haviland and Power 1994;  
33 Wiseman 1995b, 2001). This culturally important species is also threatened. The butternut canker fungus,  
34 first found in Vermont in 1983, now infects nearly all butternut trees causing dieback and often death.  
35 Maple sugaring (*Pkwamhadin* – “gathering of maple sap” (Chenevert 2021)) was an important seasonal  
36 activity among the Western Abenaki, one which was taught to colonists (Cotnoir n.d.).

37 Thomas (et al. 1995:61-64) lists the uses by the Abenaki of some thirty species of trees and shrubs  
38 abundant in the mixed deciduous forests of Vermont, many of which are found in ACF. Wiseman (1995a,  
39 1995b, 2001) describes a wide range of forest plant species that were and are collected for construction  
40 materials, food, medicines, and dyes by Abenaki people. In Appendix 2, Wiseman (2001) lists many

1 forest plants used in Abenaki herbal medicines by the maladies that they treat. A complete list of  
2 culturally important species found now or in the past at ACF would be valuable to develop for use by the  
3 ACFC in management decisions and educational materials. Ideally, such a list would be compiled, and  
4 important species prioritized, in partnership with the Abenaki people.

5 Before colonization, the Abenaki likely hunted and trapped a wide range of animal species for food and  
6 pelts in the forested landscape where ACF is now located. Thomas et al. (1995:65-75) describes the  
7 traditional uses of the 11 species of animals found at the Huntington River site. Wiseman (2001)  
8 describes the relationship and importance of many species to the Abenaki, as well as how they were  
9 traditionally hunted and used. The acts of hunting and fishing, as well as the resulting food, skins and  
10 other usable body parts (e.g., bones and sinew), remain culturally important for many Indigenous peoples.  
11 As mentioned for forest flora above, it would be valuable to develop a prioritized list of ACF’s animal  
12 species of cultural importance in consultation with Abenaki partners, including uses, stewardship, and  
13 both Abenaki and scientific names.

### 14 **A2.3.3. Abenaki language and the ACF**

15 The Western Abenaki language, which is in the Algonquian family of languages, is considered critically  
16 endangered by UNESCO (2010). It is a descriptive language based on root words specifying physical  
17 qualities. For example, the region’s largest river is named Winoskisibo – built from *Winos* means onion,  
18 *ki* means land, and *sibo* means river. Thus the Winooski River is named for the ramps and other wild  
19 onions which were known to grow in abundance along its shores. Maintaining the Abenaki language and  
20 culture is deeply connected to the Abenaki homeland and its stewardship. For example, Cotnoir (n.d.), a  
21 citizen of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation, wrote that “...sugaring still functions as a  
22 time for our community members to gather and connect with the woods and one another. Through  
23 sugaring, we continue to cultivate a working relationship with the land, while practicing our language –  
24 Western Abenaki.”

25 Conservation efforts, such as the ACF, can inadvertently contribute to the erasure of Indigenous presence  
26 when introducing and perpetuating nonnative place names and management practices. Conversely, the  
27 ACF can support the revival of the Western Abenaki language and culture by supporting the use of  
28 Abenaki language for places, practices, flora, and fauna in the naming of trails, educational materials, and  
29 signage. **Appendix B** includes suggestions developed by the Richmond Racial Equity committee in  
30 collaboration with Abenaki tribal citizens and culture keepers. If ACFC decides to go beyond that list,  
31 Abenaki culture keepers should be consulted.

### 32 **A2.3.4 History After European Settlement**

33 European settlers arrived in the Richmond area in the 1770’s. “Gray Rocks Farm,” as it was formerly  
34 known, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 “because of its dual architectural  
35 and agricultural significance” (Longstreth 2007). The farm exemplifies the growth and development of  
36 dairy farming in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Vermont. The land that is now the Community Forest was largely  
37 the farm’s pasture and woodlot, and most of the farmland and remains of the historic farm’s agricultural

1 buildings are on land now owned by Maple Wind Farm and protected by an agricultural conservation  
2 easement The farm house and immediate yard are privately owned.

3  
4 The existing forest parcel, along with 212 additional acres, was first farmed by James Butler, beginning  
5 around 1800. He constructed a farmhouse, blacksmith shop, and an English barn before selling the  
6 property to Asa Rhodes in 1813. The property remained in the Rhodes family for over a hundred years,  
7 passing from father to son.

8  
9 The 1850 agricultural census indicates that the Rhodes farm was primarily a dairy farm, with 45 cows  
10 producing 1,800 lbs. of butter and 15,000 lbs. of cheese annually. As was common in Richmond at the  
11 time, the farm also had other livestock – horses, chickens, sheep, and swine. The Rhodes also harvested  
12 125 tons of hay and 200 lbs. of maple syrup annually and grew many different crops: corn, oats, rye,  
13 potatoes, peas, and beans.

14  
15 Over the years, ownership passed first to Asa’s son, Cornelius, and then to his son Edward, around the  
16 turn of the century. The farm continued to grow and ultimately thrived as the market for butter and cheese  
17 expanded. Given the farm’s success, in 1917, Edward reconstructed the English barn into a large U-  
18 shaped barn that more than doubled the space available for the cows. The new barn also added space for  
19 horses, a granary, and a milk house and he added a silo for storing cereals elsewhere on the property.

20  
21 In 1923, Edward Rhodes sold the farm to Clarence Andrews. Andrews continued dairying operations on  
22 the property until 1978. The Andrews also operated a successful inn, the Gray Rocks Inn, from 1928 to  
23 1941. Ina Andrews, Clarence’s wife, ran the inn, cooking three meals a day for guests from  
24 Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. During this period, the Richmond area was full of small inns  
25 for travelers looking to experience the idyllic countryside. The tourism business was vital to the  
26 Richmond economy and an important period in the town’s history.

27  
28 After Ken’s death, Everett and his wife, Mary Jo, ran the dairy farm on their own, and also sold firewood  
29 and hay from the property. They built a rustic cabin on the northern portion as a deer camp which they  
30 used into the 1990s. Only two 1950s automobiles remain.

31  
32 Everett and Mary Jo raised four daughters on the land – Abigail, Amy, Jennifer and Kate. After  
33 shutting down farming operations, the family generously facilitated the transfer and  
34 conservation of the property. What had largely been the farm’s timberland, pastures and places  
35 of childhood exploration and adventures became Richmond’s first community forest.

36  
37 In 2018, Angus Cummings, a UVM student, interviewed several of the Andrews sisters and other  
38 townspeople familiar with the recent history of the parcel for his thesis. It includes historical photos of the  
39 site contributed by the Andrews family.

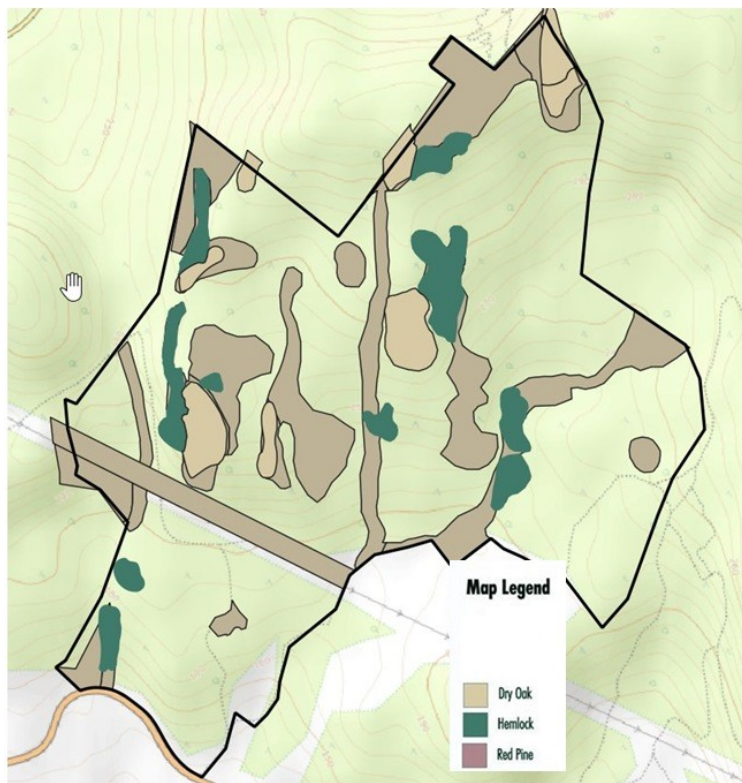
### 1 A2.3.5 Remaining Historical Sites and Features

2 Today, all that is left of the many farmstead buildings on the community forest parcel are two former  
3 farmstead sites with stone foundations. One foundation is on the northwestern side of the property, near  
4 the VAST trail. The other remaining foundations are near the end of the eastern farm road. One remaining  
5 foundation, set slightly apart, was either a springhouse or a small barn. The adjacent parcel to the east,  
6 was also part of Gray Rocks Farm and the Andrews Farmstead. The 1813 farmhouse and barn remain  
7 there, just outside of the town-owned forest property. In 2013 Maple Wind Farm bought 189 acres from  
8 the Andrews family largely below Route 2, which is conserved by an agricultural use easement On  
9 January 13th, 2014 the barn located across the street from the ACF entrance, burned down from an  
10 electrical fire. Maple Wind Farm rebuilt the barn in the same location in 2014.

### 12 A2.4 Ecological and Water Resources

13 See Appendix C: ~~Background to Ecological Resources and Stewardship~~

### 15 A2.5. Forestry



Figure\_: Map showing principal tree species locations, using data provided at the [Arrowwood site](#).

Historical records indicate that former owners actively managed the forest. In 2011 - 2014, timber management occurred on a western portion of the property. Western areas were previously logged in 2001-2003 and eastern areas were logged in 1994-1997. The most recent timber harvest was completed in the spring of 2021 under the direction of then Chittenden County Forester, Ethan Tapper. In 2024 the Town began working with Chittenden County Forester Brandon Benedict.

There are a number of reasons to continue to employ active forest management on the Andrews Community Forest. Active forest management can be an important part of land restoration, conservation, maintaining the ecological integrity of native ecosystems, retaining the working landscape of Vermont, and

40 supporting the local forest products economy in Vermont. Outside of infestations of non-native invasive  
41 plants, forests do not require human intervention to self-perpetuate and function ecologically. Active

1 forest management, though, can accelerate the process by which forests acquire characteristics we may  
2 find desirable, such as:

- 3 - Healthy wildlife habitat
- 4 - Old forest characteristics
- 5 - Resilience to disturbances (climate change, invasive pests, etc)
- 6 - Carbon storage and/or sequestration
- 7 - A steady supply of forest products

8 Active management in the form of timber harvesting can meet the goals of creating the forest products we  
9 use while promoting the other attributes as well. The forest products industry, in addition to being  
10 economically important in Vermont, can support the maintenance of healthy, intact ecosystems by  
11 providing the means for enhancing wildlife habitat, elevating the health and resilience of forested  
12 ecosystems, and generating periodic income to fund important stewardship activities. It is also a source of  
13 local, renewable resources in the form of forest products.

14

15 Forests, such as ACF, can sustain plant and wildlife species of special cultural importance to Abenaki  
16 peoples. Forest management for timber on municipal lands can serve as a demonstration of responsible  
17 and sustainable forest management, educating people on how to harvest forest resources in a sustainable  
18 way. If forest management incorporates traditional practices by engaging Abenaki foresters and culture  
19 keepers, it offers the opportunity to demonstrate historical and contemporary Indigenous forest  
20 stewardship practices.

21

22 Uneven aged silvicultural systems (single and group tree selection) will generally mimic the scale,  
23 intensity, and frequency of disturbance that the forests of Vermont historically received prior to European  
24 settlement. With these systems either single, scattered trees or groups of trees (up to about 2 acres) are  
25 removed in a single treatment. These mimic historical disturbances such as windthrow, ice damage, or  
26 large downburst events. In forest management choices of which trees to retain and which to harvest are  
27 guided by a combination of ecological principles (which tree is “healthier,” which trees are in use, or may  
28 be used, by wildlife), and human desires (the management objectives). Economic considerations (which  
29 tree is a more valuable species or may produce a more valuable product in the future) may contradict the  
30 'non-commercial' stipulation in the Easement. Trees in forests, without any intervention by humans, will  
31 naturally die due to old age, disease, or disturbance. Active forest management seeks to guide which trees  
32 continue to occupy the forest and which will succumb to mortality; thus accelerating the accumulation of  
33 desirable forest characteristics (for example increased carbon storage or wildlife habitat).

34

35 The ability of a forest to respond to and maintain its health during disturbance is known as resiliency.  
36 Simple forests lack a diversity of tree species or structure, because of this they have fewer pathways to  
37 recovery if a disturbance occurs. Complex forests, those with greater species diversity or increased  
38 structural complexity, have more pathways to recovery following disturbance, and are therefore more  
39 resilient. Forests today encounter regular natural disturbance events, together with human-related events.  
40 In the face of an unstable climate, invasive exotic plants, animals and pathogens, and many other  
41 unpredictable problems, it is prudent to manage forests for resiliency in the course of any long-term forest  
42 management planning. Our goal is to encourage diversity, both in terms of species composition and  
43 function, the age spectrum of significant species and consistent with other activities within the  
44 management plan. Uneven aged silvicultural systems will accomplish the goal of encouraging complexity

1 the forest, and therefore the forest’s resiliency.

2

### 3 **A2.6. Recreation**

4

5 Previously, the Forest was not posted and hunting, walking, snowshoeing, and skiing were allowed. It  
6 was also managed for timber, leaving logging roads scattered throughout the property. Some of these  
7 roads are unsuitable for increased recreational use due to their steep grades, poor drainage, and potential  
8 for erosion. Others could be lightly maintained for continuing use as footpaths, supplementing multi- and  
9 single-use trails in appropriate areas. Other roads (the VELCO road, the Maple Wind Farm road on the  
10 eastern boundary, and parts of the former VAST trail) act as important recreational and management  
11 corridors throughout the property and remain in use. New trails and a parking area have made the Forest  
12 easier to access.

13

14 The VYCC campus, which adjoins the property to the east, has a network of trails. There is currently a  
15 former VAST trail connecting the two properties and their trail networks.

16

17 Adjoining the ACF to the north is a 173-acre property currently owned by David Sunshine and Carol  
18 Jordan, which contains a multi-use trail network connecting to trails on adjoining properties and beyond,  
19 including into Jericho. Trail maps of the area are available online at [IS: The Town’s RTC website  
20 <https://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-meetings/trails-committee>] RichmondMountainTrails.org and  
21 [TrailForks.com](https://www.trailforks.com) (the RTC proposed favored App). The Sunshine-Jordan property is conserved through VT  
22 Forests, Parks and Recreation. Motorized travel is not permitted there and there is no parking at the  
23 trailhead.

24

### 25 **A2.7. Agriculture**

26 Maple Wind Farm, **the adjoining landowner to the south and east**, is a diversified pasture-based livestock,  
27 poultry, and organic vegetable farm. **This farm had an informal agreement with the Andrews family to use**  
28 **two fenced-in meadow areas for livestock grazing. Many years ago** Maple Wind Farm had placed high  
29 tensile electric fencing around their grazing area in the community forest’s lower meadow and upper  
30 meadow. A **human** gate through the fence allows for public access to the meadow when the pasture is not  
31 in use for grazing. When the pasture is in use, the “cutover trail” is closed.

32

33 **The “lower meadow” and the “upper meadow” under the power lines, used to have about 30 adult**  
34 **bovines and 30 calves for 10-16 days per year. The fenced-in meadow lands have not been used for**  
35 **grazing or any agricultural purpose since perhaps 2010. The ACF Committee did have conversations**  
36 **with Maple Wind Farm perhaps in 2018 about entering into a license agreement at nominal charge for**  
37 **agricultural use of the two fenced meadows. Those conversations ended without final terms established.**  
38 **The Committee would like Maple Wind to continue these conversations and consider finalizing the**  
39 **agricultural license agreement.**

40 Maple Wind Farm has a **25’** right-of-way for agricultural purposes over the **old farm road on the eastern**  
41 **side** of the Andrews Community Forest extending from the **then** Dyer-Chadwick property on Route 2 to  
42 Maple Wind Farm’s upper meadow. The Town has a **25’** right of way over the northern edge of Maple  
43 Wind Farm’s upper meadow **over what was** previously the VAST trail.

1  
2 *[BE:I suggest deleting Sections (A2.7.1-3) as it is covered later in the document, and with a note that we*  
3 *should also briefly describe the Conservation Easement and its Purposes.]*

## 4 **A2.8. Legal Agreements on the Property**

5 There are four recorded easement agreements as follows: the east / west 150' wide VELCO (Vermont  
6 Transco, LLC) utility easement, the adjoining to the north and parallel 100' to 125' wide east / west  
7 Green Mountain Power, Co. utility easement, the Maple Wind Farm, 25' farm road right of way on the  
8 eastern side of the Andrews Community Forest, and the Vermont Land Trust conservation easement.  
9 A fifth easement, which has been fully agreed to and will likely be recorded in early 2025, is the VELCO,  
10 surveyed, 25', utility road right of way easement, leading from US Rte. 2 heading north up the existing  
11 utility road to the two utility right of way easements. Approval by Vermont Land Trust and the  
12 Selectboard is required for any changes in easement agreements.

### 13 **A2.8.1 Agricultural Lease**

14 Maple Wind Farm is an adjoining landowner of several hundred acres of the original Andrew farm.  
15 Maple Wind Farm has historically used eight to twelve acres of what is now the Community Forest for  
16 grazing cattle. The fenced in lower meadow and fenced upper meadows have not had cattle on them  
17 since perhaps 2015. *The ACF Committee is interested in continuing to have Maple Wind Farm use these*  
18 *meadows and will explore the possibility of a long-term license agreement. These meadows should be*  
19 *brush hogged so trees and brush don't over take them.*  
20 .

### 21 **A2.8.2 Powerline Rights-of-Way: VELCO**

22 A VELCO powerline runs east/west through the community forest *subject to a 150' wide utility*  
23 *easement.* VELCO, the committee, the Town Manager, the Selectboard and the Vermont Land Trust  
24 have been working collaboratively to provide VELCO with its desired '25 wide perpetual utility road  
25 Right of Way easement, over the existing utility road. In 2018, VELCO improved a road from the forest  
26 entrance on Route 2 to the powerline; they used the upper landing area to stage their work. Following this  
27 work, they re-seeded the landing and the road above the landing and installed waterbars on the road below  
28 the landing. At certain periods, VELCO may need to close some of the forest to perform larger projects  
29 on the powerline. The ACF Committee should coordinate with VELCO to prepare for such events and  
30 fully inform the public of the closure.

### 31 **A2.8.3 Powerline Rights-of-Way: Green Mountain Power**

32 Green Mountain Power has a 75' to 100' utility right-of-way adjacent north of the VELCO utility line in  
33 the same east / west powerline corridor.  
34 Within each of these two utility corridors, VELCO and Green Mountain Power manages vegetation  
35 growth. The Committee will work to better understand the vegetation management goals and practices,  
36 the landowner's (Town's) rights, to advise the Selectboard to make an informed decision about vegetation

**Draft version for June 23rd 2025**

1 management within the Powerline corridor, and to communicate this decision broadly to Community  
2 Forest visitors. A fifth easement, which has been fully agreed to and will likely be recorded in early  
3 2025, is the VELCO, surveyed, 25', utility road right of way, leading from US Rte. 2 heading north up the  
4 existing utility road to the two utility right of way easements. Approval by Vermont Land Trust and the  
5 Selectboard is required for any changes in easement agreements.

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## Part B: Management Objectives and Actions

### B1.1 Posting of Town Forest Rules

Posted rules shall be posted at the kiosk and trails providing access from neighboring lands (Note to ACFC: need to update the posted rules and install):

Current Rules as posted:

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Andrews\\_Community\\_Forest/Meetings/2023/10/Kiosk-Signage\\_29-Sept-2023.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Andrews_Community_Forest/Meetings/2023/10/Kiosk-Signage_29-Sept-2023.pdf)

### B1.2 Parking

Parking is available off of Route 2 across from Maple Wind Farm, at 1129 East Main Street, Richmond and is permitted to accommodate one parked school bus and five parked cars. The Town of Richmond is responsible for maintenance and plowing. The upper landing area can be used for parking during special events, subject to acceptance of an application to the ACFC.

No new car parking shall be designated without ACFC approval. Maintaining low parking capacity is a passive way of controlling density of use.

Bike parking shall be installed in the parking area.

## B2. Comprehensive Management Plan: Process for Updates: Amendments and Revisions

*[BE: This Section B2 precedes management objectives and action items, and describes how they'll be changed?]*

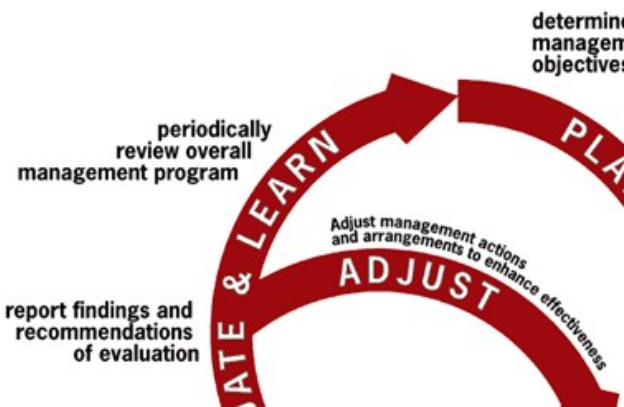
This Comprehensive Management Plan is intended to be a living and evolving document. As the Andrews Community Forest is new to public ownership, there is a need to better understand current and changing conditions on the ground and respond to new conditions that may arise. Adaptive management is an iterative cycle of evaluating and learning, adjusting, planning, and acting. The ACFC is required to make management decisions based on resource management requirements, objectives and current best management practices. *[BE: The preceding sentence should read, "...resource management requirements and objectives, ..."]* In addition, the ACFC is required to gather information on relevant management practices that can guide future management decisions and management plan revisions.

This plan must be reviewed and updated, at a minimum, every ten years, as required by the Conservation Easement. However, more frequent revisions may be necessary as the community's uses of the property and knowledge about it evolve. Updates to the Comprehensive Management Plan can be of two kinds, revisions or amendments, which vary in degree of public outreach and data collection.

1 *[BE: This should define how to determine minor or major changes and define “in the public eye]*  
2 Any amendments to the plan, as suggested by **Figure 3: Adaptive Management Model**, may include  
3 **minor adjustments** made *in the public eye* that improve the effectiveness of management actions or  
4 minor changes to wording.

5 Any **major changes** to the plan objectives or proposed actions require a plan revision, which entails a  
6 planning and outreach process that includes scoping of concerns, collection of any needed data, and a  
7 public engagement process that invites stakeholders and other residents to provide input on proposed  
8 revisions. Such a process may entail a combination of surveys, ecological assessments, field trips, and  
9 public meetings dedicated to the plan revision.

10  
11 Proposed changes to the Comprehensive Management Plan, either amendments or revisions, must be  
12 reviewed and approved by the Vermont Land Trust to ensure compliance with the Conservation Easement  
13 and submitted for approval by the Richmond Selectboard.



16 Figure 3: Adaptive Management Model"

### 18 **B3. Timber Management and Forestry Activities**

19 In November of 2019 the ACFC, Vermont Land Trust, and the Selectboard adopted a [Forest Management](#)  
20 [Plan](#) written by the County Forester Ethan Tapper specific to forestry activities. The document details  
21 how the forest will be managed for its timber and other natural resources. It uses a ‘zone’ approach that  
22 divides the forest into three different management styles for perpetuity and emphasizes a diverse and  
23 resilient forest as well as addresses invasive species management. This Comprehensive Management Plan  
24 provides more detail about the Forest Management Plan that was crafted by Ethan Tapper and adopted by  
25 the Selectboard on November 18, 2019. Additional timber stand improvement (TSI) activities were  
26 completed in the winter of 2022 and included crop tree release as well as selective cutting.

27  
28 Many forest management roads (also called “logging roads,” or “skid trails”) from previous logging  
29 operations still exist in the forest. Some may still serve as a component of a multi-use recreational trail  
30 network, provided that drainage and erosion challenges can be mitigated. The use of these trails for  
31 recreation should not compromise or preclude their utility as forest management roads into the future.

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This Forest Management Plan provides an initial schedule for maintenance and on-going forest management activities by stand and zone. All forestry activities should be in agreement with this document. (Located on the town website; click [here](#) for direct access).

### B3.1 Forestry Management Objectives and Actions

[IS notes: Brandon wrote in an email in January 2025: “I made some small changes to [then] section 2.7 “Forestry”. I did not find any changes to make in [then] section 4.1- objectives. That section felt fine, but more importantly, it is really not my place to define the objectives of the town forest.”]

**Overall Objectives:** Follow the [Forest Management Plan](#) adopted in 2019 to manage forestry activities that improve forest health, wildlife habitat protection and wildlife diversity.

- Utilize multi-aged silvicultural treatments over the majority of the property.
- Avoid creating new permanent openings or wide (> 20 feet wide), roads and trails. **Consider creating** 5-10 acres of young forest/early-successional habitat.
- Utilize management guidelines that enhance the value of the forest for a variety of deep forest species such as bear, fisher, and a variety of songbirds is recommended.
- In Ledge, Talus, and Ridges area, a forested canopy should be maintained over these rock habitats that occur in a forested matrix. The selective removal of trees near these habitats is compatible with continued use by wildlife. Maintain a 100’ buffer from treatments to broken ledge and talus that provide concealment cover for wildlife.
- Mast Stands: Use forest management activities that promote the establishment, maintenance, and persistence of these species within the Forest.

**Objective 2.** Protect natural communities as well as the ecological processes that sustain them. Retain soil integrity, water quality, natural species composition, natural disturbance regimes and natural hydrology.

- Update natural community mapping as more on-the-ground data becomes available.
- All forestry activities shall incorporate steps to retain soil integrity, water quality, natural species composition, natural disturbance regimes, and natural hydrology; Identify and control exotic species with the Forest Management Plan.
- Deer Wintering Areas: The Hemlock and Hemlock-Northern Hardwood forest communities on the parcel could be managed specifically to enhance the conifer overstory and hemlock regeneration.

**Objective 3.** Recognize that forest management in the form of the periodic harvesting of timber is an important part of land conservation, maintaining the working landscape, and supporting the forest products economy in Vermont.

- Employ forest management for timber on municipal lands as a demonstration of responsible, and sustainable forest management, educating residents of Richmond and beyond in how to harvest forest resources in a sustainable way. See Forest Management Plan for harvest dates.
- Hold educational events around forest management activities to inform the public about the rationale and best practices of sustainable forest management.

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**Objective 4.** Manage the ACF to sustain plant and wildlife species of special cultural importance to Abenaki peoples. (When forest management incorporates traditional practices by engaging Abenaki foresters and culture keepers, it offers the opportunity to educate the community about historical and contemporary Indigenous forest stewardship practices.)

- Maintain contact with Abenaki tribal foresters to contribute to future forest management planning and activities. In collaboration with Abenaki partners, identify culturally important species (e.g., black ash) and the stewardship practices needed to sustain them, to inform future forest management activities.

## **B4. Cultural History Management Objectives and Actions**

*[BE: seek advice about Indigenous agreement.]*

In our commitment to Abenaki indigenous, first nation people we have pledged to foster a healthy forest community by incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into our management practices.

**Objective: Provide information for forest visitors about the Indigenous and colonial cultural history of the forest and its context within Richmond.**

- Expand and enhance cultural information about the forest.
- Add interpretive signage about the cultural history of this forest land at historic sites and about other educational materials that explain and celebrate Abenaki language, forest uses and stewardship practices.
- Work with the Abenaki tribes, the Andrews family, and others with cultural knowledge of the forest to host programs and tours about the history and contemporary resources of the ACF.
- Work with Radiate Art to share high quality images of their murals for use by the ACF interpretive materials and signage.

**Objective: Protect remaining cultural features and values.**

- Route trails distant from cultural resources *[SP: What cultural resources exist? Are we referring to ecological resources? Either way, perhaps we could be more specific.]*; provide spur trails if appropriate.

**Objective: Maintain viable populations of plants and wildlife of cultural importance.**

- Coordinate with Chittenden County forester and Abenaki tribal forester(s) to manage black ash trees *[SP: Is this actionable? Aside from tree injections, can we do anything to preserve these trees?]* given its cultural importance and the threat of the emerald ash borer. Identify and protect any threatened butternut trees *[SP: Are there any butternut trees in ACF?]* and any other culturally important species in the ACF.
- Consult with an Abenaki Forester or tribal affiliate upon any management plan revisions and major management activities that may affect cultural resources. **(See Appendix B, Part 3).**

**Objective: Include Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and language in ACF educational materials, management and naming practices.**

- 1 ● Maintain a working relationship with the Western Abenaki People and welcome them to this
- 2 land.
- 3 ● Improve our community’s understanding of the cultural importance of ACF to Indigenous people.
- 4 ● Partner with Abenaki tribal representatives and others to develop and prioritize lists of culturally
- 5 important forest plant, animal and fungal species to help the ACFC manage them sustainably and
- 6 to provide educational materials. Such lists should include Abenaki names, scientific names,
- 7 traditional and current uses, traditional ecological knowledge and stewardship practices, potential
- 8 threats, and other information, stories or sources that would help in their sustainable management.
- 9 ● Choose AFC trail names from the list of Abenaki words for animals of the forest and landscape
- 10 features found in Appendix B, Part 4. These words were proposed and vetted by Abenaki tribal
- 11 citizens and culture keepers.). Take advantage of educational materials and programming for the
- 12 UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022 – 2032. See:
- 13 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/indigenous-languages.html>. Also, for
- 14 exploring the potential for ACF to be an educational site for the Abenaki Trails Project, see:
- 15 <https://abenakitribe.org/abenaki-trails-project>

#### 16 **B4.1 Potential partners regarding ACFC cultural history**

- 17 ● Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, <https://www.abenakination.com/>
- 18 ● The Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation, <https://abenakitribe.org/>
- 19 ● Kerry Wood and Annette Urbschat for consultation regarding the Western Abenaki language
- 20 ● Abenaki Arts and Education Center, <https://abenaki-edu.org/>
- 21 ● Radiate Art, <https://www.radiateartspace.org/>
- 22 ● Richmond Racial Equity
- 23 ● Chittenden County Forester

1

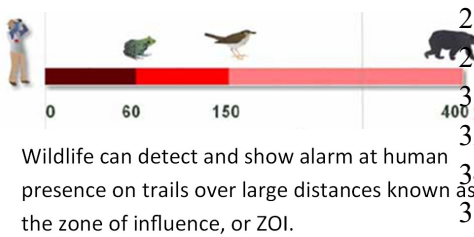
## 2 **B5. Wildlife and Natural Resources Stewardship**

3 [BE: For ease of use, what follows consolidates and condenses into one six-page section the three  
 4 working document sections Ecological Resources, Water Resources, and Wildlife and Natural Resources  
 5 Stewardship. For each topic, an overview is followed by its management objectives and action items.  
 6 Each topic’s background information is moved to a 10-page Appendix C].  
 7 [IS: Note that this section includes updated information and understanding and now recognizes the 2025  
 8 Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department’s “Vermont Conservation Design”.]

### 9 **B5.1 Ecological Resources and Stewardship**

10 The ACF Conservation Easement and Richmond Town Plan call for maintaining the Forest’s ecological  
 11 health and its ability to support biodiversity amid climate and land-use changes. Those functions are also  
 12 critical to sustaining the quality of its many forestry, recreational, agricultural and educational resources  
 13 for our community and beyond. To guide this effort, this Plan uses the Vermont Conservation Design  
 14 (VCD) framework to look at the ACF’s ecological resources from three perspectives: landscape,  
 15 community, and species.

16  
 17 Drawing from this comprehensive approach and numerous research studies, the Plan aims to minimize the  
 18 impacts of human disturbances on sensitive habitats by recognizing “zones of influence,” or ZOIs – areas  
 19 around trails where traffic can affect wildlife, often adversely. [IS: From a footnote in earlier version:  
 20 Zones of influence (ZOIs) are areas within which wildlife can detect and flee or otherwise respond to  
 21 human activity, such as traffic on a trail. ZOIs can range up to and beyond 300 meters, though studies  
 22 show 100 meters to be an acceptable and practical minimum standard for wildlife in Northeastern forests  
 23 such as the ACF.]  
 24



26 For some species in some terrain, ZOIs can extend beyond 1000  
 28 feet. As a general recommendation for New England forests,  
 30 wildlife biologists advise keeping trail traffic 330-400 feet from  
 32 sensitive areas. Considering the habitat quality and sensitivities of  
 34 much of the interior forest north of the former VAST trail,  
 36 limitations are placed on construction of additional trails in that  
 38 area [IS] detailed in Section B6. This guidance, supported by

39 professional ecological assessments, informs this Plan’s strategies to ensure long-term human access to  
 40 and enjoyment of the full ACF without degrading its ecological integrity or many contributions to our  
 41 community.

42

### 43 **B5.2 Landscape-Level Elements**

44

1 Maintaining and enhancing ecological function across the Vermont landscape is fundamental to  
2 conserving biological diversity in its component parts. Much of the ACF, especially above the former  
3 VAST trail, is ranked “Highest Priority” or “Priority” by Vermont’s natural resource agencies at the  
4 landscape scale. This reflects the contiguity of its interior forest, the high quality of its wildlife habitats  
5 and robust natural communities and the connectivity it provides for regional wildlife travel and migration.

6  
7 The ACF is notable for the ability of its interior to support wide-ranging species like black bears, bobcats,  
8 moose, fishers and wild turkeys, especially as development disturbs and fragments other Vermont forests.



Figure: UVM researchers in the ACF looked up to see this bear watching them work.

11  
13 The ACF’s Its ridges and ravines serve wildlife as  
15 vital migration corridors while fostering genetic  
17 diversity and promoting forest connectivity on a  
19 landscape scale. As the climate shifts, the forest’s  
21 connectivity will facilitate northward species  
23 migration, underscoring its role in sustaining regional  
25 biodiversity.

27  
29 Recognizing this, the ACF Conservation Easement  
31 highlights the importance of maintaining the ACF’s  
33 landscape connectivity to sustain regional wildlife  
35 populations and mitigate habitat loss, fragmentation,  
37 and climate change.

38 Footnote: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/conservation/vermont-conservation-design> Naughton, 2021, Oehler,  
39 2017 and others. See References in Appendix.

## 40 B5.2.1 Landscape-Level Objectives

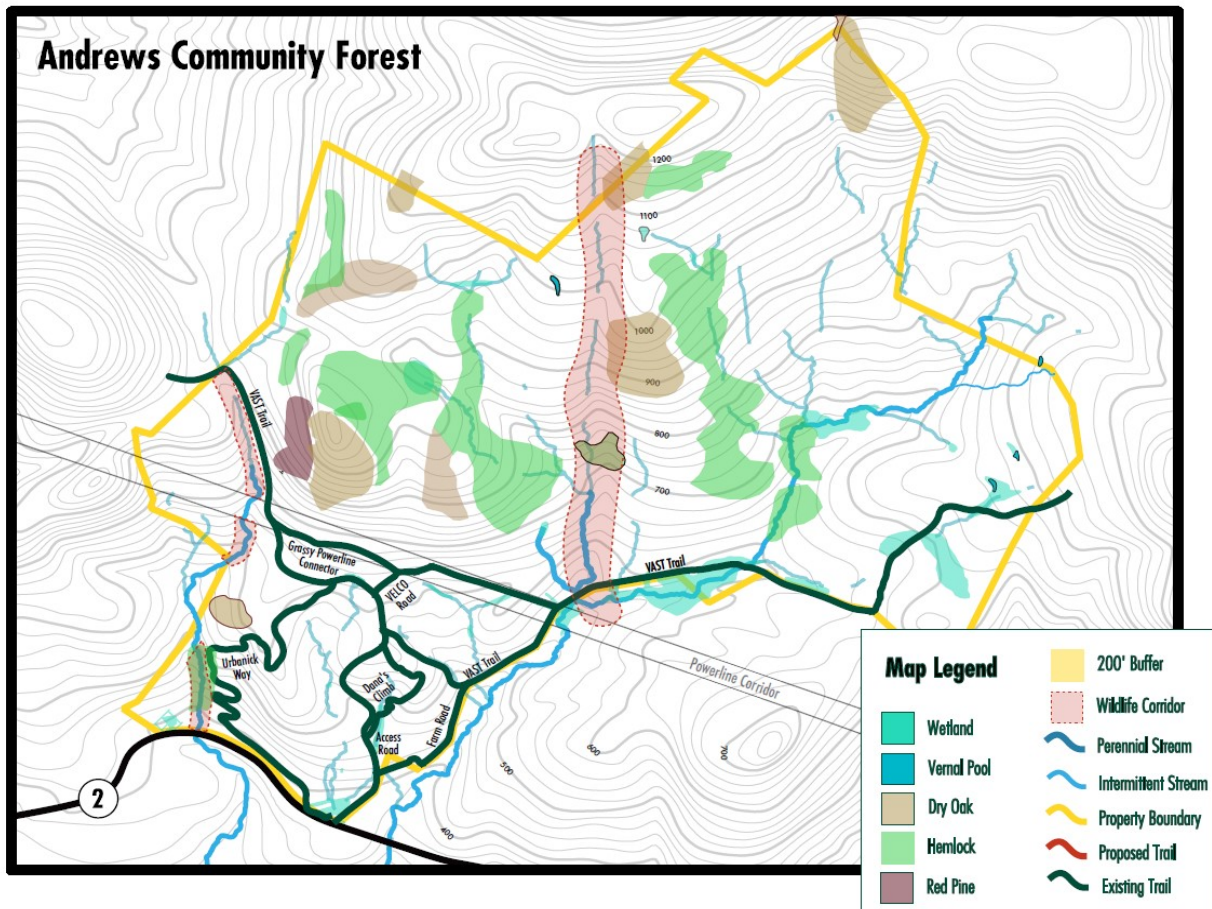
- 41 • Maintain the ACF’s ecological integrity, biodiversity and functionality, including its status as  
42 “High Priority” and “Priority” interior forest and connectivity components of Vermont  
43 Conservation Design.
- 44 • Preserve interior forest health and connectivity to support black bears, bobcats, moose, fishers,  
45 ovenbirds, hermit thrushes and other deep-forest species.
- 46 • Protect neighboring properties’ landscape-scale ecological integrity and pursue opportunities to  
47 conserve and connect wildlife habitats. [IS: Does ACFC have ability/authority over neighboring  
48 properties?]
- 49 • Protect soils, natural vegetation, water quality and natural climate change resilience through  
50 measures shown to control erosion and prevent washouts from soil disturbances on [IS: specify  
51 ‘terrain slopes’] slopes exceeding 20 percent. Avoid disturbing any soil or duff layers on slopes  
52 over 35 percent. Monitor existing trails on those slopes for damage and erosion, and take  
53 restorative measures that could include closures [IS: as detailed in Section B6].

## 1 B5.2.2 Landscape-Level Action Items

- 2 • Maintain recreational access north of the former VAST trail at current types and levels while  
3 creating new and diverse options south of the VAST trail (see Section B6. Recreation  
4 Management).
- 5 • Work with the County Forester to implement the ACF Forestry Management Plan and enhance  
6 the ACF’s interior forest and wildlife connectivity values.
- 7 • [IS: ‘Work to replace invasive plant species with ...’] Replace invasive species with native  
8 vegetation.
- 9 • Develop a plan to reduce wildlife mortality along Route 2 crossings.
- 10 • Use public signage and events to educate visitors about ACF’s ecological role.

11  
12 For more information, see **Landscape-Level Elements** in Appendix C “Ecological Resources”

## 13 B5.3 Community-Level Elements



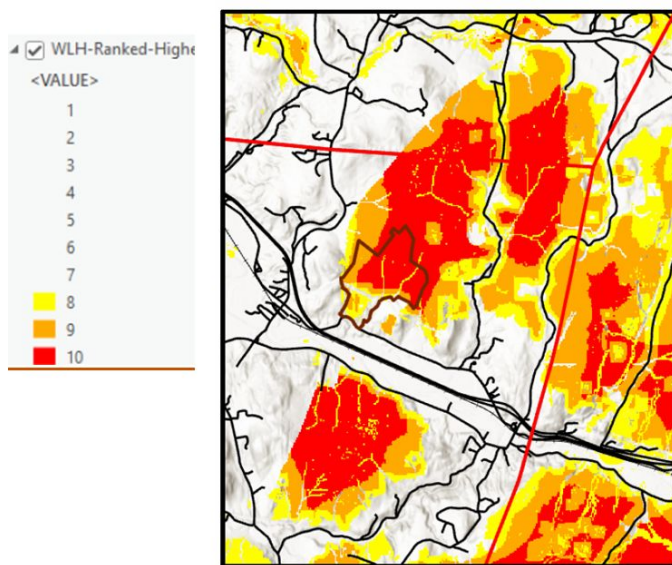
14

*Figure \_ : Ecologically-sensitive features, and existing trails in 2025.*

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The ACF encompasses ten upland and wetland natural communities vital for wildlife diversity. Each is “an interacting assemblage of plants and animals, their physical environment, and the natural processes that affect them<sup>4</sup>.” Undisturbed, natural communities provide needed food, shelter and breeding grounds for myriad species.

ACF’s natural communities, particularly those north of the former VAST trail, hold “High Priority” and “Priority” rankings in Vermont Conservation Design. Tracks, scratch marks, sightings, camera captures and other evidence show ACF’s upland communities supporting whitetail deer, black bears, bobcats and forest birds such as hermit thrushes. Wetland areas, while comprising less than 1% of ACF, support important populations of amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Riparian zones filter stormwater runoff to protect water quality while also providing critical wildlife corridors.



14

Figure \_\_: The highest quality wildlife habitat quality in the ACF is in its northern section. (Source: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources)

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<sup>4</sup> *Conserving Vermont’s Natural Heritage*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and Agency of Natural Resources. Waterbury, Vermont. 2013.

### 1 B5.3.1 Community-level objectives

3



- Maintain the relative isolation and integrity of rare upland natural communities (e.g., Dry Oak Forest) to support the conservation needs of bears, bobcats, wild turkeys, hermit thrushes and other deep-forest, far-ranging species. [IS added the underlines]
- Protect wetland and aquatic habitats, including vernal pools, for diverse species such as salamanders and wood frogs.
- Facilitate connectivity between upland and wetland habitats.
- Minimize disturbances to natural communities south [IS: and especially north] of the VAST trail.

Figure: [caption missing]

### 25 B5.3.2 Community-level action items

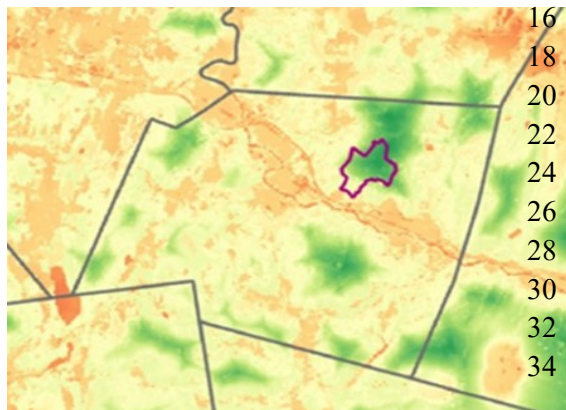
- [IS: First 2 bullets propose to develop Stewardship plans – isn't this Section B5 the Stewardship Plan? So add the word 'additional' to both bullets.] Develop a Wildlife Stewardship Plan to protect the functionality of the ACF's community-level elements.  
Promote food, cover and structural diversity for terrestrial and aquatic species in upland and wetland natural communities.  
Maintain hiking, hunting, skiing, snowshoeing, birding, wildlife observation and other types of low-impact recreation north of the former VAST trail on existing forest roads. Identify routes best suited for these types of recreation and maintain them accordingly. Expand recreational opportunities between the parking lot and the former VAST trail to include new and improved trails for mountain bikers, casual walkers, runners, elderly residents and school groups.  
Work with County Forester, UVM resources and professionals to ensure adequate amounts of shade and coarse, woody debris in streams and wetlands.
- Assess and develop plans addressing these major challenges to the ACF's natural communities:
  - Invasive species
  - Tree and plant diseases
  - Climate change
  - Human impacts
- Use signs and outreach tools to inform and involve the public in conserving the ACF's natural communities and the ecological processes and benefits they support.
- Monitor the health of the ACF's natural communities and habitats.
  - Involve ACFC and public volunteers in a program combining field visits, camera and audio traps, and consultations with experts.
  - Utilize black bear and bobcat [and selected songbirds/raptor species] as indicators of the overall biodiversity and health of the ACF.

- Maintain or enhance conditions for wildlife in and among the ACF’s natural communities:
  - Improve deer population management so the ACF’s herd can contribute to its health and species diversity. Encourage hunting subject to VT regulations. Employ exclosures to both track and demonstrate impacts of deer browsing the forest understory.
  - Protect mast-producing areas from disturbances during fruiting and wildlife foraging seasons.
  - Monitor forest health and quantitative/qualitative changes to its habitats (see Appendix C).
  - Post to *Times Ink!*, *Front Porch Forum*, the ACF’s webpage and social media information about the ACF’s natural and cultural history, and efforts to protect and enhance its natural communities and other habitat features.

For more information, see **Community-Level Elements** in Appendix C “Ecological Resources”

### B5.4 Species-Level Elements

ACF offers specialized, critical habitats for certain species. Hemlock groves provide winter shelter for



deer, enabling them to conserve energy during the leanest months. Oak, beech, blueberry and other sources of mast support over 100 species, including black bears and turkeys. Ledges and rocky areas serve as vital habitats for bobcats, ruffed grouse and other animals. Early successional habitats foster biodiversity by supporting young tree growth and associated fauna.

Figure\_ : Much of Richmond’s prime bobcat habitat (green) exists in the northern part of the ACF. *Source:* [2020. Investigating Bobcat-Recreation Conflicts in Vermont. Middlebury College.](#)

#### B5.4.1 Species-Level Objectives

- Conserve rare, threatened, and endangered species by integrating updated information into management plans.
- Maintain the functionality of mature softwood cover for wildlife wintering and ensure nearby food sources.
- Promote the health and viability of mast-producing trees and shrubs.
- Enhance early successional habitats to diversify species and age structures.

## 1 B5.4.2 Species-Level Action Items

2



Figure 1: Hemlock stands shield deer and other wildlife from winter snows and winds, and also provide nesting spaces for interior forest birds such as the hermit thrush.

- Engage ecologists to survey proposed trail routes and infrastructure areas for rare species within 50 feet of their sides and adapt conservation plans accordingly.
- Maintain at least a 70 percent canopy [Melissa questioned why this 70% specificity] within hemlock stands. Close trails within 100 meters to all but hunters from November through March. [IS: Overly restrictive of recreation? Provide detail in B6]
- Manage deer populations with regulated hunting. Install exclosures to demonstrate browsing impacts and nurture seedlings.
- Maintain the oak and other mast requirements

of black bears, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer and other species. Avoid disturbing soft- and hard-mast stands areas during fruiting and foraging seasons.

- Provide education and updates about ACF’s efforts to preserve its species and habitats.

For more information, see **Landscape-Level Elements** in Appendix C “Ecological Resources”

### Overall Assessment

The need to respect and maintain the integrity of its critical ecological / wildlife resources in the ACF at the Landscape, Community and Species levels requires careful attention to patterns of human use. Landscape level connectivity to sustain regional wildlife populations and mitigate habitat loss, fragmentation, and climate change effects together with the Landscape features themselves including its steep slopes and soils, requires new trails be kept to a minimum north of the Former VAST Trail [IS: as detailed in section B6]. Community- and Species-level features require protective measures that will preserve their integrity.

# 1 B6. Recreation Management

2 [Updated with Work Group input, replacing previous text]

## 3 B6.1 Permitted and non-permitted uses

4 Maps, and general rules about permitted and non-permitted uses, hours of opening, trail use, dogs,  
5 hunting, etc. shall be posted at the Kiosk and other trail entry points to the ACF, and online at the Town  
6 website

### 7 B6.1.1. Dogs

8 [BE: At this point, and for the upcoming Snowmobiling and Hunting sections, I'm suggesting we go  
9 straight to the text starting at B6.2. I think that will give us a much stronger document. We'd be kicking  
10 off with our broad, defining objectives for Rec. The sentence above could even be omitted, with key  
11 points added to B6.2 where they're not now included. This would also give the ACFC some leeway in  
12 adapting rules as our experience and new knowledge warrant, avoiding amendments or revisions to the  
13 MP. If more explanation on these three topics is needed it can be put in the Appendix..]



Dogs are permitted below the power lines, and not above them. [SP Comment: I generally agree this is the responsible thing to do, but offer a slight adjustment—changing it from power line to VAST trail. It only slightly changed the allowed trails for dogs, and also allows for better connectivity to surrounding properties for dog owners without having a major impact on wildlife.] Dogs are to be kept on leash at all times, following the model of the Audubon Society (Huntington), in order to protect the forest wildlife. This is more stringent than the town dog ordinance, and is intended to protect wildlife and vegetation as well as other forest users. Hence no hunting with dogs. Voice control may not always be effective, and may disturb wildlife anyway because of the (loud) vocalization required. All pet waste must be carried out.

Figure\_ : Notice about dogs at the Raven Ridge Natural Area.

### 31 B6.1.2 Snowmobiling

32 Previously the ACF contained a snowmobile trail that was part of the VAST trail network. Snowmobiling  
33 will be permitted in the ACF if and when VAST seeks to establish such trails and subject to a use contract  
34 ensuring compatibility with the Management Plan’s goals and objectives.

### 1            **B6.1.3 Hunting**

2    Many people want to hunt in the ACF. Hunting is allowed on the property in accordance with all State  
3    and federal laws and allowable uses. As of 2021, citizens of recognized Abenaki tribes may obtain free  
4    hunting licenses from the state of Vermont. The ACFC will emphasize education about hunting season  
5    safety for both hunters and non-hunters. Trapping will not be permitted on the Town Forest because of the  
6    safety hazard it presents to visitors and their pets who may be traveling both on and off trail.

### 7            **B6.2 Recreation Objectives and Actions**

8    [\[IS: Note: Dan Wolfson has offered an 'Updated Recreation Section' with a rewrite of Section B6.2](#)  
9    [through B6.2.1. It is inserted in at the end of Section B6.2.1 below.\]](#)

10   Outdoor recreation has long been and remains a highly valued tradition throughout the Andrews  
11   Community Forest. By blending thoughtfully designed trails with strong ecological stewardship, the ACF  
12   can enable outdoor enthusiasts to continue enjoying the benefits of recreation and nature in the ACF with  
13   little or no detriment to forest health. **The forest should continue to offer a wide range of recreational**  
14   **opportunities for hikers, bikers, hunters, walkers, runners, nature observers, skiers, snowshoers, and**  
15   **others.** [BE: Suggest moving this to the first objective below, beginning with "Continue...."]

#### 16           **Objectives:**

17   [BE: Suggest adding as first bullet: "Continue to offer a wide range of recreational opportunities for  
18   hikers, bikers, hunters, walkers, runners, nature observers, skieers, showshoers and others."]

- 19        ● Provide a connection to the past indigenous inhabitants of the area and their way of life. **Move to**  
20        **indigenous section.**
- 21        ● Maintain wildlife corridors through the town forest and wildlife habitat on the town forest. **Move**  
22        **to ecology.**
- 23        ● Protect water quality, prevent soil loss and maintain the ecological integrity and functionality of  
24        the forest. **Move to ecology.**
- 25        ● Provide educational opportunities for the community to experience the town forest and learn  
26        about its ecological function in the Chittenden County Uplands. **Move to education.**
- 27        ~~● Collaborate constructively with diverse user groups.~~
- 28        ~~● Minimize the potential for negative interactions between mtn. bikers and pedestrians.~~
- 29        ● Promote enjoyment and exploration of the forest for people of all ages and abilities. [BE: Delete?  
30        It seems covered above, as the suggested new top objective.]
- 31        ● Maximize accessibility of trails whenever possible and appropriate.
- 32        ● Seek to maximize balance and harmonization among diverse recreational activities through  
33        various management measures including zoning, timing and consideration of the particular  
34        characteristics of the activities.
- 35        ● Ensure harmonization of recreation objectives with the other priorities of the management plan.
- 36        ● Seek opportunities for users to connect to neighboring properties.
- 37        ● Seek input from relevant community groups, town committees and the general public about  
38        decisions related to recreation.
- 39        ● Promote the town forest as a hunting destination. [BE: Suggest replacing with more specific  
40        "Support hunting as an effective and economical method for helping to manage ACF deer  
41         
42

1 populations to reduce overgrazing in the forest understory, and limiting ACF's age and species  
2 diversity." "Promote" could imply activities that might make people uncomfortable.]  
3

## 4 6.2.1 Management Guidelines:

5 [BE: Some of the points below seem more like "Actions," but I've always struggled distinguishing goals,  
6 objectives, guidelines, etc. Rather than split hairs over this, we could leave it to the writer/editor to do so  
7 while for now we just focus on content.]  
8

- 9 ● Promote recreational ["Promote non-mechanized recreational"] use on existing trails/skid roads  
10 and limit the creation of new trails except as needed to 1) bypass wet, steep, ecologically sensitive  
11 or otherwise unsuitable stretches of existing trails, 2) connect trail segments interrupted by acts of  
12 nature or forest management activities, 3) to connect to trails on adjacent land.
- 13 ● Trails will be built and maintained in keeping with the trail ~~stewardship plan~~ development  
14 parameters and will utilize the best practices from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.  
15 Trail work will only be performed at the direction of the ACF committee. [BE: For style  
16 consistency, edit to the active voice: "Build and maintain trails in keeping with this document's  
17 trail development parameters and utilize...."]
- 18 ● Maintain permanent gates to restrict motorized access at entrances to the forest.
- 19 ● Maintain a 300-foot buffer between trails and adjacent private properties, except in areas where  
20 trail connections to neighboring lands already exist or are actively being pursued.
- 21 ● Collaborate with indigenous communities to incorporate their social, cultural, and spiritual goals  
22 into the management of the forest.
- 23 ● Avoid constructing and maintaining trails in ecologically sensitive zones and ensure adequate  
24 buffers between human impacts and these areas [BE: add "or near"] [BE: Replace with "areas,  
25 buffering those areas from human disturbances"] as specified in the Trail Development  
26 Parameters.
- 27 ● Designate two distinct management zones within the forest: a southern zone and a northern zone.  
28 These zones will be separated by a boundary that follows an east-west corridor composed of the  
29 VAST trail and the powerlines. Specifically, the dividing line should follow the northernmost  
30 [BE: Add "edge"] of either the VAST trail or the powerlines, from east to west.
- 31 ● Designate trails in the northern zone as pedestrian only. Limit dogs and mtn bikers to the southern  
32 zone and dividing boundary.
- 33 ● Bridges, culverts and boardwalks will be built and maintained in accordance with best practice to  
34 maintain water quality and prevent erosion. [BE: Go for active voice: "Site, build and maintain  
35 bridges, culverts and boardwalks in accordance...."]
- 36 ● Pursue accessibility in trail development whenever possible.
- 37 ● Minimize trail stream crossings and avoid encroachment on riparian buffers. [BE: as specified in  
38 the Trail Development Parameters." Maybe tuck this as a sub-point into the "Site, build and  
39 maintain" point above?]
- 40 ● Educate Provide for education of visitors on the ecological value of the town forest. [BE: Suggest  
41 moving this point to Eco section, or Education section, or both?]

- 1 ● Monitor trail use and wildlife activity through monitoring (cameras, microphones, trail counters,  
2 sign-in sheets).
- 3 ● Adapt management of recreational trails as dictated by user volumes and their ecological impacts  
4 and **consider** closures or reroutes where appropriate. [BE: "Consider" is weak...suggest replacing  
5 with "using"]
- 6 ● Create and maintain a positive working relationship with adjoining properties to align their land  
7 management goals with those of the town forest. [BE: Suggest replacing with "property owners in  
8 efforts to coordinate ACF's management goals with theirs."]
- 9 ● From November 1st through May 31st, close seasonally sensitive trails while promoting hunting  
10 and winter activities in designated areas. **Move to hunting section**
- 11 ● Implement additional seasonal and weather related closures in designated areas to protect deer  
12 yards ["identified deer yards, [etc.]]. [BE: Add "and other wildlife wintering areas", omitting  
13 "yards"] And those should be identified somewhere in the MP I suppose. Or just use the colored  
14 areas that Dan was drawing attention to in the map.], nesting/breeding sites, mast stands, wildlife  
15 connectivity routes and fragile soils.
- 16 ● During hunting seasons, especially deer rifle season, recommend blaze orange attire and post  
17 safety signage.
- 18 ● Use current and/or additional **assessments of wildlife biologists and professional trail designers to**  
19 **flag new routes that** align with this Management Plan's requirements. [Replace with "coarse- and  
20 fine-scale professional assessments to flag proposed trail routes to"]
- 21 ● Include overlays on all trail proposal maps to identify locations of sensitive natural features and  
22 their respective buffers ~~and 100-meter zones of influence on either side of proposed routes.~~
- 23 ● Trail proposals must follow the formal approval process.
- 24 ● Create and maintain up-to-date kiosks with trail maps, regulations, and seasonal advisories.  
25 Install signs at all trailheads and property access points. Include Indigenous land  
26 acknowledgments and use Abenaki names where appropriate.
- 27 ● **Maintain communication with the public** [BE: Replace with "Keep the public informed..."]  
28 about trail conditions through the town website.
- 29 ● In response to the questions about hunting and safety/buffer zones at the perimeter of the  
30 property, I found the following; there is no buffer by default, and there is no safety zone unless  
31 there is an occupied building within 500ft of the property and the owner/occupant posts necessary  
32 signage stating that hunting is prohibited in that area. Seeing as this is state law, I don't believe it  
33 needs to be explicitly called out in the management plan.
- 34 ● [BE: Following needn't be in the MP ... included just for benefit of ACFC. As a courtesy of  
35 neighbors, we could offer to put the official State signs up 500' from their homes. They would  
36 stay in place year-round.] **10 V.S.A. § 4710 - Safety zone; shooting prohibited** - (a) A person  
37 may on land owned or occupied by him or her and within 500 feet of any occupied dwelling  
38 house, residence, or other building or camp occupied by human beings, or any barn, stable, or  
39 other building used in connection therewith, maintain posters furnished by the Department of Fish  
40 and Wildlife not less than 12 inches wide and 18 inches high containing the words "safety zone,  
41 shooting prohibited." An area bounded by such posters placed at each corner, and not more than  
42 200 feet apart on the boundaries shall be considered enclosed land for the purpose of this section  
43 and is hereby defined as a "safety zone." Without advance permission of the owner or occupant, a

1 person shall not discharge a firearm within or take a wild animal that is within a “safety zone” as  
2 defined herein.

3  
4 **Actions:**

- 5 • Create and maintain trail signs that use Abanaki language and naming traditions [BE: Maybe the  
6 'create" point goes in the Eco section and "maintain" goes here and into the TSP.]
- 7 • Maintain an active ecological resource map.
- 8 • Inspect water/wetland crossings yearly and respond to changes caused by floods, sediment  
9 transfer, stream channel migration etc.
- 10 • Collaborate with community experts and members of the Richmond Conservation Commission to  
11 host occasional educational events in the town forest. **Move to education.**
- 12 • Create and maintain interpretive signs that highlight various aspects of the forest’s ecological  
13 function.
- 14 • Communicate yearly with adjoining landowners to discuss user impacts and collaborative  
15 stewardship opportunities. [BE: Is this repetitive with the similar Guideline?]
- 16 • Collaborate with the Richmond Trails Committee and other volunteers to help steward the trails  
17 by scheduling volunteer work days.
- 18 • Establish an ACF contact email for the public to report trail maintenance needs, user conflicts, or  
19 wildlife concerns.

20  
21 [IS: The following (in blue text) is Dan Wolfson’s rewrite of B6.2 through B6.2.1]

22  
23 **Updated Recreation Section**

24 **Recreation**

25  
26 Outdoor recreation is a cherished tradition in the Andrews Community Forest. With careful planning, we  
27 can offer meaningful access to nature while protecting the forest’s most sensitive ecological features.

28  
29 **Objectives**

- 30 • Provide inclusive, enjoyable recreational opportunities for hikers, walkers, bikers, runners, skiers,  
31 snowshoers, hunters, and nature observers of all ages and abilities.
- 32 • Design trails to highlight the forest’s beauty while protecting wildlife corridors, riparian zones,  
33 steep slopes, vernal pools, and other ecologically sensitive features.
- 34 • Encourage a culture of shared stewardship and education through community involvement.
- 35 • Strengthen connections to adjacent trail networks using existing corridors—such as the VAST  
36 trail—when ecologically appropriate.
- 37 • Ensure that recreational development supports the long-term conservation goals outlined in the  
38 management plan and conservation easement.

## 1 Management Guidelines

- 2 • Prioritize improvements to existing corridors (e.g., VAST trail) to avoid unnecessary  
3 fragmentation of forest interior and wildlife habitat.
- 4 • Avoid trail construction through or directly adjacent to hemlock stands, steep slopes, mast stands,  
5 riparian buffers, vernal pools, and known wildlife breeding or wintering areas.
- 6 • Maintain spatial buffers and use ecological overlays and 100-meter zones of influence in all trail  
7 planning and proposal maps.
- 8 • Follow best practices for sustainable trail design and maintenance to minimize erosion, reduce  
9 habitat disruption, and enhance user safety.
- 10 • Use seasonal and adaptive closures to protect vulnerable habitats (e.g., deer wintering areas,  
11 nesting sites) during critical times of year.
- 12 • Engage users in low-impact, non-motorized recreation that aligns with the ACF's ecological  
13 vision.
- 14

## 15 Actions

- 16 • Install educational signage at trailheads and along trails to highlight the ecological importance of  
17 protected areas, including Indigenous land acknowledgments and Abenaki place names where  
18 appropriate.
- 19 • Maintain an active ecological resource map to guide decision-making and educate trail users.
- 20 • Inspect and maintain trail infrastructure, including bridges and water crossings, with annual  
21 evaluations and updates following storm events or erosion.
- 22 • Monitor trail use and wildlife activity using trail counters, sign-in sheets, cameras, and audio  
23 monitors, adjusting management practices accordingly.
- 24 • Collaborate with local partners including the Richmond Trails Committee, Conservation  
25 Commission, and community volunteers to host trail work days and educational events.
- 26 • Establish a public contact email for reporting trail conditions, user conflicts, or wildlife concerns.
- 27 • Communicate current trail conditions and closures on the town website and kiosks, especially  
28 during hunting season or ecological sensitivity periods.
- 29 • Ensure all new trail proposals follow the formal review and approval process, with overlays  
30 showing sensitive features and their protective buffers.
- 31

## 32 6.2.2 Trail Development Parameters

33 The following parameters ensure protection of sensitive areas and wildlife and promote responsible trail  
34 building. **Trail development should strive** [BE: Relying on words like "should" and "strive" to accomplish  
35 objectives creates ambiguity and risks creating ongoing, subjective disputes. Given the relatively short  
36 lifespan of MP2 -- 5 years? -- we can use more definitive language and see if it seriously cuts into

1 recreational opportunities. If so, it'll be easier to fix language in the next revision or even by interim  
2 amendment than trying to restore ecological functions we've degraded.] to follow the [Vermont Town](#)  
3 [Forest Recreation Planning Natural Resources Guide](#)

#### 5 **Wildlife Habitat Connectors**

- 6 ● **Maintain existing** [BE: Suggest "Identify, map and maintain major"] wildlife linkages to support  
7 habitat connectivity.
- 8 ● Prohibit any new trail construction within a 300-foot strict buffer zone.

#### 9 **Riparian Areas**

- 10 ● Consider perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams. [BE: Something's missing here -- and  
11 the next bullet could cover it.]
- 12 ● Avoid trail development within riparian zones to protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems.
- 13 ● Where crossings are unavoidable, [BE: Qualify by adding "perennial and intermittent stream"  
14 here] they must be minimal and perpendicular to the watercourse.
- 15 ● Use bridges and boardwalks to cross perennial and intermittent streams. Ensure proper crossing  
16 height to **maintain bank full width**. [BE: Replace with "cover gull bank width and provide  
17 adequate debris clearance beneath."]
- 18 ● Buffer requirements from top of bank:
  - 19 ○ Perennial - 100ft
  - 20 ○ Intermittent/Ephemeral - 50ft [BE: Because of mapping difficulties and other  
21 practicalities, suggest limiting coverage to perennial and intermittent streams only.]
- 22 ● In a case where a riparian area is specifically **planned** [BE: "protected"] as a wildlife connectivity  
23 corridor, the buffer should be 300ft. (**designate specific streams and link to ecology section?**)

#### 24 **Vernal Pools**

- 25 ● Protect vernal pools and associated species by limiting trail development in surrounding zones.  
26 [BE: Add after "zones" "by" and then sub-points "Avoiding trail development with the  
27 Easement's 100ft EPZ" and "Restricting trail development within the Easement's 500ft EPZ to  
28 foot paths, using boardwalks where necessary." ]
- 29 ● **Buffer requirements:**
  - 30 ○ **No trail development within 100ft EPZ**
  - 31 ○ **Restrict trail development within 500ft EPZ (restrict new trails to foot traffic, use**  
32 **boardwalks when necessary)**

#### 33 **Ledges and Talus Slopes**

- 34 ● Prohibit trail development within 100 feet of broken ledge and talus formations due to ecological  
35 sensitivity and erosion concerns.
- 36 ● Protect bobcat denning sites with 300 foot buffers. [BE: Add "likely" so we don't inadvertently  
37 knock out a future denning site.]

1 [The work group struggled with the above section. Bobcats, broken ledges, and talus are not  
2 specifically called out in Meredith Naughton’s report, though the standard buffer for sensitive  
3 areas is 300ft. However, the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Natural Resources Guide  
4 recommends 100ft buffers for trail development around broken ledges and talus. If a known  
5 denning site exists, [BE: Add "or has the potential to serve that function"] that would warrant a bigger  
6 (300ft) buffer. We would like to reach out to Meredith (or another expert [BE: Such as Sue Morse])  
7 to see if we can get additional guidance on this.]

## 8 **Slope Guidelines**

- 9 ● Expedite and simplify new trail development by prioritizing new trails on terrain with slopes less  
10 than 20%.
- 11 ● Limit trail development on slopes above 20%. Prioritize soil integrity and erosion control.  
12

## 13 **Sensitive Natural Communities**

14 Protect sensitive natural communities identified in the conservation easement and ecological surveys.

### 15 **Strict 300-Foot Buffer:**

- 16 ● Dry Oak
- 17 ● Dry Red Oak–White Pine
- 18 ● Dry Oak–Hickory–Hophornbeam
- 19 ● Red Pine

### 20 **Hemlock:**

- 21 ● Focus on protection of Hemlock stands, which serve as critical wintering habitat for deer, turkey,  
22 and other species. [BE: Suggest adding "Close trails in and within 300 feet of Hemlock stands  
23 during winter months to maintain the critical roles these areas play in sheltering deer and many  
24 other species from harsh weather."]

## 25 **6.2.3 Trail Approval Process**

26 All proposals for new trail construction within the Andrews Community Forest must comply with the  
27 ACF Management Plan, [BE: Isn't compliance a given?] the Conservation Easement, and applicable state  
28 and local regulations. The following process ensures transparency, ecological responsibility, and  
29 community engagement:

### 30 **Document the Need, Purpose, and Identify Proposed Route**

- 31 ● Clearly define the intended use, audience, and purpose [BE: Replace with "users, purposes and  
32 estimated costs"] of the proposed trail.
- 33 ● Explain how the trail supports goals in the ACF Management Plan and aligns with the easement's  
34 permitted uses.

## Draft version for June 23rd 2025

- 1 ● Justify the trail based on community interest, accessibility improvements, [IS: estimated cost,]
- 2 and/or connectivity needs.
- 3 ● Identify the proposed route using existing forest roads or skid trails where possible.
- 4 ● Adhere to the trail development parameters to ensure compliance with protecting forest integrity
- 5 and wildlife habitat.

### 6 **Committee Review**

- 7 ● The proposed trail should then be brought to the ACF committee for consideration

### 8 **Expert Review and Flagging**

- 9 ● Engage a professional trail designer to flag the preliminary route.
- 10 ● Hire a qualified ecologist to walk the flagged route and a buffer zone (300ft?) to identify fine-
- 11 scale ecological features.
- 12 ● Adjust the route as needed to avoid:
  - 13 ○ Rare, threatened, or endangered species
  - 14 ○ Fragile soils and erosion-prone terrain
  - 15 ○ Conflicts with known wildlife usage
  - 16 ○ Any sensitive areas as outlined in the trail development parameters

### 17 **Overlay Mapping and Zones of Influence**

- 18 ● Map the proposed trail using the respective buffers from ecologically sensitive areas

### 19 **Committee Review and Public Input**

- 20 ● Present the proposal to the ACF Committee for preliminary review.
- 21 ● Solicit input from:
  - 22 ○ Richmond Trails Committee
  - 23 ○ Richmond Conservation Commission
  - 24 ○ Neighboring landowners
  - 25 ○ The general public (e.g., through meetings, notices, and comment periods)

26

### 27 **Regulatory and Legal Compliance**

- 28 ● Ensure compliance with Richmond Zoning, State, and Federal regulations
- 29 ● Prepare supporting documents as needed:
  - 30 ○ Site plans
  - 31 ○ Erosion and sediment control plans

### 32 **Approval and Permitting**

- 33 ● Submit finalized proposal for **formal approval** by:
  - 34 ○ The ACF Committee

- 1           ○ The Richmond Selectboard
- 2           ○ Vermont Land Trust

### 3 **Construction and Stewardship**

- 4           ● Construct the trail using best practices outlined in the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning
- 5           Natural Resources Guide.
- 6           ● Coordinate with volunteers, professional builders, and the Trails Committee.
- 7           ● Establish a monitoring and maintenance plan with reporting and adaptive management based on
- 8           use and impact.

9

## 10 **6.2.4 Trail Deviation Review Process**

11 This process provides a structured way to evaluate minor **or unavoidable** [BE: Suggest deleting this --  
12 when would a deviation be unavoidable -- i.e., what would be forcing us to build a trail, no matter what  
13 the consequences would be?] deviations from the Trail Development Parameters.

### 14 **Define “Minor Deviation”**

15 Set clear criteria to distinguish minor vs. major deviations. A minor deviation is defined as:

- 16           ● Trail encroachment into a buffer zone by less than 5% of the total trail length. [BE: This would  
17           allow a mile-long trail to encroach more than 250' into a buffered area (or areas), largely negating  
18           the protections. Smaller but disproportionately critical features could be greatly compromised by  
19           long trails.]
- 20           ● Trail passes within the edge of a buffer but does not cut through it (e.g., skirting the edge of a  
21           300-ft zone, not crossing through a vernal pool EPZ).
- 22           ● Trail follows an existing disturbance (e.g., skid road) [BE: Add ", mast stand, wintering area,  
23           denning zone or other sensitive feature."] in a sensitive area with no viable reroute. [BE: Again,  
24           what would be "unavoidable"? Why give precedence to a trail vs. maintaining ecological integrity  
25           wherever there is no "viable reroute"? This sets up a big, "avoidable" loophole.]

### 26 **Require a Justification Statement**

- 27           ● Why the deviation is necessary (e.g., terrain constraints, connectivity need, user safety).
- 28           ● What alternatives were considered and [BE: Add "why they were"] rejected.
- 29           ● [BE: Add bullet, "Expected ecological impacts of the deviation."]
- 30           ● How the deviation will be minimized or mitigated.

31

### 32 **Trigger an Enhanced Ecological Review** [BE: Would this be for both major and minor deviations?]

33 Require a review by a qualified ecologist and/or wildlife expert that includes:

- 1 ● **Site walk** of the deviation area.
- 2 ● Assessment of **potential impacts** (wildlife, soil, hydrology).
- 3 ● Recommendations for:
- 4 ○ Buffers or reroutes
- 5 ○ Seasonal restrictions
- 6 ○ Infrastructure (e.g., boardwalks, signage)
- 7 ○ [BE: Add final bullet: "Monitoring requirements and impact assessments"]

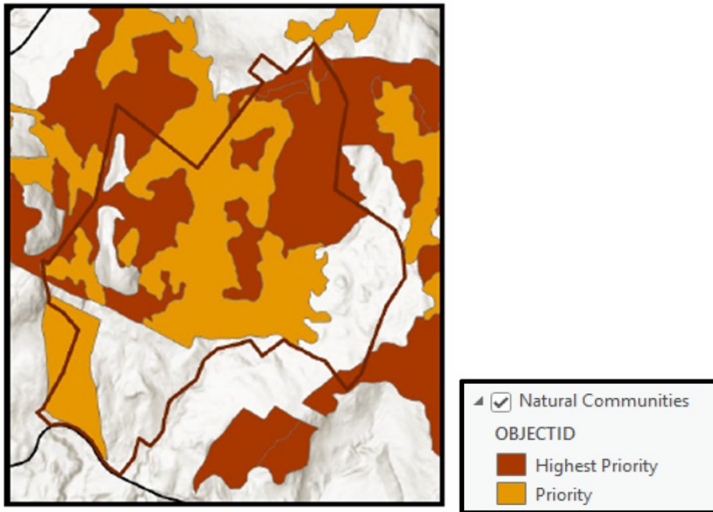
## 8 **Committee Decision and Conditions**

9 The ACF Committee votes to approve with conditions, request modifications, or reject the proposed  
10 deviation. If approved, include monitoring requirements, and set a review window to reassess impact.

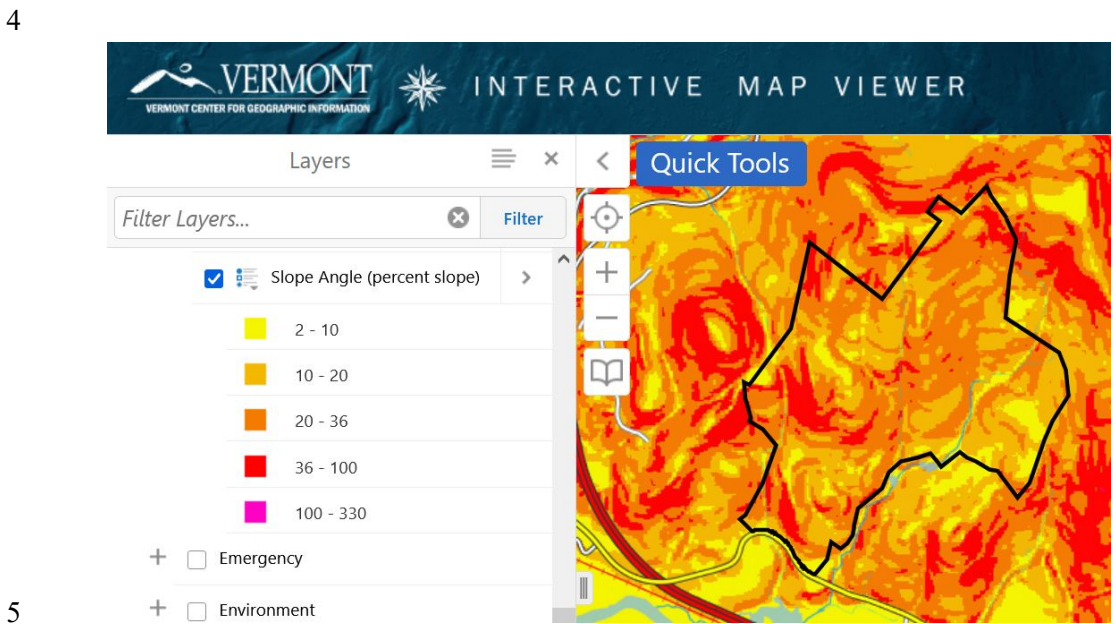
## 11 **Documentation**

12 All deviation approvals must be logged in an **addendum** to the Management Plan or Stewardship Plan.

1 [IS: The following two Figures are already in Appendix D, or should be moved there?] [BE: Yes, these  
2 should be in the Appendix.]



3 Figure \_\_: On a state-wide scale, Vermont’s Agency of Natural Resources ranks ACF’s natural communities as “high” and “highest” priority for conservation. Note that most are clustered north of the former VAST trail. Source: VT ANR BioFinder.



5 Figure \_: Slopes of terrain in the ACF. Zoning regulations identify special provisions for development on slopes  
6 between 20% and 35%, and greater than 35%

7 **B6.3 Trail Monitoring, Maintenance, etc.**

8 [BE: This would benefit from an opening statement describing the purpose, such as: “The Adaptive  
9 Management (Section ?) and the Town’s overall stewardship of the forest and its recreational facilities,

1 *depend on regular, consistent tracking of trail usage, trail and infrastructure conditions, impacts on*  
2 *ecological processes, and the need and costs of maintenance projects. Benchmarks and trigger points*  
3 *should be established to guide usage of the data as it is gathered. The Trail Stewardship Plan details*  
4 *steps needed to achieve this.”]*

5  
6 Trail users will be encouraged to notify the ACFC of any observed problems requiring attention (downed  
7 trees, erosion, invasive plants, etc.) via the email address listed at the Town website. The ACFC member  
8 who is the Richmond Trails Committee representative will be a designated as responsible for monitoring  
9 trail conditions, coordinating maintenance and repairs, and publicizing trails’ status.

### 11 **Monitoring of trail traffic**

12 [SP Comment: Should we consider adding a visitor sign in log?]

13 [JP: Absolutely, doing so is consistent with all of our goals (conservation, recreation, education, etc)]

14 [BE: We definitely need to provide for some kind of monitoring but not as a substitute for avoiding  
15 sensitive areas in the first place.]

16 Monitoring should include counting or estimating the number of visits, making periodic surveys of plants  
17 (including invasives) and animal populations, and inspecting for trail erosion. The plan should establish  
18 baselines and then monitor changes over time.

19 [BE: How to establish baselines? Set some parameters in the Trail Stewardship Plan and in the Wildlife  
20 Stewardship Plan]

21 Results of monitoring shall be reported annually at a meeting of the ACFC. Management actions shall be  
22 adjusted according to the results of the monitoring plan per the adaptive management model in **Figure 3.**

23 Monitoring should start with sensitive areas identified by the [Arrowwood report](#) recommendations, and  
24 the 2019 [Field Naturalist Report](#) and employ game cameras, [BE: audio traps,] observations by  
25 [volunteers](#), and forest monitoring coordination.

### 27 **Invasive species management**

28 Seasonal visual inspection for invasive species will be conducted by ACFC and removal / mitigation will  
29 be planned accordingly. Guidance shall be sought from the Conservation Commission, local experts such  
30 as Jon Kart (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife Department) and others on  
31 monitoring methods and control measures for identified invasive species. [BE: *Suggests asking the*  
32 *County Forester to take a lead role in this. It should be given critical importance in the Forestry*  
33 *Management Plan.*]

### 35 **Monitoring impact of human presence in forest**

36 [BE: *This title is overly broad, and seems to focus only on soil impacts. Benchmarks and standards*  
37 *relating to trail carrying capacity for ecological protections, user safety, user enjoyment, etc., should be*  
38 *established for any trail.*]

39 Quantitative and qualitative data collected will be reviewed regularly and guide the Committee in  
40 prioritizing trail maintenance and upgrades. Trail user counters will be installed at base of each trail, and  
41 counts retrieved periodically. A non-arbitrary decision-tree will be established to guide actions when  
42 certain numbers of users are on trails. Methodology:

43 1. National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (2016): A simple method for extrapolating  
44 from sample monitoring to estimate longer term traffic volume. <https://bikepeddocumentation.org>

- 1 2. SE Group (2017) Monitoring Traffic on Hinesburg Town Forest (2017)  
2 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uUC0Vwym\\_BjyvSnyVy58z4Qp40p6ElBT/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uUC0Vwym_BjyvSnyVy58z4Qp40p6ElBT/view)  
3 3. Monitoring traffic on Johnnie Brook Trail <https://infoacf.files.wordpress.com/2023/04/jbt-kh.pdf>  
4 Seasonal visual inspection of trails for erosion and maintenance requirements will be conducted by the  
5 ACFC. Trail maintenance will be planned seasonally and as needed and will be coordinated with the  
6 Trails Committee to supervise work and to recruit volunteers. The ACFC member who is the Richmond  
7 Trails Committee (RTC) member will liaise between ACFC and the RTC and other groups.

## 8 **B6.4 Potential Recreation Partnerships**

- 9 ● Richmond Trails Committee
- 10 ● Western Abenaki Tribes and Richmond Racial Equity
- 11 ● Maple Wind Farm
- 12 ● VYCC
- 13 ● Richmond Land Trust
- 14 ● Richmond Mountain Trails/Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA)
- 15 ● Scouts
- 16 ● Community Senior Center
- 17 ● Richmond Conservation Commission
- 18 ● County Forester
- 19 ● Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
- 20 ● UVM Community Forest Program

1 **B7. Agriculture Management**

2 **B7.1 Potential Agriculture Partnerships**

- 3 ● Maple Wind Farm
- 4 ● Richmond Farmers Market
- 5 ● Richmond Community Kitchen
- 6 ● The Farm at VYCC
- 7 ● NOFA Vermont

8 **B7.2 Agriculture Management Objectives and Actions**

9 ~~-----New as of April 21st-----~~

10 There has been a long tradition of agriculture use in the ACF’s two fenced-in open meadows, where for  
11 generations the Andrews family pastured their livestock, primarily cattle. After the Town acquired the  
12 land from the Andrews family Maplewind Farm occasionally pastured young cattle there for a few weeks  
13 each year.

14  
15 **Objective 1:**

16 Support local agriculture by offering to enter into a license use agreement with an area farmer (or  
17 farmers) to seasonally pasture livestock or grow crops in one or both meadows.

18 **Actions:**

- 19 1. Keep in communication with area farmers, growers and other local agricultural interests about the  
20 availability of the two meadows. Among the possible users are Maplewind Farm, Richmond Farmers  
21 Market, Richmond Community Kitchen, The Farm at VYCC, and NOFA Vermont.

22  
23 **Objective 2:**

24 Provide the public with limited recreational and educational access to the two meadows, including when  
25 livestock are present.

26 **Actions:**

- 27 1. Work with the agricultural user to plan and clearly mark routes through or around pastures or  
28 planted areas, installing gates or stiles as needed to provide access.
- 29 2. Post notices at the gates, stiles, kiosk and ACF web page asking visitors to keep dogs leashed and  
30 under control, avoid interactions with livestock, and close gates on entry and exit.

31  
32 **Objective 3:** Obtain the correct legal agreement between the Town and the agricultural user.

33 **Action:**

- 34 1. Allow third-party agricultural use of the property only by means of a license use agreement.

35  
36 **Objective 4:** Keep both meadows usable as pastures or crop land.

37 **Actions:**

- 38 1. Brush hog the meadows every three years or as needed to prevent their reversion to forestland.

39  
40

## 1 **B8. Environmental Education in the Andrews Community Forest**

2 [Below is the proposed revised section from Jeanette and Danie]

3 The Andrews Community Forest has the potential to provide the community with formal and informal  
4 educational experiences that interpret Richmond’s natural and cultural history, creating an exciting  
5 opportunity to enrich community life. Throughout the ACF land-use planning process, residents  
6 expressed a strong interest in a dedicated wild space to learn about the natural world, especially within  
7 their town forest.

8 The ACF is positioned to become Richmond’s only site for environmental and cultural education. The  
9 committee is poised to support the development of safe, enriching and inclusive learning adventures  
10 through thoughtfully crafted educational materials, signage, programs, partnerships and infrastructure.

11 Richmond’s three public schools, numerous preschools, day care centers, homeschool programs, senior  
12 center, nearby colleges, the VYCC, and the general public will all benefit from a community  
13 environmental education hub based in the ACF.

### 14 **Regional Models for Success**

15 The Green Mountain Audubon Center, Shelburne Farms, Birds of Vermont Museum, North Branch  
16 Nature Center, and Krusch Nature Preserve serve as regional models of how natural areas can support  
17 both professional and self-guided learning about natural and cultural history. These sites offer valuable  
18 examples for creating similar impactful educational infrastructure in Richmond.

### 19 **Challenges and Opportunities**

20 The ACF offers many advantages for educational programming, including location, available parking, and  
21 overall accessibility. These elements make the ACF an ideal site for guided programs, habitat stewardship  
22 projects, outdoor recreation lessons, and working lands management workshops.

23 Challenges to address:

- 24 • Steep terrain in parts of the forest
- 25 • Limited accessible trails
- 26 • Minimal parking capacity
- 27 • Lack of pedestrian access (most visitors will need to drive)
- 28 • Minimal mapping
- 29 • Lack of a Risk Management Plan to maximize safety for users ie, evacuation routes,  
30 emergency protocols, appropriate trail design for multiple users to share trails safely, alerts  
31 for when all hunting seasons are allowed  
32

33 These considerations should inform the planning and implementation of education infrastructure and  
34 programming.

35 Below are a list of objectives and tasks. Objectives 1-3 should be considered high priority while  
36 Objectives 4-5 are of moderate priority.

1        **B8.1 Educational Objectives and Actions**

2        The following objectives guide the development of educational initiatives in the ACF. Objectives 1–3 are  
3        high priority. Objectives 4–5 are moderate priority.

4

5        **Objective 1: Provide education opportunities to local schools and community groups.**

6

7        **Actions:**

- 8        • Develop a self-guided tour with interpretive materials that teachers can use for field trips.
- 9        • Improve kiosk content and digital resources (maps, audio, data collection tools, photographs)  
10       to support educational programming.
- 11       • Facilitate educational programs about the natural and cultural history of the ACF, including  
12       habitat stewardship projects.
- 13       • Partner with educators to design field trips that align with school curricula.
- 14       • Provide safety information, procedures and emergency access.

15

16       **Objective 2: Recognize and honor Indigenous connections to the land. Actions:**

- 17       • Dedicate a portion of the kiosk to sharing the history of Abenaki use and care of the land.
- 18       • Host programs and events that include speakers knowledgeable about Indigenous perspectives  
19       (e.g., book clubs with authors, partnerships with UVM, VYCC, and the Richmond Free  
20       Library).
- 21       • Continue to seek guidance from Indigenous leaders, cultural organizations, and community  
22       members to inform naming of trails and places that reflect Abenaki heritage.

23

24       **Objective 3: Increase access to nature-based programming for the general public.**

25

26       **Actions:**

- 27       • Host events such as bird walks, guided hikes, nature programs, mountain bike and snowshoe  
28       clinics.
- 29       • Lead seasonal guided walks that highlight the natural history during that time of year.
- 30       • Support music and art festival that celebrates the natural and cultural history of the ACF.

31       **Objective 4: Engage the community in citizen science efforts.**

32

33       **Actions:**

- 34       • Partner with a high school or university class to develop an ecological and recreational monitoring  
35       program.
- 36       • Involve community members in using platforms like iNaturalist.
- 37       • Identify key research questions and work with partners to design a data collection program.

38

1 **Objective 5: Support environmental literacy through infrastructure and interpretation.**

2

3 **Actions:**

- 4 • Design signage, maps, and displays to help visitors understand the forest’s ecological
- 5 systems and human history.
- 6 • Explore the development of an interpretive center or trailhead learning hub in partnership
- 7 with other town initiatives.
- 8 • Ensure accessibility and inclusivity are prioritized in all infrastructure
- 9 development.

10

11 **B8.2 Potential Education Partnerships**

- 12 • Richmond Elementary School
- 13 • Camels Hump Middle School
- 14 • Mount Mansfield Union High School
- 15 • University of Vermont Field Naturalist Program
- 16 • UVM Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources
- 17 • UVM Environmental Studies Program
- 18 • UVM Ecological Planning Lab Extension Program
- 19 • Essex Technical School
- 20 • Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC)
- 21 • Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi
- 22 • The Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation
- 23 • Richmond Racial Equity Group
- 24 • Green Mountain Audubon Center
- 25 • Birds of Vermont Museum
- 26 • Girl and Boy Scout Troops
- 27 • The Nature Conservancy
- 28 • Vermont Land Trust
- 29 • Richmond Land Trust
- 30 • Richmond Conservation Commission
- 31 • Richmond Recreation Committee
- 32 • Radiate Art
- 33 • Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation
- 34 • Summer Camps (MMMUSD, MMMUSD Part 2, Our Community Cares Camp)
- 35 • Green Mountain Orienteering Club
- 36 • Richmond Senior Center
- 37 • Vermont Coverts

- 1 • Vermont Master Naturalist Program

## 3 **B9. Legal Agreements on the Property**

4 -----New as of April 19th

### 5 **Utility Work and Utility Easements**

6 Since the 1920's, VELCO (Vermont Transco, LLC) and GMP (Green Mountain Power Co.) have held  
7 parallel, adjoining power transmission line easements crossing east/west through the ACF. VELCO's  
8 easement is 150' wide while GMP's varies in width from 100' to 125'. In about 2018, VELCO and its  
9 contractors upgraded the utility access road from the ACF Rt. 2 parking lot to the two rights of way.  
10 Where topography allowed, they also installed gravel roads under the power lines. Within their rights of  
11 way the utilities manage vegetation growth by cutting trees and applying herbicides to smaller plants. The  
12 utilities access their easements on adjoining lands through the ACF.

13

14 **Objective 1:** Help ensure public safety when utilities are working in the ACF.

#### 15 **Actions:**

- 16 1. Have the utilities notify ACF committee when they are to undertake major work.
- 17 2. Use Front Porch Forum, signs and notices on the ACF web page warning the public to avoid  
18 utility equipment and crews.

19

20 **Objective 2:** Minimize impacts to ACF visitors and the ACF's ecological functions from the utilities'  
21 vegetation management work.

#### 22 **Actions:**

- 23 1. Work with VELCO, GMP and ecologists to understand and select safe, effective and  
24 environmentally responsible vegetation management strategies for the ACF.
- 25 2. Keep the ACF Committee, Richmond Conservation Commission, Richmond Trails Committee,  
26 Selectboard and the Vermont Land Trust informed about the utilities' vegetation management strategies.

27

### 28 **Access Roads Rights of Way Easements**

29 There are two access road rights of way (ROWS) easements in the Andrews Community Forest. The first  
30 is the surveyed 25' ROW (called the "old farm road") that was granted to Maplewind Farm, owner and  
31 operator of the farm across Rt 2 from the ACF. Maplewind uses the farm use road to access its upper  
32 meadows east of ACF. As of 2025 the road was in poor condition and quite wet in places. It does not see  
33 much vehicular use. There is a locked gate at the southern end where it ties into the old Andrews home  
34 parcel.

35 The second access road ROW is the surveyed 25' utility road from the Rt. 2 ACF parking area to the two  
36 utility transmission line easements that grants VELCO, GMP and their contractors perpetual access to the  
37 utility transmission lines. The ACF Committee intends to have the deed and survey for this ROW  
38 recorded in the Richmond Land Records in the second quarter of 2025.

39 The public also relies on the parking lot and utility road for the most convenient access to the ACF by far,  
40 and it is in the Town's interest to maintain that access.

41

42 **Objective:** Use access road ROWs to maintain and improve public access to the ACF.

1 **Actions:**

- 2 1. Explore with the owners of Maplewind Farm mutual opportunities for exchanging their “old farm  
3 road” ROW for a similar 25’ agricultural road ROW on the utility road. If the Town and Maplewind’s  
4 owners agree to a ROW swap, extinguish the “old farm road” easement and use it as a pedestrian and bike  
5 trail.
- 6 2. Help keep the utility access road clear of downed trees and its water bars in good working  
7 condition to control roadway erosion.

8  
9 --- end of new material

10  
11 [BE: This seems to be misplaced here and perhaps better included as a comment to the section below.]

12  
13 There are many [several?] agreements, rights-of-way, and easements that are key to the management of  
14 the forest. [BE suggests: Besides those listed below, the Richmond Town Plan establishes broad  
15 guidelines for management of the ACF]. The Town’s Zoning Regulations relate here, particularly in  
16 constructing new trails and infrastructure on ACF slopes above 20%.

17  
18 **B9.1 Conservation Easement**

19 To conserve the ACF’s natural resources and ensure public access to it in perpetuity, a [Conservation](#)  
20 [Easement](#) ([Appendix A](#)) was conveyed to both the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and  
21 Conservation Board when the forest was acquired from the Andrews family.

22  
23 The Vermont Land Trust acts as the primary **conservation** steward. As such, VLT must conduct annual  
24 monitoring to ensure activities on the property are consistent with the terms of the Easement. VLT’s  
25 stewardship representative serves as the ACF Committee’s primary contact at VLT for reviews and  
26 approvals of proposed actions which are not contemplated in the Management Plan.

27  
28 The Easement ([Appendix A](#)) requires that a Management Plan and any future changes to the Management  
29 Plan must be reviewed and approved by Richmond’s Selectboard and by VLT. Section 1.B. of the  
30 Conservation Easement dictates what information the Management Plan must include. Public input is  
31 required for any updates to the Plan.

32 **B9.2 Agricultural Lease**

33 Maple Wind Farm is the adjoining landowner, and that land includes the remaining acres of the original  
34 Andrew farm. Maple Wind Farm has historically used eight acres of what is now the community forest  
35 for grazing cattle. Both parties are interested in continuing this arrangement and can explore the  
36 possibility of a long-term agriculture license agreement. Vermont Land Trust, as conservation easement  
37 holder would need to approve any such use license agreement.

38 Should Maple Wind Farm return to using one or both open meadows, the Committee wishes to retain a  
39 crossover trail across the lower portion of the pasture linking the VELCO access road with the old farm  
40 road to the east. This trail would be open anytime cows are not grazing in the pasture; when cows are  
41 grazing, the Committee proposes closing this trail and installing appropriate signage to redirect visitors to  
42 other routes on the property.

1 It is noted that the southern side of the lower agricultural meadow is on land that is apart of the former  
2 Andrews' homestead. The committee should work with this residential neighbor to continue accessing  
3 this lower meadow trail.

#### 4 **B9.2 Powerline Rights-of-Way: VELCO**

5 A VELCO powerline, and its 150' east / west utility easement right of way runs through the middle of the  
6 community forest. VELCO needs frequent vehicular road access to the utility right-of-way for  
7 maintenance and repairs to the powerline. In 2018, VELCO upgraded improved the utility access road  
8 from the forest entrance on Route 2 to the powerline right of way ; VELCO used the upper landing area to  
9 stage the utility road their work. Following this 2018 work, VELCO re-seeded the landing and the road  
10 above the landing and installed waterbars on the road below the landing.

11  
12 The Town (with the Committee) has worked for three years with VELCO on a 25' wide the utility road  
13 easement right of way agreement, requested by VELCO. This utility road right of way is located in the  
14 existing utility road heading north from Rte. 2 to the VELCO and GMP utility lines on the property. The  
15 Town will receive \$11,549.45 from VELCO for granting this utility road right of way easement.  
16 Additionally, VELCO's insurance provider has listed the Town of Richmond as additionally insured, and  
17 VELCO installed two rows of split rail fencing and signs to help keep the public away from the now  
18 unused utility road bridge abutments under the power lines. This new utility road easement will likely be  
19 recorded in early 2025.  
20 Approval by Vermont Land Trust and the Selectboard is required for any changes in easement  
21 agreements.  
22

#### 23 **B9.3 Powerline Rights-of-Way: Green Mountain Power**

24 Green Mountain Power has a 100'-125' utility right-of-way adjacent and north of the VELCO line in the  
25 same powerline corridor.

26  
27 Within each of the two utility corridors, VELCO and Green Mountain Power (GMP) manage vegetation  
28 growth. The Committee will work to better understand the vegetation management goals and practices,  
29 the landowner's (Town's) rights, to advise the Selectboard to make an informed decision about vegetation  
30 management within the Powerline corridor, and to communicate this decision broadly to Community  
31 Forest visitors.

32 At certain periods, VELCO and or Green Mountain Power may need to close some or certain parts the  
33 community forest to perform utility line maintenance and upgrade projects. VELCO and GMP should  
34 coordinate with the Town and the committee to prepare for such events and fully inform the public of the  
35 closure.  
36

#### 37 **B9.4 Legal Agreements Management Objectives**

- 38 ● Develop agreements that allow partners to work within the forest while limiting the impact (both  
39 ecological and human impact) of such work.

1 **B9.5 Legal Agreements Management Actions**

- 2 ● Work with VELCO and GMP to understand and select vegetation management strategies in the  
3 powerline right-of-ways which are safe, effective, and environmentally responsible.
- 4 ● Communicate with the public about grazing plans or powerline management activities that may  
5 influence the public’s experience on the property.
- 6 ● Manage public use during powerline work or grazing periods to mitigate public safety hazards.
- 7 ● **Maintain** positive working relationships with Maple Wind Farm, VELCO, and Green Mountain  
8 Power to ensure that their use of the property is compatible with public visitation.

1 **List of Appendices**

2 **Appendix A: Conservation Easement**

3 <https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Archive/2018/04/Conservation-Easement-2018.pdf>

4 **Appendix B. Indigenous Land and People Acknowledgment and Land Use**

5 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Archive/2018/04/land-acknowledgment-and-use-agreement-](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Archive/2018/04/land-acknowledgment-and-use-agreement-appendix-1.31.21-draft-5179783_1.docx)  
6 [appendix-1.31.21-draft-5179783\\_1.docx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Archive/2018/04/land-acknowledgment-and-use-agreement-appendix-1.31.21-draft-5179783_1.docx)

7 **Appendix C: Ecological Resources**

8 [https://infoacf.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/mp2\\_ecoappendix\\_c.pdf](https://infoacf.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/mp2_ecoappendix_c.pdf)

10 **Appendix D: Recreation**

11 (Link in April-2-2025 Packet: “d3 Draft section B6 and Appendix ”)

12 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Andrews\\_Community\\_Forest/Meetings/2025/04/d2\\_Recreation\\_Appendix.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Andrews_Community_Forest/Meetings/2025/04/d2_Recreation_Appendix.pdf)

15 **Appendix E: Plan Development and Credits**

16 <https://infoacf.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix-e-credits.pdf>

17 **Appendix F: References**

18 [https://infoacf.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix\\_f\\_references.pdf](https://infoacf.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_f_references.pdf)

20 **Appendices from 2018 Management Plan ([links](#))**

21 **1. Forestry Maps, etc.**

22 [ACF Soil Map \(2019\)](#)

23 [Forest Stands \(2019\)](#)

24 [Forest Stands -Topo \(2019\)](#)

25 [Management Intensity Zones \(2019\)](#)

26 [Forestry Activities Map \(2019\)](#)

27 [ACF Invasives Map 090119](#)

28 [Example Forester Agreement 072419\)](#)

30 **2. Ecological Assessments**

31 [Andrews Farm Ecological Assessment](#) – Allaire Diamond

32 [Four Town Ecological Assessment](#) - Arrowwood Environmental

33 [Audubon Society:](#) Forest Bird Habitat Assessment and Management Recommendations (Hagenbuch,  
34 2017)

36 **3. [Maps & Appendices](#) from 2018 Management Plan**

37 A. Maps

- 1 a. Trail Concept Map - zones
- 2 b. Trail Concept Map - possible trails
- 3 c. Conservation Easement Map
- 4 d. Interim Management Plan Map (applicable through 12/31/18)
- 5 B. Chart: Evolution of Allowed/Prohibited Uses Through Planning Phases
- 6 G. Results and Comments from Public Meetings (page 279)
- 7
- 8 **4. [Visioning Process](#)** (2017) from 2018 Management Plan
- 9 (Starts at Page 279 of 345):
- 10 Visioning Process Results (pp 279 - )
- 11 See charts of priorities: Page 294: Management Focus; Page 342 – 347: Recreational Activities 1-6