

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/28/2	Helene Arnold	Richmond	I believe that the trails should be constructed in keeping with the Andrews family conservation easement: respecting the ecological integrity of the land and protecting the habitats where other living species dwell. As a user of Richmond's wonderful trail networks, I think it is important to expand recreational usage wisely, building new trails with minimal impact to plants, animals and waterways. Fortunately, there are strong wildlife advocates in our town who drew attention to this matter and the dangerous consequences the currently proposed trails could have on sensitive creatures living in and around the routes. Making this debate more transparent is an important step to finding a solution that respects the desire for human recreation and the wild ones living on these lands.	0
3/27/2	Betsy Hardy	Richmond	I've watched the short video that shows the proposed trails and have read Sue Morse's letter. It's clear that several of the proposed trails go through ecologically sensitive areas. I am not in favor of having trails in the sensitive parts of ACF. In her letter, Sue Morse emphasized the importance of ACF as a critical part of a larger vital block of wildlife habitat needed by many species. ACF also provides an important wildlife corridor. With too much use by humans, these ecological assets would be lost. Each year, because of human incursion, wildlife habitat is lost in Vermont and across the country. I'm willing to give up my ability to hike in and enjoy certain areas so they can continue to thrive and provide the vital habitat needed by many animals and plants (some of them rare). We are so fortunate to have ACF and all the species that inhabit it. My hope is that we'll steward it wisely so it'll be good habitat for them long into the future.	0

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/27/12 Ed Wells		Richmond	Thanks ACFC for allowing time to share views on the trail route proposal. While I support carefully planned recreation at ACF I am in favor of relocating trails in the upper portion of ACF to less sensitive areas. PLEASE take as much time as necessary to assess trail route proposals and public input. Ian Stokes has offered an alternative trail design in these comments. I think they are worthy of your consideration. The Arrowwood/Sinuosity report offers much to consider as long as the ACF Management Plan and Conservation Easement requirements can be met. As an aside but probably relevant ... Richmond's Preston Forest Legacy trails, although well made, were sited without the benefit of a management plan or formal environmental assessment. It shows in my view: Some well-developed game trails have been converted to single-track multi-use trails; To some extent the desire for connectivity to other trails seems to have determined the number of trails and their locations; 'features' (large berms, 'balance beam') have been added to at least one trail (Visceral) clearly out of compliance with the conservation easement. (The easement actually calls for non-mechanized public use of this land.) As a former member of the town Trails Committee I learned how difficult it is to get valuable committee time to discuss and act on such concerns after the fact when more immediate things have to get done. It highlights for me the importance of getting ACF done right the first time, however long it takes. It is important that the desire to connect to other trails does not always take precedent over other factors in deciding trail location at ACF. While I generally support the idea of trail connectivity it does increase the challenge of managing trail USE and its EFFECTS when there are multiple points of entry. Looking at the cumulative impact of trails at ACF and connecting trails off of ACF has to be a priority. On a more personal note, a forest loses some of its magic when a permanent trail runs through it. Keep it small. There are lots of trails in the area. ACF is a special place as it is. Thanks again for your time.	
3/27/12 Marcia Levison		Richmond	Please help me understand why we would not listen to Sue Morse. She has a great deal of information based on research and experience in wildlife habitat. Is Richmond being singularly minded for the benefit of a small minority? I stand with the flora and fauna. Thank you	

Time
stamp

What is your
name?

What town do
you live in?

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Many thanks to the consultants for their work in preparing their responses to the ACF Committee's three questions. Some additional information from them and/or the Committee would help clarify the responses and perhaps lead to some new and better alternatives to what is being proposed:

Question 1 (Reducing trail mileage/number in the NE quadrant)

The consultants state, "In order to reduce mileage in the northeast quadrant of the property, there must be a shift to a more defined ranking of priorities, with a de-valuation of some current priorities." The reference to "current priorities" is unclear. •What "current priorities" are referenced as needing to change – those in the Management Plan, or those in the bullet points that follow ("Sustainable connectivity..." and "Ecological considerations....")? If the reference is to the bullet points, where did that language come from, and how does it reflect the MP and RFP?

- Trail Use Perspective

The MP's Concept Map and the RFP both call for a Sip of Sunshine connection and multi-use trails. The consultants argue that safety and terrain issues make this impossible. The only solution they present is to build multiple single-use trails in the northeast quadrant and accept the greater ecological impacts traffic will have on the many sensitive ecological features the consultants and others have cataloged in that part of the Forest. That would seem to have us not balancing but subordinating ecological needs to recreational preferences.

•How does that reconcile with the Easement's, MP's and RFP's parallel calls for balancing ecological and recreational considerations?

•Were alternatives considered, and, if so, why were they ruled out? For example:

oCould we address safety, terrain and ecological issues by constructing just one, single-use connection to Sunshine, avoiding sensitive areas by the MP's very conservative 200 feet. East Climb now comes closest to filling this bill. Also, its suitability for hiking tracks with the leading recreational interests derived from the Visioning process' public survey.

oCould the consultants provide a single route to accommodate all users (who might have to make some compromises, such as dismounting on steep sections, reducing speeds, or stepping aside for bike traffic?

The second bullet states that ecological impacts will be "mitigated to the greatest degree possible...."

•What references and standards were used to gauge ecological impacts of introducing more people and dogs into these areas, and do they track with recent research?

•Since traffic volume and density are important causes of both trail and ecological degradations, as well as management challenges, what are the forecasted traffic volumes for the trails over time?

•Did the consultants consider the effects of mountain biking's ongoing technological advances, i.e., lighter materials, electric assists, LED headlights, fat tires, etc.

•At what point might the trails' carrying capacities be reached on safety, terrain and ecological considerations? How might we monitor and manage for that?

On page 2, the consultants state, "As a whole these trails provide for the most sustainable and safest recreational experience for the target user groups, while maintaining the smallest ecological footprint possible to meet these project priorities."

•What "project priorities" are referenced here?

•Which "target user groups" were focused upon, and how do they reflect the ranking of user group preferences compiled during the Visioning process? If not, would a plan reflecting those preferences remove the issues we are struggling to confront?

•In the reference to a "sustainable" recreational experience, how is the word "sustainable" used – from an ecological or trail maintenance perspective, or both?

The consultants describe the north-south stream corridor as "the most sensitive ecological feature in the northeast quadrant," echoing prior and detailed evaluations by them and other ecologists. Even so, they say that designation was "impossible to quantify with the limitations of seasonality and duration inherent in the original project scope." They also note

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.
3/26/2 Jill Merkel	Richmond	Richmond	I would like to see effective wildlife corridors and sensitive forest areas protected. I support the recreational use of Andrews forest, but I think that the original plan for the forest is a good one, and should not be amended to allow more incursion into wild lands than already exists unless it can be done without disturbing the biological balance of the forest. The Andrews Community Forest Management Plan states that our community forest is a critical wildlife corridor and is ranked in the top 3% of Vermont's wildlife blocks. The current amended trail proposal and many of the comments to this page rely on the work of Arrowood Environmental to verify trail locations as being ecologically sensitive and environmentally sound. Yet the Arrowood report states on page 2, "This project was limited in temporal scope and could not accommodate a comprehensive on the ground natural resource inventory, therefore additional resource features are expected to be present." In fact, the "Middle Connector Trail" would run right through a stand of the Broad Beech Fern, Phlegopteris hexagonoptera, which has been identified as a rare fern in Vermont. Another example is on the proposed "Hemlock Trail" which would funnel traffic into the forest's largest winter wildlife refuge area. Richmond Residents have not been presented with the full scope of the pros and cons of the proposed amended trail plan for public comment. Nor have they been presented with a map that identifies the wildlife corridor, and sensitive ecological areas as they relate to the proposed trails. There is also no mention of the 200' trail buffer zone as discussed in the Andrews Community Forest Management Plan. I believe proposed trails should be ground truthed, and that they must conform to the Forest Management Plan. The Andrews Community Forest Committee deleted one proposed trail that ran through an ecologically sensitive area, and should be recognized for their work. We now hope our committee will work together to protect the ecologically sensitive areas where trails are still proposed. As a trail user and frequent visitor to Andrews Community Forest, I know creating recreation opportunities in the Andrews Community Forest is important, but not at the expense of critical wildlife habitat and ecologically sensitive areas. The Conservation Easement emphasizes minimizing ecological impacts over developing areas and wildlife corridors. There would be greater community support for trail placement that locates trails away from ecologically sensitive areas and wildlife corridors.
3/26/2 Melissa Wolaver	Richmond		As I have become aware of the AFC's proposed trails, I am dismayed at the dismantling of the original management plan. Please do not allow any trails in/near the vital wildlife habitat located in the northeast section of the forest. I have been following development of a Trails Plan for the Andrews Forest (https://arrowwoodvt.com/acff/). I have not found it possible to come to an opinion regarding that Plan without knowledge of proposed changes to the AFC's governing Management Plan, which states that "The Trail Concept Map shall not be revised independent of the Management Plan" (verbatim including underlining). I feel the two must come forward together. For example, it no doubt was essential to somewhat relocate the proposed trail in the North-East quadrant, as described in the Management Plan Concept Map, based on a feet-on-the-ground examination as carried out by Consultants. However, a single trail was specified in the Management Plan for that area. The initial Forest Committee Trails Plan called for three. One, I think wisely, was removed, but still leaving two trails, not the single trail specified. I need to understand how two remaining trails can be justified in what is considered the ecologically most sensitive area in the Forest - how the Trails and Management Plans can be reconciled. How can two trails provide the appropriate balance of ecological / wildlife protection with recreational opportunity? I need to hear the reasoning.
3/26/2 Martha Nye	Richmond	Richmond	
3/26/2 Bob Low	Richmond	Richmond	

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?		Theme
			Please describe your views on the proposed trail route. As an outdoor enthusiast, I am excited to use thoughtfully designed multi-use trails in the Andrews Community Forest. Thank you to the committee for your work on this. I am impressed that our community is taking the time needed to plan minimum impact trails that we can feel good about using. After extensive community involvement, a trail concept and forest management plan were created that reflected a true compromise of many interested parties to honor the conservation easement and forest management plan. The hard-earned compromise was to focus on wildlife habitat protection (the number one reason stated in public input for purchasing this land), while also providing recreational uses that do not impact the land's fragile areas including: wildlife travel corridors, wetlands, and deer yards. The ecologists were hired to map the ecological sensitive areas. While they admittedly ran out of time and money to thoroughly assess all the critical wildlife features and endangered species, they were able to map most of the ecologically sensitive areas. It is concerning that the proposed trails were then located right through the middle of these very areas we had agreed to protect. The proposed trails are also specifically not designed to be multi-use. It seems we need some thoughtful compromise to both honor the Conservation Easement that comes with this land and to provide low-impact recreational opportunities. Maybe it would be better to keep the Mt. Bike Park below the powerlines, where the terrain is more suitable, and only put a simple low-impact footpath through the upper portion of the forest or keeping all the trails below the power lines would be consistent with our minimum impact commitment. This would provide trail options while still protecting the habitat and conservation priorities for the land. There would be greater community support if trails were located that protect the ecological value of our forest: avoid the sensitive areas identified by the ecologists, minimize the number of trails above the powerlines, as agreed to in the management plan, and design trails that are truly multi-use and appropriate for hikers, runners, cross-country skiers, bikers, hunters and birdwatchers. Thank you.	
3/26/2	Dan Wolfson	Richmond		0
3/26/2	Caitlin Corless	Richmond	I feel very conflicted about this project, particularly after reading the letter written by Sue Morse. While I think it is important that we have the chance to enjoy the outdoors, I worry about disrupting more and more of our natural areas. Where does it end? Where is the balance? I am glad to hear that compromises have been made and feel that I need to research a bit more about the revised plan. I am very concerned that the proposed trails would be harming local wildlife and plants. No trail should infringe on wildlife corridors, or areas with sensitive plants. While mountain biking is popular, it specifically creates more erosion than foot traffic does on trails. I am a regular trail user and have been shocked at the damage to the Preston Legacy Trails since more mountain bikers have been using it. We cannot have that happen to the Andrews Forest, as well. We as a town are the new land stewards of this parcel and are responsible for preserving sensitive wildlife areas within it. For that reason it is essential that trails are carefully planned to avoid damage to the land and current inhabitants. The process of planning should continue, with another look at how trails could be better placed. Thank you.	0
3/25/2	Kathryn Wysocky	Richmond	Thanks for providing this opportunity to comment. Vermont's wildlife deserve space and respect, and I support trail construction that avoids sensitive areas. There are many unique ecological assets in Andrews Town Forest that are at risk from recreational impacts. To protect the public's investment in this forest and the biodiversity it supports, trail development should be kept to a minimum to protect existing, intact values. Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.	0
3/25/2	Zack Porter	Montpelier		0

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

From the comments submitted to date, it is clear that Richmond has a robust biking community. Some might think the Andrews Community Forest is a blank slate, and there are no restraints on the trail proposal. However, the 428 acre Andrews Community Forest was conveyed to the Town of Richmond subject to a Conservation Easement. The legal document is a Grant of Development Rights, Conservation Restrictions and Public Access Easement. It specifies the purposes of the Grant and the attributes of the land. While the Easement provides for recreational uses, the overwhelming emphasis in the document is on protecting the ecological values of the property (see pages 1-3).

The Easement also requires a Management Plan as well as a Forest Management Plan. Both plans are approved and in effect. (The Management Plan supersedes a Recreation Plan that has been mentioned in prior posts. The Conservation Easement is separate from, and independent of, the Conservation Easement that encumbers the Maple Wind Farm land, which was also part of the Andrews Farm.)

The reason there is controversy surrounding the present trail proposal is that there are people in Richmond who feel that it is not consistent with the provisions of the Conservation Easement or the Management Plan. Specifically the trail plan appears to encroach on ecologically sensitive areas in the upper parts of the property that are to be protected under the terms of the Easement. The Management Plan clearly states that the trail plan can not be revised without a full revision to the Management Plan (page 27).

The Management Plan has not yet been revised. We do not know what's intended for the trails in question. Will there be limits on their use? Will Vermont Land Trust, a holder of the Easement, approve the changes if they're shown to contradict the terms of the Easement?

There are also questions about the process used to get to this trail proposal. There has not been much opportunity for open dialogue and even this system for gathering responses does not result in discussion of the issues.

I urge the committee to give further consideration to the trail proposal and look for alternatives that may have less impact on the ecologically sensitive areas. Also, I hope the committee will consider the substance of the comments received. Do the people in favor of this plan understand that we are not dealing with a blank slate?

I thank the committee for their work on this and hope the result is a proposal that is consistent with the Conservation Easement, for the sake of the species that call this area home.

I believe the addition of new trails threaten the viability of the ACFs central wildlife movement corridor causing further fragmentation to multiple sensitive areas and jeopardize natural communities. These newly proposed bike trails (particularly Hemlock Valley) go right through a winter deer range habitat, another proposed trails runs right over a recently discovered patch of rare plants, consultants were not able to conduct a full-scale work up on these proposed routes. Clearly there are real issues to consider here that are not being fully vetted before moving forward with such a plan. More than ever want this forest to benefit our wildlife and preserve their natural communities. Look around there are many recreational areas in Richmond and supporting town around. We ALL need to continue to serve as better stewards for this sensitive forest. Keep trails out of ecological sensitive areas. There are plenty of places to recreate outside of this forest. More and endless building of infrastructure is not needed.

3/22/2 emmanuel betz

Richmond

3/23/2 Kit Emery

Richmond

3/24/2 Marcy Harding

Richmond

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?		Theme
			Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	
			When I think of a Community Forest, I envision a wildness that we pledge to preserve as our gift to humanity, not something to conquer. We have parks for that and many of them contain their own forests, just so we don't forget.	
3/22/2	Martha McSherry	Richmond	As the human busyness of the forest increases, the wildlife will move on. It won't be the same for long. People should be encouraged to explore the forest in moderation at their own risk, quietly and slowly on game trails that already exist. Just like the creatures which already call it home.	

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Theme
3/21/2 Brad Elliott	Richmond	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route. Before sound decisions can be made about routing more trail traffic into remote parts of the Andrews Community Forest, the public needs more clear and objective information about the proposal's impacts on the Forest's wildlife and ecological health. We also need to know what changes the proposal would require to be made to the Management Plan and the long-term implications of those changes. Solid, science-backed information is key if the Town is to meet its stewardship responsibilities for this wonderful place. The ACF's 428 acres are recognized as "an integral part of a large contiguous block of forestland that ranks in the highest 3% of Vermont's wildlife habitat blocks as ranked by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife....The property abuts adjacent conserved land totalling more than 5,000 acres that connect to Mt. Mansfield State Forest, itself comprising 44,444 acres, helping to create a critical wildlife corridor on a statewide scale." The forestry project underway there will only further enhance its ecological contributions. Accordingly, Richmond's Town Plan, the ACF Management Plan and other important documents all stress the need for balancing recreational development with wildlife protections. But balanced outcomes require balanced information. The public needs independent, objective information to be able to judge what inserting more people into remote and sensitive areas of the Forest than originally envisioned would mean to its ecological health. I was on the committee that developed the Management Plan. We spent months collecting, compiling and responding to extensive public input on how the Forest could best be protected and still used and enjoyed by town residents. After countless compromises in the Management Plan's development, the Selectboard and Vermont Land Trust approved it and put its requirements and recommendations into force. Now, 10 months after the proposal for expanding the original trail concept was made public, it still hasn't been clearly explained if and how the new trail locations meet the requirements. What does seem clear, however, is that the proposed routes and trail densities stray far enough from the Management Plan to require its "full revision." That mandate is in the Plan itself. The public needs to see what those changes would entail for the Forest's long-term management before it can weigh in on the proposed trail routes. Here are some links intended to help fill the information gap. • Trail Impact Map – See where traffic on the proposed routes would degrade some of the Forest's most remote and sensitive habitats: https://tinyurl.com/ACFTrafficImpacts • ACF Trail Policy Summary – Read what Town policies and documents say about balancing ecological and recreational values in the ACF: https://tinyurl.com/ACFInTownDocs • Trails for People and Wildlife – Watch a video about planning wildlife-friendly routes for trails: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX3oId8LRPM • Letter from Sue Morse to the ACF Committee – A naturalist familiar with the Andrews Community Forest describes her concerns about the proposal: https://tinyurl.com/MorseLetterACF • "Wildlife and Recreation: Understanding the Effects of Trail Use on Wildlife" – New research and guidance for locating and managing low-impact recreation trails. From Vermont Forest, Parks and Recreation, and Fish and Wildlife departments: https://tinyurl.com/LocatingTrails • For a Deeper Dive: Links to maps, research, articles, videos, correspondence and other materials about the Forest and the proposal's likely effects. https://infoacf.wordpress.com/	

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?		Theme
			Please describe your views on the proposed trail route. An important opportunity is before the Richmond community to develop a plan for recreational trails in the Andrews Community Forest. It is critical that this is done right, balancing the needs to preserve the ecological integrity of the Forest with the desire to create recreational opportunities, as described in the Forest Easement and community-developed Management Plan. The Andrews Community Forest Committee (ACFC) has initiated a Google survey to obtain public opinion regarding the Trails Plan it has developed, currently in its second iteration. This is an important step. However, I do not feel that such a survey alone satisfies the degree of public discourse clearly called for in the Forest Easement and Management Plan. It does not reflect the widespread public input through many venues that went into establishing the governing Management Plan. I suggest the Andrews Forest Committee might arrange for a noticed public hearing where it presents its most recent Trails Plan to the public, summarizes feedback it will have thus far received and asks for further feedback in public. The ACFC might then consider that public feedback and then hold a second noticed public hearing detailing how public input has further shaped the Plan and the rationale behind its trails decision. It is only then that I feel the required degree of public input to the process can be satisfied.	
3/18/2	Bob Low	Richmond		

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/15/12	Nancy Zimny	Richmond	There are two key questions the ACF should consider about the ACF: 1. How critical is it to prioritize the protection and conservation of this particular piece of land? and 2. Given recreation is to be allowed, how should the ACF balance that use among different types of users? Unique importance of ACF parcel: The ACF parcel is one of the "few, untrammelled, relatively remote habitats left in the state" (Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project) and the Vermont Conservation Design project considers it to be "part of a 'Highest Priority Interior Forest Block' providing critical ecological function at statewide level." The Conservation Easement clearly prioritizes conservation over recreation, and the Forest Management Plan stresses the imperative of 'minimizing impact on natural resources' when recreational trails are considered. The ACF's own ecological consultants (Arrowwood) acknowledge ACF's many and unique natural features. In addition, they point out that there are likely even more at-risk areas yet to be discovered in the ACF (in other locations and to account for seasonal changes). They simply had insufficient time to find them before the published report. Furthermore, why is a map with only trail locations on the public ACF website? It would be more informative and honest about the tradeoffs to show a map with the trails superimposed on one that identifies the eco-sensitive areas, wildlife habitat, and recommended buffer zones. Trail Use: Human access to the ACF of any kind is usually via trails. The proposed trail system was developed by a firm (Sinusity) that specializes (primarily) in mountain bike trail design. Are these proposed trails appropriate for ALL types of users? Can someone use these same trails to walk, birdwatch, mountain bike, hike, and hunt? An emphasis and priority seem to be given to the importance of connecting some mountain bike trails to others, of providing different trails to accommodate different mountain biking skill levels and concern about whether trails are appropriate for ascent or descent on a mountain bike. The ACF needs to remember this is a COMMUNITY forest, supposedly open to all types of users, and not just prioritize one user group. The ACF is clearly NOT just a small unimportant parcel of land bisected by power lines nor should it be considered an easy way to extend mountain biking access even further into the forest on the north side of the river. The idea that this public land should be used to take the pressure off heavily used trails in other privately-owned locations is not appropriate. I urge the ACF to take a 'start low and go slow' approach particularly in its most remote and sensitive areas to: • Allow time to complete studying the impact of trail development BEFORE any trails are built. Have ecologists complete their analysis and estimate numbers of people using trails by activity and season • Re-assess the need for and priority attached to developing more mountain biking trails in ACF when in fact, there are already ~ 100 miles of mountain biking trails available in Richmond and nearby • Take seriously that human recreation in the ACF is supposed to "minimize impact to natural resources." Reject the notion that the ACF should be used as an economic driver for the town. Making money is based on maximizing (not minimizing) human access which is the antithesis both in theory and practice of the overall intent of preservation and conservation of the ACF. Thank you.	0

Time
stamp

What is your
name?

What town do
you live in?

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Hello Andrews Community Forest Management Committee,

I saw the solicitation for participation in a process around the latest trail proposal on the Andrews forest. I don't know if as a resident of Jericho I have any standing in the process, but wanted to pass along some new research that I thought is relevant and you may not have seen. I have been visiting the area where the Andrews forest is now as well as adjacent properties for many years, so it's an area I have a significant connection to and I'm very interested in helping to ensure that the development of the property is done in a way that minimizes the inevitable impact this will have on the ecology of the property as well as on other users.

I am concerned about the new trail proposal, which appears to put a relatively significant new trail system in the upper Andrews forest, occupying a significant percentage of the upper property, especially along the eastern edge of the central drainage where the identified wildlife travel corridor, some evergreen winter habitat and oak feeding areas are located. It appears from the map that much of this new trail network is well-within the "flight distance" of many wildlife species from the important south-facing hillside for wintering habitat, fall food-sources in preparation for Winter, or for the vernal pools or water sources. I see the comments in the "Follow Up Report" document from the trail designer essentially said they proposed this trail configuration knowing there would be a greater negative impact and footprint than intended, (the report noted the hemlock trail is routed directly through deer wintering habitat and the trail locations diverged from the intent of the original request and were more numerous than originally intended) but that it was required in order to connect to the other trail system North of there (sip of sunshine), which was a stipulation of the project. My understanding of their response is that the necessity of accomplishing a connection to the Sip of Sunshine trail, combined with the difficulties in trail routing due to the terrain, caused them to alter the originally-intended balance between recreational infrastructure development and maintaining ecological integrity, in favor of the new development.

I know you have been sensitive to these concerns during the planning process, so I also wanted to pass along some new research I ran across on this topic. There is an unpublished UVM thesis from this past Fall cataloging New England-specific negative impacts to various wildlife and habitat from trail-based recreation. I don't have the final thesis to pass on, but the author did a presentation at the last Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative meeting, which I've linked-to here. https://www.uvm.edu/femc/attachments/project/999/annualMeeting/2021/presentations/Meredith_Naughton.pdf

My worry is that with a significant connector trail to another trail system, within a few years usage of these trails will inevitably wind up being much, much heavier than today. I also worry that with bc skiing being so popular, or if the trails were ever to be groomed for fatbike use as other local trail systems have begun doing, that it's inevitable the trails will see a similar increase in use during the winter when any impact is potentially more harmful to wildlife. It seems clear from the available research this impact is real and significant, and would degrade the value of that wintering habitat as well as negatively impact wildlife's ability to access some of those important habitat features and the movement corridor along the central drainage. I think it would be highly worth considering a more difficult to construct trail location if that means it is less-impactful on the highest-value habitat features and the areas connecting them and allowing wildlife to move through the area un-hindered.

Personally, given the terrain constraints mentioned by the trail builders, if a suitable alternative that is less impactful can't be found I think the goal of linking to sip of sunshine should be reconsidered altogether in order to maintain a balance between ecological integrity and new development of recreational infrastructure. In this event, further development of trails on the lower portion of the property below the power line would not significantly increase the impact to wildlife since that area already sees relatively heavier use. In my experience trail development projects become a matter of incremental degradation, as the initial development is usually reasonable, but then every few years another "limited, reasonable addition" gets added, whether officially or not. No one addition is ever unreasonable, but collectively over time the result is far more impactful than anyone intended from the beginning. Regardless of the eventual decision the committee and the community makes now, in order to maintain the intended balance between ecology and development in the long-term I believe some trail-less areas should be officially designated now to maintain ecological integrity and maintain the opportunity for dispersed users, so the extent of development doesn't become a moving target over time. This would give both trail advocates and trail-based recreationists a clearer understanding of what is on and what is off the table not only now, but in the future.

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
Sue Morse (originally submitted via email) 3/15/2	Jericho	Sue Morse submitted comments via PDF. The PDF is viewable at http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Morse-letter-to-AFC.pdf		

Time
stamp

What is your
name?

What town do
you live in?

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Dear members of the Andrew's Community Forest Committee,

As a professional wildlife biologist, I cannot evaluate the adequacy of Andrew's Community Forest Committee's trails proposals based on the partial information the committee has provided so far. As a citizen who has volunteered on several of Richmond's standing and ad hoc committees (e.g., Selectboard, Transportation Committee, Science to Action, Town Governance, Volunteers' Green), I know that the ACFC's efforts to inform and involve the public in trail design and review fall well below our community's standards.

If your proposal package is left as is, you risk further confusing your audience while compromising the validity of any comments you receive. Moreover, I cannot believe that the Selectboard would consider reviewing an ACFC trail plan (and any associated management plan amendment needed to justify the trail plan) coming out of your process.

Doing better does not have to be difficult, or time consuming, but you need to try. Therefore, please consider withdrawing or closing the current public comment request as soon as possible and begin developing a functional and meaningful public information and participation program.

A tenet of public participation is that sufficient and objective information must be provided in an understandable format to foster a genuine understanding of a project's need, and the pros and cons of any proposals. The ACFC's process for the past nine months does not achieve this.

To expect the public to digest the 6/1/2021 Trail Project Summary Report, the consultants' undated "Expanded Additional Responses to ACF Committee", 2/28/2022 draft meeting minutes, and the Forest Management Plan is misguided. In your February 28th meeting, several of you said you didn't understand the consultant's responses—and you know the relationship of these documents and have been discussing them for months. How can you expect someone outside the committee to even begin to grasp the issues, let alone know which questions to ask?

Moreover, it's only deep in the meeting minutes that readers begin to learn that some committee members questioned the amended proposal's ability to meet the Management Plan's goals and requirements, and that the initial trail design request-for-proposal and subsequent contract might have been poorly designed (see "subject to the parameters you gave us"). And you don't share the concerns and questions expressed by the public so far.

The only trail design information you provide are those from the consultants. Where is the Committee's stand-alone summary linking the reports, questions, discussions, and management plan goals/requirements to your proposal (along with a discussion of the pros and cons)?

What might a substantive participation look like? Richmond offers many. For example: the Transportation Committee (of which I am a member) recently began an effort to make Bridge Street safer and more inviting for bicyclists and pedestrians. The project outreach plan includes two public meetings to gather input and report findings (in addition options for online comment submission). During the first meeting we (the Committee, liaisons from the CCRPC and the hired consultants) explained the project and asked the public many questions, starting with "are we asking the right questions?". We followed by asking people to share their experiences, concerns, and needs. Then we zoomed in for a block-by-block, and even a crosswalk-by-crosswalk, exploration, asking the same questions and answering the public's questions the entire time.

When the draft designs are ready (~3/17), we will hold another public meeting in which we will present the designs and ask the same questions again, as well as "Did we get it right?" "Does it address your concerns/needs?" "Did we miss anything?"

The Planning Commission uses the same basic template to engage the public on zoning questions, except the Planning Commission will often hold multiple sessions for both input and reporting out. The Conservation Commission, Selectboard and others do the same.

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Hello ACF Committee Members, attached [see link below] is a report titled Wildlife & Recreation: Understanding and Managing the Effects of Trail Use on Wildlife. It was researched and written by Meredith Naughton, a UVM grad student for the Vermont Departments of Forest, Park & Recreation and Fish & Wildlife.

Meredith is one of the students that conducted the natural communities mapping project for the ACF. She is now the Conservation Director for the Stowe Land Trust.

The report includes the most up-to-date and Vermont-specific literature review on the effects of trails on wildlife, as well as management recommendations. Both FPR and F&W advised Meredith throughout the course of her research. I think you'll find it highly relevant to the work of your committee.

Jon

<http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2021-11-Wildlife-Managing-Trail-Use-Effects-Naughton.pdf>

I'm concerned about the wildlife and hope that no further trails will be established. I viewed the letter from Sue Morse, and hope that others will. That letter validated my view on the matter. Thanks for the opportunity to share my views.

What town do
you live in?

Time
stam
What is your
name?

Jon Kart
(originally
submitted via
3/15/2 email)

3/14/2 Jennifer
Richmond

Richmond

0

0

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
			Having had the opportunity to walk along the flagged proposed trails on the ACF my overwhelming impression is that the number of trails is excessive, since many routes are duplicated. The Trails plan provides little information about the need for this. We are mostly relying on the information from the expert consultants. While it seems that Arrowwood people have done a thorough job of documenting present conditions, I am concerned about the trails plan. The website of Sinuosity shows their specialization in building trail systems catering to mountain bike users seeking thrills on downhill routes (see https://www.sinuosity.net/home#work) I am also concerned that the assessment of trail routing does not address the human impact that will increase as the numbers of trail users increases. The impact of trails depends the amount of use as well as their location. The Conservation Easement and Management Plan both emphasize conservation of habitat and natural resources as the highest priority for ACF with public access only to the extent that minimal impact on that habitat and resources occurs. While the number of people expected to use the new trails is unknown, precedents (e.g. Preston Preserve, Chamberlain Hill, Cochran's) suggest a high level of year-round human activity. There are already about 30 miles of multi-use trails within Richmond, and an additional 70 miles in neighboring Towns. It's unclear why we need so many more trails in this crucial component of the Chittenden County Uplands that demands our best efforts to protect it. People wishing to study the ACF proposals in detail don't find a lot of easily accessible or in-depth information from the ACF Committee's web page. So Richmond residents have assembled a resource for maps and documents about the ACF and about the impacts of human activity – see https://InfoACF.wordpress.com. I encourage Committee members and others to study that resource before coming to any simplified 'yes/no' about the proposed trail plan. Having served as a member and chairperson of the Richmond Trails Committee some years ago, I had the opportunity to learn a lot from a wide range of hikers, hunters, landowners, land stewards and others about many aspects of trails on private, public and conserved lands. But things have changed a lot in recent years – the predominance of hikers with backpacks and binoculars seem to have been outnumbered now by people riding mountain bikes. Bikes make access and range a lot easier. In particular, the doubling or tripling of trail routes above the power lines contradicts stated principles in the Conservation Easement (CE) and Management Plan (MP) to minimize impact. The following changes regarding new trails can be made without substantially reducing opportunities for trail users: - Where they parallel each other, consolidate Rocky View (#11) and Cascade Trail (#12) to avoid duplication; also avoid the short loop at the top that requires two stream crossings. - Omit: the unnecessary Roadside Trail (#8) - Retain: Lower Traverse (#9), Stream View (#13) and Middle Connector (#14); - Retain: East Climb (#17); Omit Hemlock Valley (#16) and Ridge Top (#15) - Retain: Sip of Sunshine Connector (#18). Another important point: it is suggested that Richmond can benefit economically from becoming a destination for trail users. This is a dangerous concept since it implies that trail use should be maximized along with economic impact. I would welcome any opportunity to explain and elaborate on these points to the ACF Committee, and thank them for the huge amount of work already done.	
3/13/2 Ian Stokes		Richmond		0
3/11/2 Jason Lapointe		Richmond	I think it is fine the way it was. We have enough trails in richmond	0

Time
stam
What is your
name?
What town do
you live in?

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Habitat protection in the Andrews Community Forest with an allowance for reasonable recreation was achieved with the original plan and it should remain unchanged. The original management plan was the result of many thoughtful sessions and input from all the interested parties. Coming after the fact and attempting to amend the plan, which effectively guts it, is counterproductive to all the efforts the original planners made to protect the environment and wildlife.

Richmond

3/11/2 Rick Barrett

I am a citizen of Richmond. I'm very concerned that there are too many trails being proposed. Much of the proposed trail routes will negatively impact wildlife. I would like to see the addition of new trails done over a long time period so we will know when there is visible negative impact without affecting the whole parcel.

I would like to return to the original plan where all wheeled vehicles would be prohibited.

You can't fully appreciate nature traveling 20mph through the woods.

I do want limited hikers and hopefully school groups to learn about the forest.

I fully support selective logging. We need differing habitat and logging is essential to protect various species.

I would support haying some of the meadow but even then it should be cut late in the traditional first cut so meadow larks may once again nest.

I would like to see the majority of the traffic limited to the area below the power line.

I strongly believe that there should be no bridges or jumps that litter the woods on the south side of town.

I would also like to see the deer yards off limits for all users from Jan 1 to March 1.

I want people to walk on and enjoy the land. Some trails are essential to that goal.

I want to return to the upper section to hunt again as I did years ago. It may sound selfish but I would like to see sections off limits to hikers and bikers if we must have them during the traditional rifle deer season. Many places do this. It does increase safety in the woods.

Richmond

3/9/2C Robert Lajoie

I believe the trails should be WALKING trails only. No wheeled vehicles allowed. ACF should be a wilderness preserve with as little human impact as possible. This is a wilderness preserve for the animals to exist and live.

Richmond

3/9/2C Joan Lajoie

Page 7 of the Andrews Community Forest Management plan states that the land in question is a "critical wildlife corridor and is ranked top 3% of the states wildlife habitat blocks." Additionally page 8 states that the different water sources found on ACF is also critical - as it directly correlates to the health of the surrounding forest. Therefore, as a critical block, linking Mt. Mansfield and Camels hump blocks, this land should have minimal impacts, which includes minimal to no biking. Hikers can more easily tread lightly- able to step aside and avoid harmful and long term negative impacts to the ACF.

The proposed plan ignores the corridor buffer zones (200') and puts trails on over and adjacent to the corridor. The surveys mention deer- what about studies for all the other environmentally sensitive species/habitats/ insects/amphibians etc. The May 23 survey ignores the environment at different times of the year (breeding times, migrating times for other species) and ignores specifics to other habitats and creatures.

As much as possible use preexisting trails and logging roads IN COLLABORATION with VAST and VYCC - so as to preserve as much ACF as possible. I support eliminating the ridge trail, and as cited in the minutes from 2/28/22 from Army's comments - eliminate the Ravine trail too - as it goes against the management objective as noted by CL, minimize impact to wildlife and natural resources. Thus again, supporting low to no biking. Moreover, Are there studies presented about the impacts of biking, vs. hiking? This seems highly relevant.

Richmond

3/8/2C Deborah Kulisch

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/7/20	Kit Emery	Richmond	While I'm not a WL biologist, I believe the steep slopping landscapes, numerous ravines with narrowing ridgetops on this particular piece of land does not seem conducive for additional bike trails and should be limited to one trail only. I believe additional trails will permanently impact wildlife and interrupt their corridor movement causing further fragmentation to this sensitive habitat. We all need to continue to serve as better stewards for our land and avoid putting our recreational desires ahead of preserving our wild and natural communities. More than ever we want these forests to benefit our wildlife and their natural habitat. Look around there are many recreational areas in Richmond and supporting towns around.	0
3/6/20	Ian Stokes	Richmond	People intending to submit comments about the proposed trail route should be aware that the information about proposed trails at the Town website for the ACF http://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/conservation-commission/richmond-town-forest/ is very difficult to navigate. To see a map of the proposed trails the link https://arrowwoodvt.com/acf/ is given to the initial report from ecology consultant (Arrowwood) and trail designer (Sinuosity). This link displays a map of the terrain with proposed trails superimposed. To see the ecological considerations you select the blue box below, that links to an "Interactive Map" at https://aevt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a8f6b1539eb84e308fd78e36fc093e7a. This map includes ecologically sensitive areas, but they are difficult to distinguish from the background image. Features such as 'Hemlock and Red Pine Forests' are much more evident if you select the Topographic Basemap. Then you can see that some of the proposed trails pass through areas identified by Arrowwood consultants as ecologically sensitive, a prime concern specified in the Management Plan. One trail that was invading ecological sensitive areas was dropped from the plan at the February 28th meeting of the Andrews Community Forest Committee, raising questions about the competence of the consultants who had proposed it. The trails plan was developed jointly by Arrowwood (https://arrowwoodvt.com) and Sinuosity (https://www.sinuosity.net/ - a company specializing in designing mountain bike trails.) Blunders such as planning for trails right through ecologically sensitive areas is very troubling and I question how much communication there was between these two consultants. Why did Arrowwood let the trail plan go ahead when it seems to be very damaging to the Town Forest and to their reputation?	0
3/6/20	Lisa Kory	Richmond	I have walked the trails off Cochran Road for many years. I have observed that as more trails are developed, wildlife has had to move to other habitats. So I would like to make sure we minimize the disruption of habitats in the ACF. I am not an expert in the ACF land so cannot specifically comment about that. My comment is to keep this principle in mind. The primary goal of the ACF should be preservation of natural areas to benefit wildlife. While recreation is a secondary goal, it should not interfere with the primary goal. There are plenty of opportunities for recreation in the Richmond area. But as development expands, areas devoted to preservation of wildlife habitat are growing smaller.	0
3/6/20	Maria (Chichi) Barrett	Richmond	We need to protect these wildlife habitats. Respectfully, Maria (Chichi) Barrett Frederick (Rick) Barrett Richmond, Vermont	0

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

As a nature educator and outdoor enthusiast, I am excited to hike, run, ski, bike and guide educational programs in the ACF on trails that reflect the principles and spirit of the conservation easement that the Andrews Family entrusted our community to honor. The Andrews Family sacrificed millions to primarily ensure that their land be forever wild and shared in a manner that respects the ecological integrity of the forest for generations to follow. The original management plan, reflecting the guiding principles of the easement, is the bedrock for this planning process and should not be compromised to fulfill a vision different from the original one. I urge the ACF committee, our Richmond Selectboard and the VLT to hold us to the promises we made.

I chose to live in Richmond 25 years ago because of the abundant trails and natural areas not just here, but in surrounding towns. While it has been inspiring to see an explosive interest in seeking solace and adventure in nature during the pandemic, new threats to healthy, thriving forest habitats have emerged due to over-use in the backcountry. Spreading out our robust interest for woodland exercise and adventure with new trails will not solve the problems of congestion, severe erosion, sprawl and impact in a forest that the conservation easement species we agreed to manage with minimal impact. The ACF Committee has done an admirable job identifying some of the critical wildlife habitat features to help us carefully select appropriate places to explore and play. The ecological assessment that Arrowwood conducted shows boundaries or buffers between 200 and 400 feet for high value ecological zones we should not intrude. They mapped the following parts of the forest:

- 1) Significant wildlife movement corridors, assessed as among the top 3% most important to protect in the state of Vermont.
- 2) High value Southwest facing deer yards critical for winter refuge.
- 3) Several riparian zones bordering streams that are super important for water quality and rich in biodiversity.
- 4) Interior and remote core forest many species need to feed, breed, and protect their young.
- 5) Mast trees for Black Bears, Vernal Pools for frogs and salamanders and high value uncommon natural communities such as Dry Oak Forest patches that many animals need to thrive.

While I share the desire to access the wilds close to home, many of us are thinking more critically about where, when and how we visit them because of the intense development and global warming assaults the wild ones face. The Andrews Family and the forest inhabitants would want us to take the necessary time we need to plan with care while bearing in mind multiple other developed trail networks in the area. We already have 100miles of mountain biking trails and turning the ACF into a popular mecca similar to Cochran's and Chamberlin Hill is not the right fit for this integral habitat link within the 10,000 acres Chittenden County Uplands Forest we have already committed to protecting.

Responsible recreational expansion according to the original minimum impact plan means concentrating trails in higher density zones and allowing nature to restore old roads and advanced riding exist below the power lines and out of the need more than ever. Trail options for hops, pops, drops and advanced riding exist below the power lines and out of the wildlife hot spots. By keeping high intensity use out of critical wildlife habitat, we would satisfy our quest for a multi-use trail system while achieving the balance the Andrews Family had in mind.

I hope the ACF Committee will do the following: 1. Complete our planning process by inviting comprehensive public engagement representing the diverse range of interests including wildlife who do not have seat at the table. 2. Follow Arrowood's recommendation to finish the full habitat assessment including an inventory for rare and endangered species during the appropriate season which they admittedly ran out of time and money to thoroughly complete. 3. Ground-truth alternative trail options away from habitat hot spots. 4. Exhaust all the existing trails and impacted areas before breaking ground, cutting trees and displacing wildlife in new ones. 5. Promote a culture of responsible recreation including seasonal trail closures near vernal pools and safeguarding this forest from severe erosion and unauthorized rogue side trails seen on many other trail networks in Richmond.

Thank you ACF for taking time to make sure the final outcome is something we can all feel good about long into the future.

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/28/2	Ann Greenan Naur	Richmond	We have A LOT of mountain biking trails in Richmond. People come from all over to bike here. I'm not a mountain biker but a road biker. I don't appreciate all of the folks who DRIVE to Richmond to go biking. They drive too fast, They don't look out for walkers/runners/ road bikers. We DO NOT NEED MORE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS HERE!. We need to keep as much of the forest as animal habitat and as a wild place. THIS is what will become scarcer and scarcer over the next 50 years. Thank you	0
3/27/2	matthew fisher	Hinesburg	I think the proposed route will serve the needs of all concerned. It will create public land that can be used for a variety of recreational activities, and it will maintain a wildlife corridor as well. I am a native Vermonter and I have seen public land for recreational use dwindle over the years. To have a piece of municipal land protected for public use is a gift for any town. Trails on private land can be repurposed at any time so it is important to have public land accessible for use by all. It is my experience that people who love the outdoors are respectful of the land and the wildlife on it. Use of land like this is why most of us live in Vermont	1
3/27/2	Jason McCune-Sai	Richmond	I am a local resident, I appreciate the balance between preservation, conservation and recreation. I support the trails plan that was designed by Arrowwood and Sinuosity. Thanks	1
3/27/2	Halle Harklau	Richmond	I fully support the ACF committee and their plans on the proposed trail route. ACF did what many would have done and hired Arrowwood and Sinuosity, professionals in their fields, to build out a plan that makes sense for the forest. Being a person that works for a local conservation organization (VYCC) I see the importance of what ACF is trying to do in our community.	1
3/27/2	Neil Renner	Richmond	Plan looks good. Is there a way to connect to sip of sunshine?	1
3/27/2	Amy Renner	Richmond	I think they're proposed to Trailroad takes into consideration various stakeholder perspectives. This plan looks reasonable to me.	1
3/25/2	Betsy Emerson/Jai	Richmond	We support the new plan that would avoid wildlife sensitive areas. We don't want the earlier plan that shows trails going through the deer yards, etc.	1
3/25/2	Richmond Trails Co	Richmond	The Richmond Trail Committee would like to lend our support to either the original trail plan or the amended trail plan for the Andrews Community Forest. The trail committee has been involved over the last 5 years in helping shape the future of the Andrews Community Forest. The process that the Andrews Community Forest Committee has been through to get to this trail design has been long, extensive, precedent setting, and public. Trails are how the majority of townsfolk, students, and visitors are going to use and enjoy our new Town Forest. It has been a long, deliberative process to get to this point. By working with a professional ecological firm and a professional trail design firm, we feel the plan put forth finds the optimal balance for recreation and conservation. Some of the Trail Committee's key goals are interconnecting neighborhoods and interconnecting towns via trails to avoid roads. This plan helps to accomplish this. Moreover, we strongly believe having a loop option in the upper forest for exploration is a key design feature for forest visitors, so even with losing one of the upper trails, a loop option still remains. Compared to our neighboring towns with Town Forests, the proposed trail density in this design is extremely low. Currently, the majority of trails we enjoy in Richmond are on private land, and access is provided by landowner generosity, but is not guaranteed in the future. The ACF was bought by the town with recreation as a key component, and ensuring well crafted, thoughtful, and sustainable trails is key to having a town resource for the future. For these reasons and more, we are excited for and support either plan.	1

Theme

Time
stamp
What is your
name?
What town do
you live in?

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

I support both of the proposed trail plans from Sinosity/Arrowhead. The ACF Committee have done an excellent job coming up with a trail plan that balances public recreational access as well as ecological preservation that is aligned with the Management Plan. The Community Forest is a valuable resource that can provide members of our community access to the outdoors, which leads to strong bonds and a drive to protect these natural areas. Arrowwood and Sinosity are experts in their fields, and carefully created a solution that allows public access with minimal intrusion on the environment. I am writing to express my support for the new trail network that has been proposed by the ACF committee. I am supportive of the trail network compromise as as proposed in the February 28th meeting minutes.

I realize there is significant public interest in this trail network and there hasn't been a shortage of opinions expressed publicly through Front Porch Forum during the current open comment period. At the end of the day, the committee is abiding by the spirit of the ACF management plan. The committee is obligated to build a network of multi-use trails in the forest. It's written very clearly in the plan. It was the voice and will of the people through extensive outreach and public involvement. There are several people in our community who have expressed great concern that the new trail system would require an amendment to the management plan. I'm writing to assure you that this is not a big deal. Management plans change! When the original management plan was written, it was written with great specificity, arguably too much specificity for the level of ground assessments that had actually been done. Conditions on the ground were not fully understood or vetted when the management plan was written. What I love about the current proposal is that it involved the review of ecologists who actually evaluated the ground conditions in great detail. The fact that the committee has been responsive to public concern and eliminated the ridge trail shows that the committee is willing and able to make hard decisions and make compromises when necessary. Managing public lands requires a strategy that balances conflicting values. I feel that balance has been achieved here, and I'm really grateful to the committee for working so hard to develop a trail network with the resources of trained professionals. I attended the very first public involvement meeting with the SE Group up at CHMS many years ago now. From day one, there has been strong public support behind multi-use trails and recreation. Now, years later, the time to act is now. Please move forward with this recommendation to the selectboard.

I would also like to thank the members of the ACF who are public servants not being paid a penny to work behalf of the residents of our town. The committee deserves recognition and praise for their hard work in moving this town forward. I'm incredibly grateful for all of your hard work and thoughtful compromise. Keep your heads up! You are doing great!

Sincerely,

Rob Peterson
Stage Road

I am in full support of the Andrews Community forest plan between Sinosity/Arrowwood! This plan was well thought out, with great consideration to the local habitat and wildlife. Richmond desperately needs more places for folks to safely walk, bike, and recreate with established parking.

Trails are a big part of recreation and help getting people outside to enjoy the nature and breath fresh air. The trails proposed by Arrowwood and Sinosity is the perfect example of balancing ecology with providing access to nature and satisfy the need of diverse users in the community. The plan was proposed by professional ecologists and trail builders who where specially hired to provide the best plan that takes in account all users. The scaled down plan is acceptable but not preferred. It sounds unreasonable to think that a well designed network of trails as the one proposed will have a bigger impact than the massive power lines and logging operations that have already taken place in this area.

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/24/2	John-Paul Lavoie	Richmond	It seems clear to me that the ACF property has a history of serving many needs. It is also clear, from the years-long planning process and more recent discussions, that the Richmond community would like the ACF property to continue to serve many (sometimes opposing) needs. I support the trail plan as proposed (with or without the ridge trail) as I believe it balances the communities varied desires. I am fully in support of sustainable recreational trails being built on the ACF and am in favor of the original trail layout designed and presented by Arrowood and Sinuosity initially. This design between ecologists and trail designers was iterative and ended up with a compromise solution that was better than the first plan laid out by the SE Group and strikes the appropriate balance between preserving delicate areas of the land with creating an engaging and educational trail layout for nature lovers, walkers, runners, bikers, snowshoers and others. I was at the public meeting in August 2021 where the trail proposal was presented and discussed and I was impressed by the thought and expertise of the professionals the ACFC hired to create a collaborative and responsible plan setting aside significant portions of the property for wildlife and condensing the trails into smaller blocks to meet the varied goals of the management plan. The plan was approved at that meeting after extensive deliberation on top of years of public input, so I feel like it is time to move forward and create the sustainable and clear trail infrastructure that will both benefit the town as well as protect the forest by keeping users to established trails.	1
3/24/2	Mike Donohue	Richmond	Thanks to the committee, volunteers who have volunteered their time to make our town a better place. It is an important job to make sure the ACF is a valuable resource for the town as one of the few pieces of truly public land in Richmond! This property is now a town forest. The location of the property, with such easy access from Waterbury and Burlington, means that it is going to be heavily used by walkers, joggers, hunter, loggers, birders, foragers, bikers, etc. etc. I'm sorry to say, that the relative location of a single trail to an area deemed "sensitive" to wildlife seems too little/too late for meaningful preservation of wildlife habitat. I also find it amusing how much angst there is about bikers, when so few appear concerned about all the unleashed dogs that will inevitably be running down every moving target in the forest daily- no trails required. Basically, if you are going to open an area this small up as a designated recreation area and working forest, building parking lots and trails, then make it a recreation area and don't pretend it's also great wildlife habitat. Considering the location of this parcel in proximity to a large % of the Vermont population, I vote to maintain the original trail design. Or, modify the ridge top trail slightly to avoid the minor incursions into the apparent boundaries of the wildlife corridor. I also support the creation of larger areas of undeveloped land in VT!	1
3/24/2	Nat Merrill	Richmond	The potential health benefits from providing trail access to a diversity of users are enormous. Local recreational options are important for the community to provide and will encourage local young people to stay in both Richmond and the larger Vermont community.	1
3/24/2	Rob Williams	Underhill		1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/24/2 Julian Portilla	Richmond		Further, because there will be little to no new parking opportunities, I believe that this trail will be ridden mostly by locals who live near either of the trail heads. That means that the kind of people who will ride this trail are likely to be people who appreciate the beauty and delicateness of the ecosystem on which they are treading. Because the trail is uphill both ways (literally), it will be ridden by mountain bikers who are interested not only on the gravity focused portion but on the uphill as well. While there are no hard and fast rules about what kinds of mountain bikers like what kind of trails, I believe that generally speaking this will filter out bikers who might be less inclined to appreciate the importance of respect for trail conditions and other, non-cycling, recreationists. Finally, this new trail will provide some much needed relief to the pressure that is mounting on our existing trail systems. I'm delighted to see mountain biking grow in popularity as I think it correlates with healthier lifestyles and an appreciation of nature and, in particular, our forests. That said, the increasing number of bikers means we need more trails to distribute the load and to properly care for the existing networks. Thank you for conducting such an open, transparent and thoughtful design and consultation process around this trail.	1
3/23/2 Chris Howell	Winoski		I believe in wild places. They are sacred and difficult to defend. I understand the desire to steer ACF towards a more wild state. I also trust the trail plan. It is well thought out and represents a deep understanding of recreational and ecological needs. I look forward to exploring the new trails and spending time in ACF. I also hope those on all sides can come together for a picnic when the dust settles. We are lucky to have such care and interest in this place. I trust the ecologist and trail builder and the original plan they proposed. It feels important to honor the work of the experts that the town hired. We need town recreation trails for those of us that don't own land. I don't see a need to amend the original trail plan because of an extremely vocal minority. I support the plan to build trails in the ACF. I think the plan was approached in a thoughtful way and does its best to balance recreational and environmental interests. We love using local trails to walk and run. The networks allow us access to other areas of Richmond that would be tough to travel on the roads. The proposed route would be a wonderful, recreational addition to our town.	1
3/23/2 Minta	Richmond			1
3/23/2 Amy Klingler	Richmond			1
3/23/2 Alex Bachelier	Richmond			1
3/23/2 John Rankin	Richmond		I support moving forward now with building the original trail plan. The ridge-top trail should be included. I also support winter snowmobile use of the existing VAST trail through the forest. Overall, the trail system could be improved with additional trails. It would benefit from more loops and less out and back walks. The highly regarded Hinesburg Town Forest has significantly more trail miles per acre and a better overall layout for recreational use. If most of our forest is left without official trails, users will create their own "herd paths". Ecologically, it would be better to have trails built and marked. Building the original trail plan is a good starting point. Going forward, the town should evaluate options for additional trails in other parts of the forest. The Andrews Community Forest was never intended to be a wildlife preserve.	1
3/23/2 Roger Klingler	Richmond		One of Richmond's best characteristics is the opportunity to enjoy a variety of trails without travelling far. The original discussion of the town forest always included the idea that a collection of trails would be built. In order to prevent crowding, overuse, and stress on the environment, it is imperative that that there is a large selection of trails from which to choose. I support the development of the proposed trails in the plan. We are in support of the original proposed trail system.	1
3/22/2 Helen and Jake Hc Richmond				1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/22/2	Betsy Cabrera	Richmond	I am supportive of the current trail plan and think the ATF Committee and vendors have done an exemplary job in navigating this process. I'm looking forward to having the trail network available to our awesome community!	1
3/22/2	Kate Lee	Richmond	I support the trails. They provide recreation while respecting the natural habitat. The trail committees in Richmond have done an outstanding job. I fully support and appreciate all their work.	1
3/22/2	Patrick Herbert	Williston	I would like to first commend the ACF Committee on their thoughtful and inclusive approach to this process as well as their intent to create "an exemplary trail network, with ecological considerations paramount in trail design." I am strongly of the opinion that the proposal as put forth by Arrowwood and Sinuosity was meticulously crafted with an appropriate focus on both ecological preservation and recreational opportunities. I fully support this plan including the Ridgeline trail as it was initially included.	1
			I would like to submit my full support of the original trail plan submitted by Arrowwood and Sinuosity. The ATF Committee has been extremely thorough, thoughtful, diligent, and patient in this multi-year process. I believe those supporting the recreational aspect of the Town Forest Recreation Plan have been incredibly patient as well. The Committee delivered a clear majority vote (6 in favor, 2 against, 1 abstaining) to approve the multi-use trail design plan back in August, 2021. Yet here we are, continuing to gather and filter more public input. The public has had ample opportunity to be involved and voice opinions every step of the way, over the past four years.	
3/22/2	Catherine McIntyre	Richmond	As an aside, I'd also like to express my personal opinion that it is unrealistic to expect the ATF committee members to individually become expert ecologists or expert trail designers -- to digest hundreds of pages of content forwarded to them. The Committee selected and paid two highly respected, professional, local companies to bring that expertise to the table. It was an unprecedented process to hire a joint ecologist / trail design team to balance recreation and ecological concerns. I support the expertise Arrowwood and Sinuosity delivered, and respectfully request that the Committee and the Select Board approve that plan as well.	1
3/21/2	Timothy Burgher	Richmond	My first thought is that trails in the woods seem far better than highways, condos, houses, fields for hay in the woods. So bring on the bike trail and more access to this area. I also feel this area it a little less convenient to get to which makes me think it's not going to get super heavy use. My second thought is how much there is to think about when you put something in the woods that might bring more folks into a potentially sensitive area. My gut still says adding more trails is better. I've done a bit of trail running, a bunch of trail walking, and way more mountain biking than both of those combined. I tend to keep my tires on the single track (or directly above it for extremely short periods) and get irrationally mad when folks cut trailer corners. Anyway...more trails, better trails, teach your kids to do trail work and learn about the woods and all it has to offer...and maybe teach them that some woods should just have no humans involved?! I'm just not sure where that should take place. I guess on lots of the private property in VT. Okay this is turning into something that sounds like a late night college thought process. I hope you enjoy it.	1
3/21/2	Kevin McAleer	Richmond	Completely in support. I feel the ACF completed a thorough and deliberate process that considered all stakeholders and public interests. This will be another wonderful resource for our community to access and use.	1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Theme
3/21/2 Pete Halvorsen	Richmond	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route. Some time ago, our community took the opportunity to purchase the Andrews property with the vision to conserve part of the forest as farm land and open areas to recreation. The promise was to expand the need for recreation in Richmond, bring in business and extend the educational growth of forest management and nature. This vision was enshrined in a document called : Town Forest Recreation Plan Richmond --> https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/pictures/richmond_plan_document_final.pdf . The framework of this vision helped enable the development of the ACF "Management Plan" Take note on page 24 and 25 of the document that our desires at the time focused on conservation, recreation, forest management and education. The forest has been logged, the farm land leased and now it's time for recreation. It's been over five years now that the ACF committee and community has gone through the deliberations to achieve the management plan goals. The ACF committee has a sound trail design approved by three ecologists an expert trail design consultant, and large community support. So now is the time to fulfill the promise to those who have waited the longest to have more recreation in the forest. Please give your input now so the ACF Committee can close on public opinion and represent the findings to the Select board and trails can be started this year. I support the proposed trail design as presented. The forest as part of the 10,000 acre tract of conserved land, has ample room for humans and wild life to co-exist. We have hundreds of miles of trails in Vermont similar to the ACF landscape. Now is the time to move forward with our trails and keep the promise to ourselves.	Pete Halvorsen VT Master Naturalist Certified National Recreational Trail Designer

Time
stamp

What is your
name?

What town do
you live in?

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Since people have posted more than once here I decided to post again, as I'm thinking I may be speaking for many who have not posted. I've been reading all the comments with interest, while trying to be open-minded and as agnostic as possible. I will state outright my bias is that the ACF should have some trails, and it seems like this is aligned with the initial ACF management plan, but that's about it.

The main disagreement is really starting to feel like it is mostly between people in town who would like to have mountain biking in the ACF and people who do not want mountain biking in the ACF (or more mountain biking in town), though the latter are not explicit about such. I think it's ok to feel that way and to express those concerns. I've done plenty of walking and hiking and trail running over the years in special places that would have just felt different if there was concurrent mountain biking. Such concerns are valid and should be discussed. On the other hand, these are not ecological concerns. With some of the comments, it's difficult for me to untangle ecological concerns from mountain biking concerns (e.g. Sue Morse explicitly references "the mountain bike" community, a web site designed by a community member to help people understand the ACF and the trail proposal highlights a video of someone biking down Chamberlain Hill and their speed). The two issues are certainly not mutually exclusive – presumably mountain biking causes ecological issues. But given the overriding lens on mountain biking, it's not clear to me if there would still be as many concerns from as many people about the current trail proposal if they were simply for walking/hiking/running. Is the concern the trails or the mountain biking (or both)?

This seems like an ecologically valuable parcel. What's still hard for me to appreciate, given its proximity to route 2, a major busy highway (how is this a wildlife corridor to Camel's Hump with 89 in the middle?), several neighborhoods, and near-constant logging on at least 4 properties directly adjacent to the ACF boundary for the last 8 years that I've lived here, is how much of an impact on wildlife the proposed trails (with mileage close to that specified in the ACF management plan) would really have, especially with most of the parcel remaining trail-free. I would like to understand those concerns better, and not feel like this is mostly about people not wanting mountain biking. I will continue to read the comments.

Regarding the FPF back and forth over logging – many of us recognize that there can be potential environmental benefits of logging. However, there is also increasing recognition that there is value in old growth, and that these current use programs were to some degree designed for timber production (\$), and not necessary with ecological concerns in mind. There are efforts to change this, see this current bill discussed in VT Digger (link below). Maybe more people will conserve their land now that they do not need to log. Maybe some people can now reassess their logging.

<https://vtdigger.org/2022/01/25/bill-proposes-expanding-current-use-program-to-include-some-wild-forests/>

Listening to discussion at the meetings over the last year, it seems like there are many people in town who would have liked many more trails in ACF for recreation than proposed (and have highlighted the trail/acreage ratio compared to Hinesburg Town Forest and that no such ecological trail design has been performed in many Town Forests in the state and so on), and there are people who think there should be no trails at all (i.e. Sue Morse letter). Thus far the unbiased attempt to navigate a compromise for such has been the proposal by consultants the ACFC hired. It's for this reason I support the initial plan as proposed. There have been numerous public meetings (posted on FPF) about these trails which were attended by many members of the community who gave feedback the ACFC. The consultants presented the trails and took comments at one of these meetings and made clear the current design attempts to avoid ecologically sensitive areas completely or as best as possible (a large vernal pool, passing through a ravine more than once and so on), departs from an ACF management plan trail proposal that was tentative and perhaps made without walking the property, and in recent responses made clear that one recreational trail may not be necessarily better ecologically than more than one (or could be worse). The ACF committee is comprised of volunteers in our community doing their best. I agree more feedback now can't hurt, especially at more venues. Personally I am not in favor of disassembling the complete proposed plan as I believe it would fail if partially implemented for the reasons these consultants have put forth. If the current trail plan is not adequately sensitive to specific ecological concerns in the ACF that should've received a higher value or priority in the trail design, which I remain open to being convinced of, it seems to me that the next step would be go back to the consultants for a re-design with revised aims.

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/19/2	Meredith Monahan	Richmond	I am in favor of the proposed trail route. As primarily a trail runner and hiker, I am grateful to all the generous landowners in Richmond that have allowed trails on their properties. I do not take that for granted and know that those opportunities can change. I am excited to see movement towards sustainable town trails that will be a legacy to the town of Richmond. I appreciate all the energy and thought that has been put into this project.	1
3/19/2	Robert Hamble	Williston	I appreciate the thought that has gone into this plan and the investment in recreation. It does seem like the Ridgeline trail would be great to keep as it's impact in the wide life corridor is small. I fully support this direction	1
3/18/2	Tim Clark	Richmond	Yes please! More trails. I cant think of any trails in Richmond that have done as much homework and had as much scrutiny as these proposed trails. Yet the others were built. Look at the positive impact to our community of the existing trails. Fully support these new trails.	1
3/18/2	Chris Wasser	Richmond	I support the development of multi-use trails as outlined in the latest plan. While recreational use does have impacts - they are both positive and negative. By providing access to natural areas folks develop a deeper connection to the land and usually become much more invested in protecting more land - a major positive benefit that can extend beyond the ACF. Also, the majority of trails in Richmond are on private land - the ACF represents a generational opportunity to provide a place for Richmond residents to enjoy all that this public property has to offer.	1
3/17/2	Kenny Robertson	Richmond	I support the trail plan for ACF. They help achieve the management plan's objectives.	1
3/17/2	Luke Schaefer	Burlington	From an ecological perspective, the trail route seems mostly sound. I would be curious to see what could be done to remove and restore the woodland communities around some of the redundant, eroded old logging roads, as they would be less necessary for recreation given the new planned trail infrastructure. Also perhaps the pink proposed trail near marker #13 could be routed closer to the logging road corridor and away from the wildlife corridor if it is intended as a climbing trail. A lot of mountain bikers, myself included, don't mind the occasional "haul road" for climbing if it lessens the impact of our recreation.	1
3/17/2	Nat Shenton	Richmond	I think the trail route is great. From walking my dog many times in the forest, I wish there were more trails to explore.	1
3/16/2	Eric R LaVigne	Richmond	I fully support the original plans with the additional trail. I'd love to get my 6 year old daughter into mountain biking this year. Less trails in the Richmond area means people like us are driving further to bike and hike. Using more fossil fuels and harming the environment. A few more trails please!	1
3/16/2	Jim Van Duyn	Richmond	After reviewing the materials and plans it appears that the plan is thoughtful and comprehensive of all needs. I support the plan.	1
3/16/2	Megan Shenton	Burlington	I think that this would be a great addition to the Richmond trail systems. Richmond bike community is so strong, and this would give people space to spread out, rather than crowd the area of Cochrans and Chamberlin.	1
3/16/2	Don Harrington	Richmond	I am in full support of the trail plan for ACF. The committee did a great job coming up with this proposal. We should move forward with these trails as soon as we can.	1
3/16/2	Scott Cole	Richmond	For over 30 years I have been using that area...VAST trails in the early days... and in the recent times have been walking there often with family and friends. I am in support of trails for use of the public. What a treasure it is.	1
3/15/2	Marcia Waite	Richmond	It seems that the committee has invested in significant research and has heard many different views. I 100% support the proposal and look forward to the expanded access of the 'sunny side' of Richmond in the darker months.	1
3/15/2	Karin Rand	Richmond	I am in full support of the new revised plan for trails in the ACF. I am glad to see the initiative that the trails committee has taken in response to the increased recreation in our town. I think it is imperative that the town takes actions to provide new areas of recreation for all types of use. I am very happy with the care that has been put in to understand the ecological impacts of the trails and the resulting plan. I think this is a great resources for the town to access natural areas which in turn creates a broader awareness of respect for our natural areas.	1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/15/2	Neil Preston	Richmond	I support this trail plan and hope that the town is able to move forward with it. Adding these trails to the existing network will spread out the traffic and improve the trail user and residential experience. Thanks for the hard work in crafting a thoughtful plan.	1
3/15/2	Gabriel	Richmond	As a resident and local business owner, I would like to express my whole-hearted support for either trail plan put forth by the committee. I applaud the Committee's goal to balance recreation and ecological conservation considerations in the development of the proposed plan. I have seen first-hand the economic effects of the improved recreational opportunities in town. We need to keep this momentum going as we continue with the renaissance our village core is seeing. Please consider the economic impact for the town.	1
3/14/2	Tom Cochran	Richmond	I am supportive of both the original trail network and now the revised plan. It would be great to offload some of the trail and land users from our side of Richmond (Cochran's and surrounding land) and spread all the humans out. It seems that both sinuosity and arrowhead were quite professional in their approach to developing this trail plan; let's make it happen!	1
3/14/2	Lars Whitman	Richmond	I feel as though the ecological study has been thorough and the trail design well thought, that the committee should move forward with the plan for trails.	1
3/13/2	Jake Ide	Richmond	I think the proposed trails network honors the character of the Andrews Community Forest as it exists today, restricting and containing human travel in an appropriate and sustainable manner. As a nearby property owner and frequent visitor, I am glad to see how much of the parcel was left untouched. I am glad that our town chose to participate in the years-long, community-focused and -supported deliberative process, involving citizens throughout. I support honoring this valuable work by implementing the trails network (and preservation of the rest of the ACF!) as proposed.	1
3/12/2	Todd Sagar	Richmond	I support the design plan as submitted and approved - I am hoping the proposed trails do not get cut - looking forward to when the project is completed - I use the Preston Legacy Forest trails extensively and love living here in Richmond - thanks!	1
3/12/2	Dennis Delay	Richmond	I fully support the trail plan and appreciate the extensive work done to understand the existing wildlife and flora in the ACF. Integrating this understanding into trail development is explained in detail in the Management Plan, and opportunities for public feedback are included as part of the required assessment protocol. Thank you to all who have put so many hours into the ACF and for making such an easily accessible and extensive record of documents and reports for the public.	1
3/12/2	Jim Cochran	Richmond	I would like to submit my full support of the trail plan put forth by the committee. I am a Richmond resident and manager of the Cochran Ski Area and in my opinion, the original trail plan should be supported by the Committee and approved by the Select Board. With public trails and ample parking, Cochran's ski area and my family's land is currently a host to many multi-use trails. While it has been tremendously positive to host trails and be a central location for recreation in Richmond, there is a limit on how much we can do. By approving the proposed ATF plan, the Town would share the role of providing recreational opportunities for the community, on public land. I appreciate the detailed ecological study that helped determine the proposed trail design. I encourage the ATF Committee and Select Board to approve the plan that was developed by paid, vetted, and experienced professionals.	1
3/12/2	Patty Brushett	Richmond	I think you've done amazing job. We are so lucky that you all "stepped up" to this huge task. I appreciate your revisions to the trail design. I attended one of your meetings with Sue Morris. She was very knowledgeable and convincing. I also appreciate the access agreement we will be entering in to with the Abenaki people. A small step toward repairing that relationship.	1
3/11/2	Darcy Buret	Richmond	I think people protect the land more when they actively get out to enjoy it. A trail can be made in a thoughtful way. I support making a trail for people to enjoy.	1
3/11/2	Mark Aiken	Richmond	I support the proposed trail route.	1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/11/2	Stephen Patrick Bender	Richmond	I am fully supportive. Not only does it increase availability of exercise opportunities for the well being of Richmond citizens, but it does so in an environmentally responsible way. I see no down side to this. The upside is citizen satisfaction, potentially more traffic through the town of Richmond buying services and goods at our local shops/restaurants, and is a good compromise in the name of balancing our opportunities with our environmental footprint. I think it is a good proposal to cut out the last trail on the NE corner of the AFC property. I think you should also look at closing trails that go down the steep ridges of hemlock and spruce in the late fall and winter time when the deer herds are living there. I also feel that the trails should be following the suggestions of the described parameters and goals under which the ecologists (Arrowwood) and trail designers (Sinosity) developed their proposal. We must protect sensitive areas of fauna as well as animals. There is a dry oak forest that a trail goes through that is not commonly found on our corner of the state according to Kit Emery. These are the kinds or areas the AFC should look at as well. I realize these trails are used not just for mountain bikers but also hikers and hunters and VAST members. I hope school classes will as well. The Richmond area is rich with mountain bike trails and that is why we see the heavy traffic through town and enjoy the support these people bring to our local businesses. The Andrews Community Forest should be more protected from trails being built on them then the hills surrounding us that have trails on them already. Thank you for the opportunity to add to this public discussion. John Hamerslough.	
3/11/2	John Hamerslough	Richmond		

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
			The original trail design plan would be AMAZING if it came to fruition. It would connect to town via Sip trail without having to ride on the treacherous twisty section of Rt 2. Love that I can park or ride to town and connect Chamberlain, Preston, & Cochran's without spending too much time on the road. At Andrews to that---sweet!!! But if the Sip connector can't be...it's a blow....not a critical blow for me, but I assume it could be for residents in the proximity close to Sip. I am concerned that not having enough trails to spread users out on the descents (specifically gravity oriented riders) could potentially cause significant conflict or at least some potential disharmony with different users' flow types. As one commenter anecdotally stated in the meeting, the users at Preston are generally always polite and smiling when they cross each other, no matter what their mode of transportation. I 100% agree with this statement. BUT 2 notable differences between Preston and this revised Andrews design are: (1) Preston has 3-4 descending options (LungTa, Preston Loop, Visceral, and Graveyard). (2) Aside from descending, users also are able to exit the Preston trail network in 4 separate exit points which significantly spreads users out (A-Day, Connector, Lower Connector, and out Merritt). I spend an unhealthy amount of time scouring Trailforks and Strava routes, and I find users travel Preston (often paired with Cochran's) in so many different ways and in all directions. There really isn't 1 standard top-to-bottom loop or route that everyone takes. How many hikers do you see on Graveyard or Visceral? None right!? They obviously opt for more hiking-friendly routes/exists (Preston and Merritt). So to wrap up my point--yes--most trail users live in harmony at Preston, but they are not all forced/funneled onto 1 trail ascent or descent and their typical routes vary significantly even among the same type of user groups. I've spent a lot of time this winter grooming the fat bike trails at Andrews and I see how much potential that land has. Descending Urbanik trail I envision the future of Andrew's downhill being 3x longer--wow that will be fun!! And having fun climbing trails too--yes please! A full top-to-bottom loop is sure to be a real fun addition to the Richmond Trail network for any trail user. Even the most basic top to bottom loop is sure to be AMAZING and I can't wait. If I can add my two cents as fat bike trail groomer...Having 'boot friendly' trails at Andrews could make the winter grooming last much longer and better. I know PRKR mountain in Little NH does this. There is sooo much boot traffic at Andrews, which is great that people like to hike there, but it's almost impossible to maintain a fat bike friendly route. Boot friendly routes could help make the trails better for bikers, and could continue to make the trails more equitable without requiring users to use snowshoes on all groomed trails (which they don't at Andrews anyway as you know). The boot trails can even be groomed. Options and signage could go a long way.	
3/11/2	Jake Robertson	Williston	Thanks!	1
3/11/2	Paul Hauf	Richmond	I support the original trail design by Arrowwood/Sinuosity. Trust the experts you hired to design a trail network that minimizes environmental impact. It's time to move the process forward after 4 years of debate and planning. I feel so lucky to live here in Richmond, I am behind the proposed trail construction and think it's a great addition to the many walking/hiking/biking and x/c-snowshoe-snowmobile trails private and public that Richmond offers. I am firmly behind anything that gets our society outside and off screens, I am guilty as well. As I mentioned on FPF I hope we can incorporate at least one route through Andrew's town forest for official and insured VAST trail, we hope to get a route open from Perfection trailers up and back connected with VAST route to Essex. A group of local riders, just took over the local club and once we get up and running might not be a bad idea to meet and see if there is any crossover that would benefit the community as a whole. If we get a VAST trail back on the map it would be groomed, that might be something we could somehow work out to keep a winter loop in Andrew's forest groomed for general public use, motorized or not.	1
3/11/2	Rob Hintze	Richmond	Hope this project moves forward regardless! Rob	1

Time
stamp
What is your
name?
What town do
you live in?

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

As a trail runner I am always thrilled to see new places to run, especially in my hometown. I truly appreciate the effort of protecting wildlife, as I find it important to keep a minimal impact on the lands all living beings rely on. As long as this effort to preserve wildlife/the natural land comes to fruition, I am in favor of this new network.

I fully support the trail plan as originally proposed and recommended by the professional entities hired and then agreed upon by the ACF committee. I am a strong proponent of research, data, and subject matter experts or professionals who can interpret and make recommendations given their experience and expertise. From my understanding, that is what the town hired these professionals to do given requirements and best practices of understanding all of the variables that go into trail design through sensitive environments. What are the impacts of a multi-use single track trail to the surrounding forest? Lots of opinions exist throughout our community, but the professionals based their recommendations off of research, expertise, and best practices. I stand by that, as well as the ACF committee who seems to have gone through a rigorous process to ensure the best interests of the town and environment were considered.

Due diligence has been done. It's time to move on the extremely well thought out and clear plan that the committee has come up with. I strongly support this plan.

3/9/2C Calle Ewald

3/9/2C Susan Whitman

3/9/2C Kathy Mulligan

I believe that with the extensive collaboration that was built into the original design, with a professional ecological firm, AND a trailbuilder, that it already was designed with a considerable compromise, when comparing the proposed trail density with other local town-forests (and recognizing the amount of additional non-interrupted land nearby).

But since that has been deemed potentially too intrusive, I support the current compromise as a means to allow both wildlife to thrive, and people to enjoy the land.

It is generally through the use of land that most people gain an appreciation for it, and will continue to drive towards further preservation and conservation efforts. If conservation is seen as only taking away, or limiting people, it will inhibit further conservation efforts.

3/9/2C Jed Rankin

3/9/2C McEdward-Rand

I am in favor of approving the current proposed trail routes for both pedestrian and bicycle use. I am also in favor of approving the VAST trail thru the property, but for winter only motorized snowmobile use. I am not in favor of other motorized use trails or additional snowmobile trails.

The ATF property was purchased by the town with the idea that it would be managed for conservation, recreation and wildlife habitat. I believe with proper oversight and stewardship by the ATF Committee that all users of this property (plants, animals and humans) can thrive with respect to one another. Proper management of the ATF will require periodic monitoring of the land to be sure that the human users (walkers, bikers and snowmobilers) are staying on designated trails. If permitted human uses cause unforeseen habitat destruction, trails may need to be closed or uses may need to be restricted as deemed appropriate by the ATF Committee. I encourage the ATF Committee to approve of the current trail plan. I also encourage the ATF Committee to determine a process for monitoring the impact of the trail use on the land. My hope is that this place feels friendly to visit and enjoy by all users. Positive reinforcement of what we want vs. what we don't want will do that.

Thank you for all your work on this project. I look forward to exploring this beautiful piece of land with my neighbors and with visitors from out of town.

Time
stamp

What is your
name?

What town do
you live in?

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

Hi All-

I served on the Andrews Town Forest Committee in 2017 and 2018. I am on the board of Richmond Mountain Trails. I am a member of the Conservation Alliance, which helped fund purchase of Andrews Town Forest

As you work towards a proposal for the Richmond Selectboard re: trails in Richmond's Andrews Town Forest, I wanted to share some quotes with you I collected as I was researching a story on trail-based recreation in Vermont for a national publication. The quotes are from a Vermont Federal Forester, a Program Manager at conservation non-profit Trust for Public Land, and from a representative of the Lintilhac Foundation.

As a journalist, I turn to experts to help me understand whatever topic I am writing about. I hope that the Town of Richmond will also defer to experts as we come up with a plan for the Richmond Town Forest that will serve the needs of flora and fauna, as well as the needs of the community.

At the last two ATF Committee meetings, committee members used the trails proposal created by the experts the town hired to develop a plan to care for wildlife and serve community user groups as a starting point for compromise, when in fact that plan was the result of compromise, which is what both Arrowwood Consultants and Sinuosity Trail Designers explained it was, detailing their iterative process over the course of a four plus hour public meeting.

The Sinuosity/Arrowwood plan was developed by expert ecologists and expert trail designers in a landmark collaboration that could serve as a model for how trails are built throughout Vermont in the future, satisfying trail users and protecting wildlife and Vermont's ecology.

But it doesn't appear that the majority of the committee is willing to trust the experts the Town of Richmond hired.

It's ironic. When Ethan Tapper, our county forester, makes a recommendation to the ACTF committee, all defer to him as the forestry and logging expert. When Arrowwood and Sinuosity made a recommendation, members of the committee and the community asserted their own expertise trumps that of the experts we hired.

I am a conservationist, an avid nature lover and a lover of outdoor activity. I strongly believe we should establish wilderness--land with the least human impact possible.

Richmond Town Forest is not that land. It's a small parcel bisected by a power line, a piece of land where there has been extensive logging, and a parcel with an existing network of logging roads that are heavily used by the public. Andrews Community Forest was purchased to serve as a wildlife corridor and also a place for Richmond residents to recreate. It was purchased as a community resource, a place for Richmond residents to be in nature, to breath fresh air, to stretch our legs and lungs. The Arrowwood/Sinuosity proposal represents a dramatically scaled down trail system from what was first proposed by SE Group, consultants the town hired to help us determine what town residents want our town forest to be.

I strongly encourage the selectboard to approve a plan that will balance the interests of as many community interest groups as possible. I strongly encourage you to adopt the proposal put together by Arrowwood and Sinuosity, and to approve the modest network they proposed for immediate construction.

The trails discussion has been going on since 2017. It's time that we move forward with a fair and balanced plan, and end the infighting in our town that wants to give some user groups access and bar other users. A scaled down version of the Arrowwood/Sinuosity plan will create unnecessary trail crowding and potential conflicts. Please allow the three trails laid out in the proposal we hired Arrowwood and Sinuosity to create.

As a private landowner whose parcel provides a key link in the Preston Loops, I ask the town to please allow trail-based travel in our town forest.

Theme

Time
stamp
What is your
name?
What town do
you live in?

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

My husband Bob and I host and maintain miles of public trails on our private land. While we are happy to share our land, I do want to point out that currently the vast majority of town wide trails are on private land. The Andrews Committee has done a very thorough job vetting and hiring the professionally-minded way. Personally I would prefer the original trail Town to support multi-use trails on public land, in an ecologically-minded way. Personally I would prefer the original plan to spread out rather than condense users onto fewer trails, but if compromise is necessary, I also support the Committee's amended plan. Many thanks to the ATF committee for all of its hard work!

I have reviewed the proposed maps and associated documents, and support the plan to build the trails.

I think the updated proposed trails will still be a great addition to the trail system in Richmond. Excluding the ridge line trail is a good call to be sure that sensitive ecological zone is not disturbed, especially for the long-term sustainability of the project. We read all the material provided and think the justification is valid.

I am so excited by it! I liked the previous proposal with more trails but understand the reason for change due to environmental impact and am supportive of that. A random thing of note, as someone who is actively trying to purchase a home in Richmond (within riding distance of trails) this has made the Jonesville area an awesome potential place to purchase a home -- I really feel it adds significant value to that side of town and will be interested to see if that changes for others too.

As an active resident in the town of Richmond I am in favor of proposed trail routes at the Andrews farm. My primary sport is trail running and the trail network in this town is one reason that I reside here. I appreciate that studies and consulting has been done on the proposed area for trail development and have read through the Management Plan. Nature is something that I value and want to see utilized, but at the same time respected.

I believe that the trails in our area provide value to our personal health and our communities. I also see the demand for more trails and think that this proposal will help elevate some of the overcrowding on some of the current "hot spots" while also helping connect an existing trail to others (Sip of Sunshine).

As a trail runner I am in support of the proposed trail plan. I do hope these are true multi use trails and not just mountain bike trails that people are allowed to walk and run on like so many of our local trails are.

Having a connection north to the Sip of Sunshine trail seems like a great way to access the trails without having to use Rt2. I strongly urge the town to approve this trail plan. It is time. There has been more than enough compromise and all parties and stakeholders have had ample opportunity to comment and participate. I personally feel there should be more approved trails, but can live with the reduced number in the name of compromise and moving forward. Please approve this plan! I can tell a great deal of care has gone into the design and ecology of this project. During these times of isolation and quarantine our goal should be to get our kids outside to enjoy nature and develop avenues to alleviate stress.

The focus of this forest should be increasing accessibility to the wonders of Vermont.

Thank you as a parent and as community member of Richmond for developing this trail network!

I support the proposed trail plan.

I do not see the need to eliminate the proposed ridge line trail, however, I support the plan as described and encourage the town to begin the next phase of the project.

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/7/20 Quinn Keating	West Bolton		Based on the language found on page 28 of the 2018 ACF management plan which identifies its recreational objectives as 1) Provide a forest that has opportunities for all interested users (hunters, mountain bikers, walkers, etc.), 2) Preserve sensitive areas of the forest and route trails around those areas, and 3) provide a trail system that is well-connected to trails on adjacent properties and Richmond Village, I feel the committee has done an exemplary job in meeting their objectives with the original plan as it was put forth inclusive of the now in question "Ridgetop Trail". I support the plan and the great work that the ACF committee has done thus far.	1
3/7/20 Jenny Evans First	Richmond		I strongly support the trail plan. Thank you!	1
3/7/20 Allison Frazier	Richmond		100% in favor of the current proposed plan. The committee has done a great job researching the impact and taking all viewpoints and needs into consideration. This plan represents excellent work and the best balance possible for all parties.	1

Theme

Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.

The ACFC should adopt the original trail design by arrowood and sinosity. The trails as designed will serve the intended users and the forest equally. The trail design was a compromise between ecological and recreational priorities. Many trail users would gladly see more trails than those proposed put into the ACF. Likewise, folks prioritizing minimal impact to the forest would see fewer trails. The design with 3 trails that allows for looped use and multiple trail users, while protecting habitat to the west is the best possible outcome.

Removing the "ridge-top" trail in the already compromised trail plan is unnecessary from an ecological standpoint, and harmful from a recreational standpoint. The trail as flagged is largely shielded from the wildlife corridor in the adjacent ravine due to the topography. Only at small intervals does the trail run close to the ravine, and in those instances it is along cliffs that still provide adequate shielding for wildlife to utilize the corridor. The ridge-top trail also provides those visiting the forest with a glimpse into these areas while concentrating the use onto the trail vs. dispersing it through the forest which may have a more deleterious effect.

I am a member of the Richmond conservation commission and of the Richmond mountain trails board. I have an undergraduate degree in ecological studies and a law degree in environmental law. I believe the compromise as originally proposed is a tremendous win for ecology and recreation and can be used as a beacon for other projects to emulate. Further curtailing the vision of arrowood and sinosity may make this model less appealing to future users. Recreational Trail developers may be less likely to want to collaborate with ecological consultants if the fruit of that labor is ignored.

If the committee is intent on changing the plan, I would propose keeping the ridge-top trail but moving it further away from the ravine in the places where there is concern it may impact the wildlife corridor. I have hiked the trail and believe there is adequate space to provide topographical shielding to the corridor from the trail. This would allow the arrowood/sinosity vision to be fulfilled.

If the committee is intent on removing the ridge-top trail all together, I would ask that they commit to designing the remaining western most trail as a descending trail for mountain bikes, as well as design the eastern most trail to be a climbing and descending trail for all trail users.

Regarding the mileage issues and need for a connection to VYCC, I would be in favor of removing some of the ancillary trails below the powerline to allow for additional connective mileage to VYCC.

Passions regarding this project are high, and rightfully so. I appreciate the committee doing the hard work of listening to the public and trying to fulfill their vision. That being said, the committee and community hired experts to create the trail plan. Their product is backed by years of expertise and months of on-the-ground work. I believe their plan is the best we can hope for going forward.

Thank you again for your time and attention!

Time stamp
What is your name?
What town do you live in?

3/7/2C Max Krieger
Richmond

3/7/2C Richard First
Richmond

3/7/2C Chase Rosenberg
Richmond

I strongly favor the trail plan at ACF. I was in favor of the original plan with the 3 trails and believe that was the best plan given the input and efforts put forth. That plan did a great job of compromising the desires and needs of the diverse views put forward. I am less enthusiastic about this further compromise, however I still submit a resounding YES to the proposed ACF trail route. Thanks to the committee for their hard work.
I fully support the opinion of the ACF committee and, having an ecology background, see the plan as erring considerably on the conservative side, in that I don't see an additional trail causing ecological stress.

1

1

1

Time stamp	What is your name?	What town do you live in?	Please describe your views on the proposed trail route.	Theme
3/7/20	George Lapierre	Richmond	As a resident who bikes, skis, runs and hunts in the town forest, I think the proposed trails offer a great balance of use for a wide variety of Richmond residents. Sinuosity has a wonderful reputation building trails that are durable, sustainable and fun to ride/run. The connection to the Sip of Sunshine trail is also an important part of Richmond's town vision to connect to other trail networks. The popularity of the trails in Richmond is vital for our town's vibrant culture and economic vitality.	1
3/7/20	Jack Parker	Richmond	As a local mountain biker, I would greatly enjoy having more trails to spread out the biker traffic that Richmond has been experiencing. I have walked this land numerous times and would love to have trails in the beautiful forests.	1
3/7/20	Kevin Mahoney	Richmond	The proposed trail network looks like a great community resource for riding, running, walking. this will create broader opportunity for the Richmond community to enjoy exercise and nature.	1
3/7/20	Brian Oley	Richmond	The proposed trails look great! Connecting to the neighboring trails definitely provides exciting opportunities for longer and more adventurous bike rides and hikes, whereas the trails near the parking lot provide nice variety for people of all abilities. Great work done by everyone so far! I'm very excited to see this come to fruition as someone who lives nearby and already regularly recreates at ACF.	1
3/7/20	David Sunshine	Richmond	As a land owner to the north of the ACF I believe a balance of the competing interests is necessary. I want to see the trail proposed the goes north and connects to the trails on the land I own with my spouse be retained and approved. I also agree that eliminating one of the proposed three trails in order to assist in preserving the ecological zone is a good solution.	1
3/6/20	Andy Solomon	Richmond	The original trail design seems to reflect a balance between recreational opportunity and ecological considerations as intended. Arrowhead and Sinuosity have explained the process of their collaborative decision-making that resulted in this specific design in writing and at public meetings. Therefore I am not in favor of the ATF committee removing a segment of the designed trails on their own (since they presumably do possess trailbuilding or ecological assessment expertise) in response to concerns expressed by some community members. If there is a desire to adjust the trails and our community feels this is justified, they should be re-designed by Arrowwood and Sinuosity so that they remain multi-use as intended while optimally balancing the town's intention to protect the forest while permitting recreation there (which is uncertain if ATF selects trails to remove from the original design without consultant input and redesign of what remains).	1
3/6/20	Adam Morse	Richmond	I am in favor of the proposed plan. Multi use trail networks and continuing to connect with existing trail corridors provides people the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and access nature without overcrowding of existing trails.	1
3/27/2	Deleted at the request of the person submitting the comment	Deleted at the request of the person submitting the comment	Deleted at the request of the person submitting the comment	

