
Appendix 1 – Visioning Process Results

Introduction

The Town Forest Visioning Workshop and Survey are integral parts of the overall public engagement process for the Virginia Stranahan Memorial Forest Recreation Plan, which also includes a series of steering committee and community meetings, as well as input from the Town government and other stakeholders and partnering organizations.

To ensure the greatest possible participation in the visioning process, the same visioning questions were asked at the public workshop and in the survey, although the survey asked a few demographic questions that were not asked at the workshop. Both public engagement methods were primarily focused on understanding the community vision related to the Town Forest, the management balance of the forest, the natural resources present on the site, and future activities in the Town Forest. The workshop results are presented in the photos of the public engagement “boards” completed by the community while the survey results are presented in tables of the combined survey responses. Key findings are reflective of both inputs, and areas of alignment and divergence are highlighted and analyzed.

As the workshop and survey are only one part of the overall community input into the plan, the Visioning Process Results should be considered descriptive of community sentiments rather than prescriptive. While these results should help point the way and direct the development of the plan, they must be measured alongside other community and Town inputs and should not be considered conclusive of the sentiments of everyone in the community.

Public Visioning Workshop

A Public Visioning Workshop for the Virginia Stranahan Memorial Forest was held at Old School House Common on January 22, 2018. The meeting was a drop-in anytime, open house format with questions about an overall vision for the town forest; the balance of recreation, education, conservation/natural resources, and forest products; the natural resources present on the site; and future activities in the Town Forest. Attendees wrote responses on boards, completed dot exercises, and drew their ideas and knowledge on maps. Members of the project team and local steering committee were available for one-on-one chats with attendees, and a general comment box was provided for open-ended feedback. Background/baseline information about the project, the community, and the forest, was also provided. 28 people signed in and an estimated 40-50 people were in attendance.

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Public Visioning Survey

The Public Visioning Survey was launched at the public visioning workshop on January 22, 2018 and remained open through the Sunday after Town Meeting Day—March 11, 2018. Both online and hard copy surveys were made available. The community was made aware of the survey through a variety of methods including flyers distributed around town, press-releases and news articles, and email blasts and social media posts. In total, the survey received 133 responses—100 online and 33 hard copy. Survey results presented here represent combined responses to both the online and hard copy versions of the survey.

Visioning Process Results

Demographics (Survey Only)

Location of Residence

79 percent of the respondents were from Marshfield, while 21 percent were residents from neighboring towns, second home-owners, and visitors from afar. Surveys were received from 40 zip codes.

Median Age

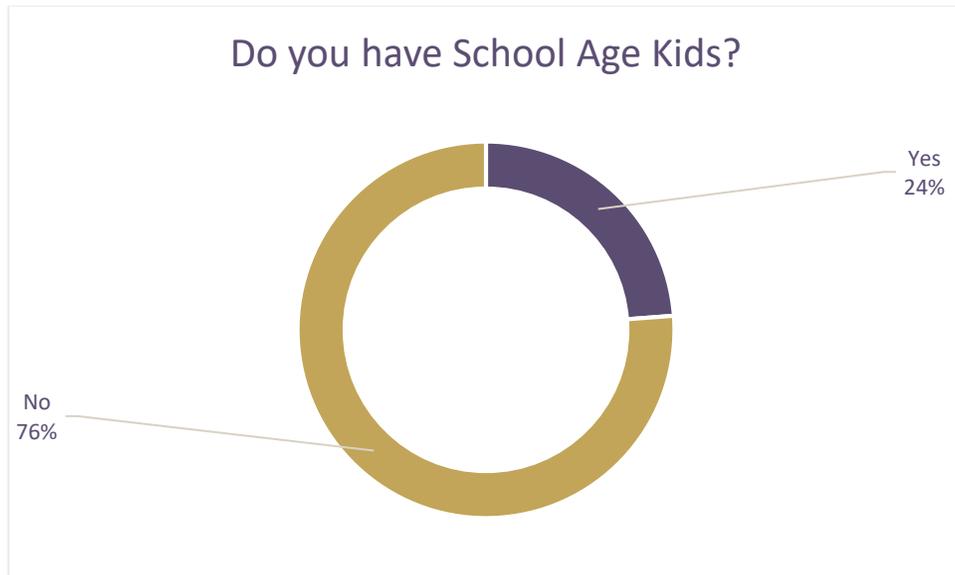
Survey results tended to skew towards an older demographic. The median age of survey respondents was 56.9, while the median age of the Town overall is 41.0.

School Age Kids

24 percent of survey respondents have school age children, suggesting we received a reasonable sample of families in town. Of those who responded they had school age children, the average number of school age children was 1.37.

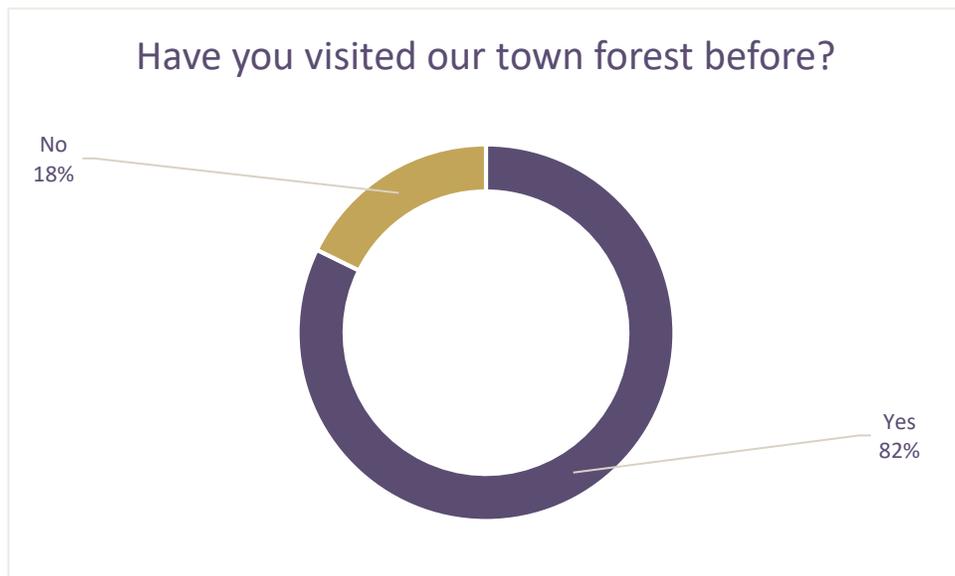


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Familiarity with the Forest

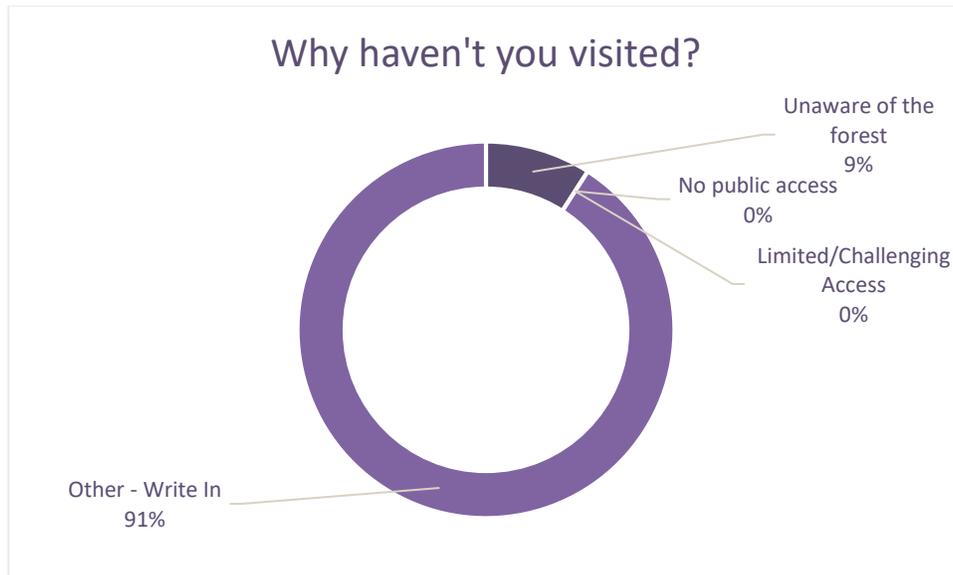
Most survey respondents (82%) had visited the town forest before.



Of those who had not visited, most chose to write in their rationale. Their responses are below and are a mix of recently found out, choose to or cannot recreate in the woods, or convenience of other woods.



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Write in responses included:

- Just never chose to. I live in the woods
- New to the area. Will visit soon!
- We have property with woods, so usually use that.
- Just found out
- I don't know exactly where it is.
- Have our own forest
- Just have not had the time yet
- Visits rarely-- I have trouble walking
- Visits a few times a year because I live on the edge of town
- I visit a few times a year, but live in a wilderness area already.
- I visit rarely, because I usually use my own property for recreational use.
- Use my own forest
- I visit rarely-- I just don't think of it or go for walks near my house
- I visit a few times a year, but live by Groton state forest and have my own 50 acres to trek on
- I visit rarely, but only because I don't have much free time.
- I enjoy using my own land
- Cannot hunt = To many regular walkers
- I do not like the way it has been locked up by a select few

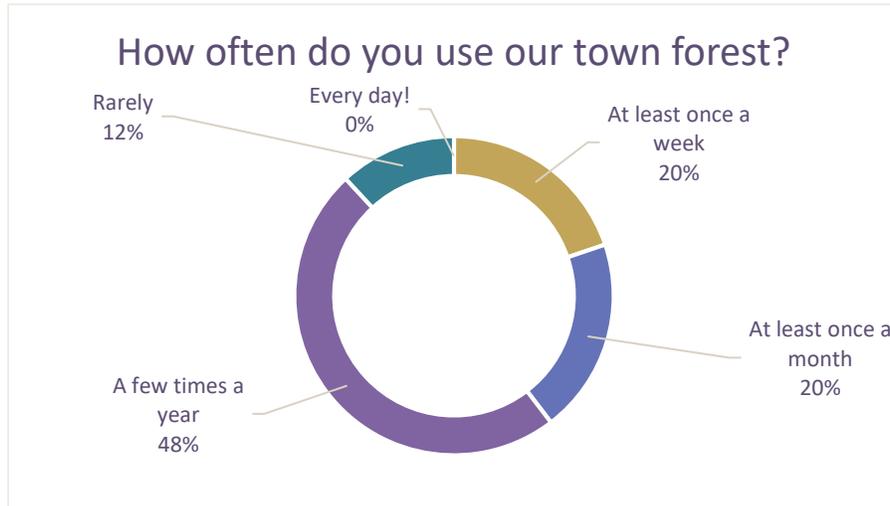


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- Not an outdoor person

Forest Visitation

Of those who had visited the forest, the most (48%) visited a few times a year. Many visit at least once a month (20%) or at least once a week (20%).



Survey Respondent Affiliations

The survey asked respondents if they have an affiliation with the Town (Conservation Commission, Town Forest Committee, etc.), interest group (trail club/group, rod and gun club, etc), or partnering organization (land trust, library, school district, etc.). Most respondents (70%) did not have an affiliation. There was a strong showing from Riders in Plainfield and Marshfield, Conservation Commission, and Library. Some respondents answered “Yes” but did not report the specific affiliation.

Affiliations included:

- Library
- Riders in Plainfield and Marshfield
- School Board
- Conservation Commission
- VT Land Trust
- Horseback Riding trail group
- Friend of Plainfield Opera House
- Energy Committee
- Calais Conservation Commission



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- wait your survey offered no definition of the prior terms
- hiking in serenity engaging with nature
- happy hiker
- pleasant
- actively and environmentally engaged
- Drive by but never stop
- historical
- Positive
- Cautious beginning
- Appreciation and gratitude for the conservation of public land
- Pleasant
- peaceful
- Beautiful, local hiking and biking
- Absent
- Overgrown trails
- undisturbed
- Outstanding town resource
- an underappreciated gem with conflicted uses
- appreciative of nature
- Pleasant
- hunters
- Love it!
- Walking, taking in nature
- Inspired
- amazed
- DID NOT KNOW
- lovely
- Discouraging
- simple/beautiful
- Divisive and Elitist
- Interesting
- cross-country skiing and trail riding
- Underwhelmed
- hiking and hunting
- Love it!
- Nature Experience
- Enjoyment of nature
- Getaway
- Focus is narrowly minded
- inspired
- nice trail to walk
- peaceful
- amazing town resource
- Calming and fulfilling.
- A lovely and interesting forest to walk through
- Open to all
- accessible
- nature tour
- Quiet, peaceful and not overly fancy. I go to the woods to be in the woods. Not to see people, ride bikes, and love that this isn't an urban place w paved-like paths.
- Preservation
- Biking
- Excited
- minimal
- enjoyable
- Grateful
- really great
- sanctuary
- limited
- overly regulated trail restrictions
- Trails
- Quiet, wild, living forest
- Great and hopefully growing recreation area
- Fun
- natural ecosystem
- Love it
- Love it
- trail volunteer
- Fun
- enjoyment
- Mushroom walks
- Challenging
- appreciation
- Natural beauty



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- Hiking
- Beautiful
- None
- Pleased that it is being cared for as an educational and recreational forest that will remain as an example of a beautiful and useful vt forest
- Pleasant
- Low impact activities on natural environment. Quiet walks in natural ancient woods.
- Relatively off the radar
- A walk in nature
- I value open land
- None
- I've only walked it once, I'm embarrassed to say
- I love walking and skiing the forest-
- observing nature
- I've gone on bird walks and plant walks. It is a peaceful piece of property.
- Exhilarating
- Wonderful!
- Quiet enjoyment
- Ecologically diverse local place to visit for walk, ski bike, alone with youth, with educational program with friends.
- Love
- Nothing but aroleing
- Infrequent
- Reports



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- Exploration
- Clear trails, more activity
- undisturbed
- Still a special place
- Well-loved wild place
- appreciative of nature and user in winter
- Keep open for all activities
- animals
- More frequent exploration
- Walking, taking in nature
- Connected to other town forests
- Very careful expansion
- RECREATION
- more lovely
- well preserved
- Inclusive
- Calm
- better trails for cross-country skiing and better trails plus more access for trail riding
- Engaged
- mountain biking, hiking and hunting
- More
- Nature Experience
- Protect natural habitat
- Natural
- Following forestry plans and being more open to other recreational uses
- inspired
- to ride horse
- peaceful
- more trail exploration
- Calming, fulfilling, and educational.
- To be able to continue walking the trails undisturbed by machines
- More access places
- inviting
- Mountain Biking
- exercise
- Slightly better trimming of overgrown paths. Not highways. Not too much different...
- Preservation
- Explore
- Mountain bike life
- more
- exciting
- More walking
- more of the same!
- more of the same!
- sanctuary
- fun
- inclusive and open-minded to serve respectful groups i.e bikers
- More trails
- Quiet, wild, living forest
- Active use by the community
- Continued fun
- natural ecosystem
- Expect to use it more
- Will use it more
- trail volunteer/user
- Bike trails
- access
- Feeling confident that I won't get lost if I explore the town forest by myself.
- More user friendly
- respect of wildlife habitat
- Healthy Ecosystems
- Enjoy it as is
- Ecologically based recreational area
- Preservation with Rec Uses
- Not sure
- Wonderful!
- Same
- Same as above experiencing the natural rhythms of earth
- Availability to future generations
- A walk in nature



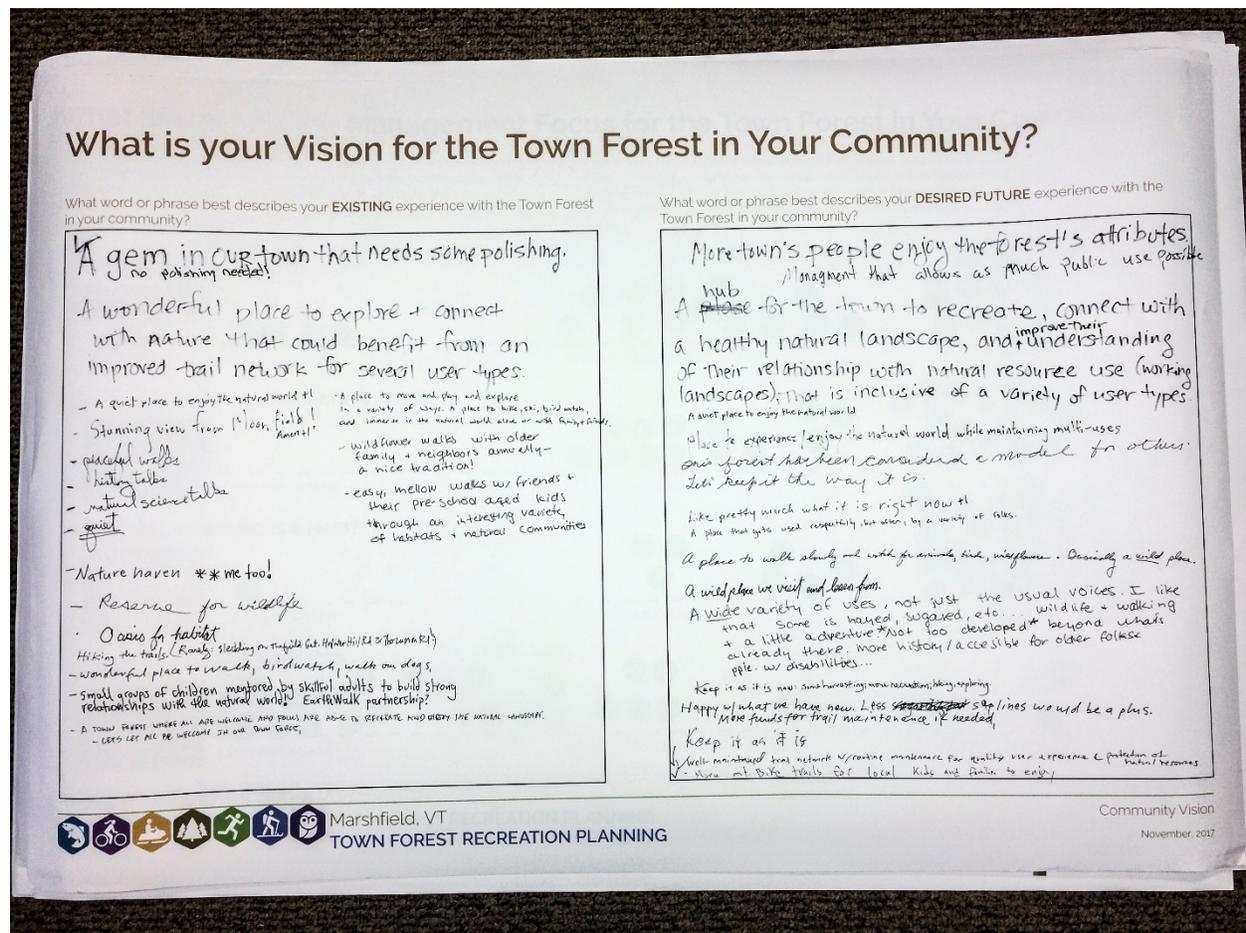
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- Great
- I'd love to use it for x-c skiing
- Same
- I'd like to ski there and hike more.
- Peaceful enjoyment of the natural world
- More of the same, in more seasons
- More known as a place for programming (educational skills,

etc) - but programming that doesn't dominate the space or culture.

- Wildlife preservation
- Managed and accessible
- Keep it a managed forest
- All wildlife
- Recreation
- Better access and choices

Public Workshop



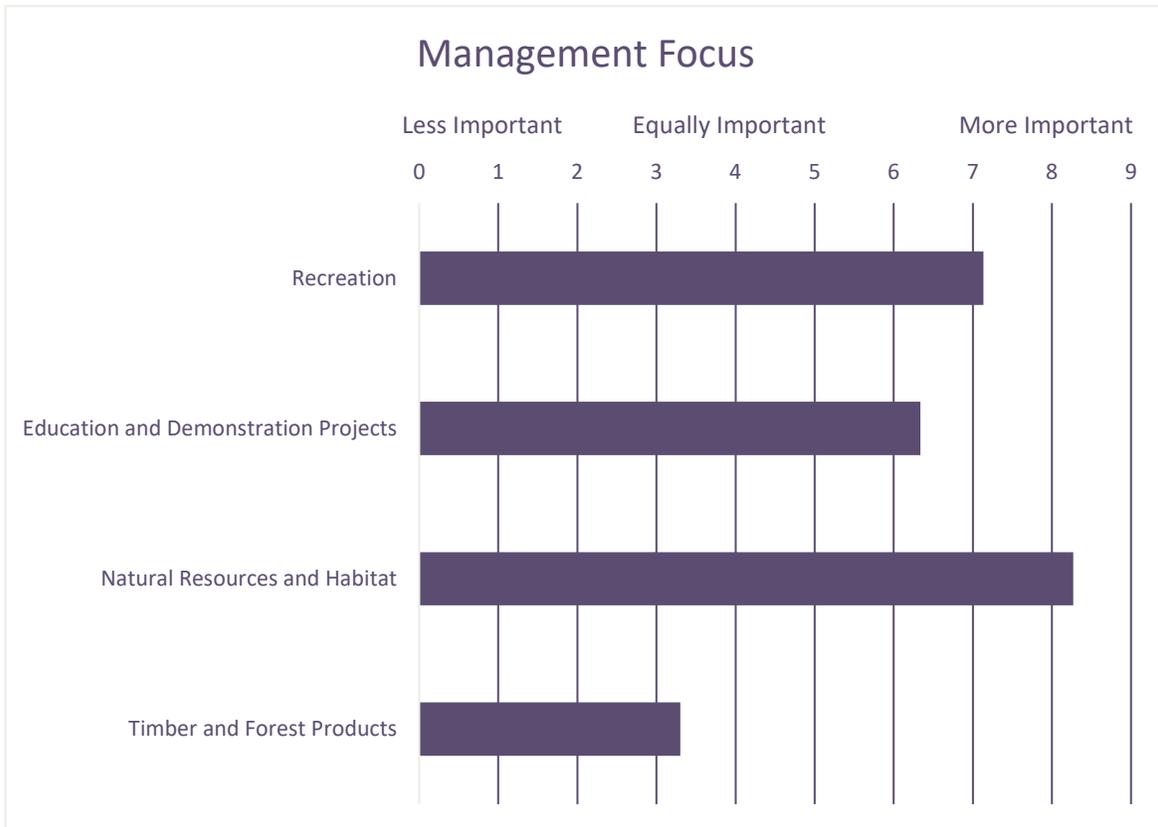
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Management Balance

Town Forests can be managed to provide a wide range of activities and community values. Four common use areas include Recreation, Education & Land Use Demonstration Projects, Natural Resources & Habitat, and Timber & Forest Products. While most publicly accessible forests provide some measure of all four types of uses, they tend to “lean” in one management direction or another.

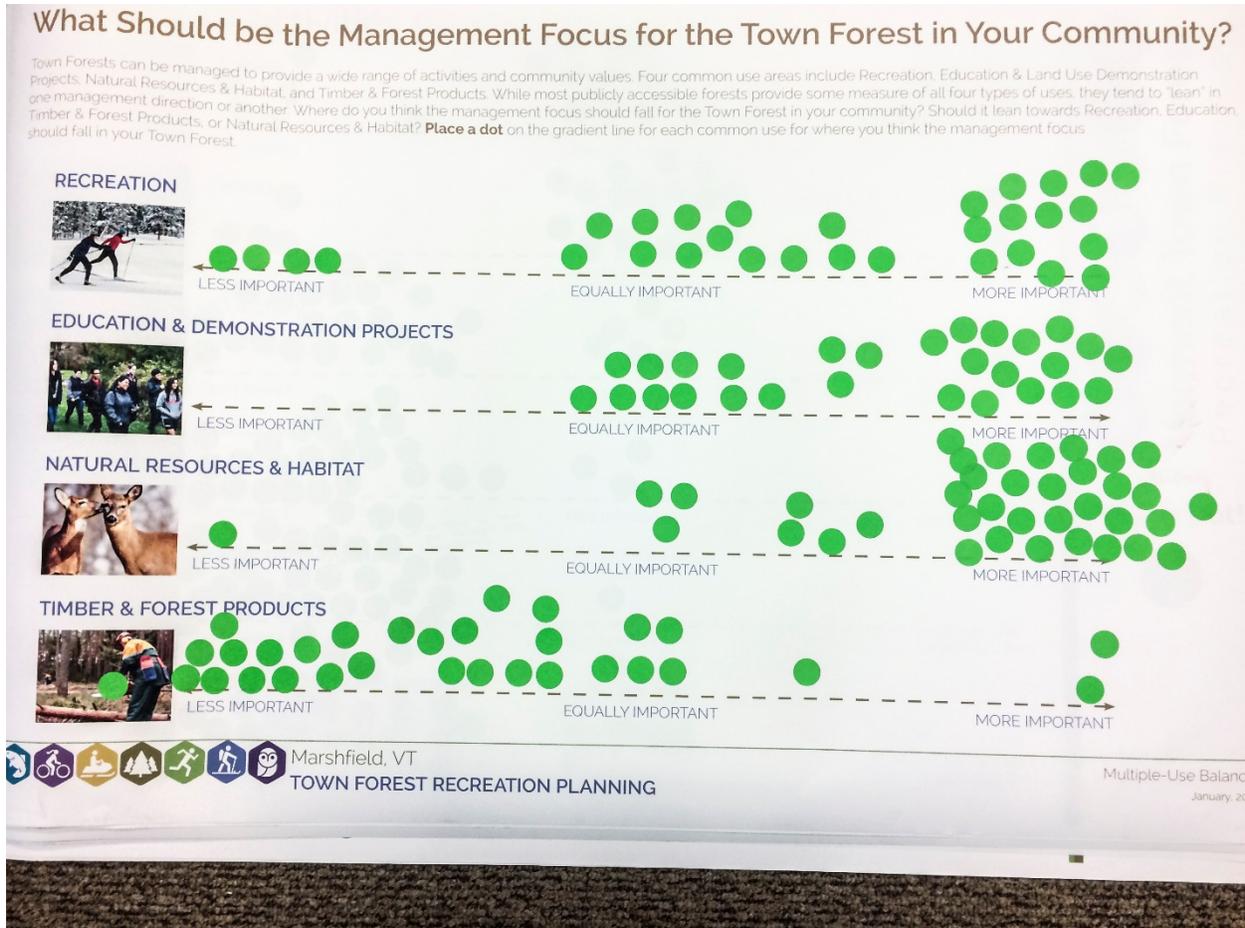
To understand this balance, survey and workshop participants were asked “Where do you think the management focus should fall for the Town Forest in your community? Should it lean towards Recreation, Education, Timber & Forest Products, or Natural Resources & Habitat?”

Survey Responses



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Public Workshop



Analysis

Both survey respondents and workshop participants prioritized natural resources & habitat. Recreation and education & demonstration projects also skewed towards "more important" but to a lesser degree than natural resources and habitat. Both survey respondents and workshop participants felt that timber was less important. There was general alignment between the survey and workshop on the management balance.

Natural Resources

Present Natural Resources

Survey respondents identified the following 'natural resources of note' in the Town Forest:

- Deer Wintering Areas



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- Vernal Pools
- Large Ledges or Cliffs
- Groundwater Seepage Areas
- Forested Swamps

Open-ended responses include:

- trails habitats, stream, marsh
- Vernal pools, beavers
- beaver ponds, streams, old farmstead foundations
- Vernal pools, Deer Yards, Mycology
- large block of northern hardwood and mixedwood forest
- sugaring
- Wetlands, Beaver Ponds, Early Successional Forest, Mature Forest
- Wetlands, beaver ponds, streams, soft and hardwood forests, meadows, old orchards
- Wildlife habitat
- streams, meadow, wetland, pond, ledge, wildlife habitat
- old farmsteads and orchards
- beaver ponds, vernal pools, forests, streams
- wetlands, wildlife habitat
- Habitat for most Vermont forest wildlife, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, microbes etc etc
- Wildlife
- maple trees, waterfall
- diverse ecosystems
- Beaver pond, vernal pool (I think), likely much more
- Plants, animals forest fields
- Trees
- wooded, fields, wildlife
- wetlands, sugar stands, ledges and vernal pools
- marshy areas, forests, fields, streams
- streams, fields, some less common plants (black walnut, mayapple, nice edible mushrooms, etc)
- Timber, vernal pools
- Large areas of woods with good wildlife habitat
- Field, heavy cover, steep, and wet habitats suitable for varied species
- Varied flora and fauna, vernal pools
- intact watershed, natural ecosystem
- Birds
- Escapism
- sugar maple; trails; wildlife
- habitat



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- streams, not sure really
- Wildlife habitat
- trees, wetlands, wildlife habitat
- Forests, fields, wetlands, vernal pools, sugarwoods, beaver ponds and meadows, old orchard
- All those listed in the above paragraph and more
- All that ensure the health of the forest.
- Beaver ponds, forest, for it is a prime example of vt nature
- Timber, conserved land
- Looking at guides along the forest paths it seems to have a great many places to learn about
- Forest, wetlands, old fields
- Forests, wetlands, trails, wildlife
- Streams
- Wilderness area
- Wildlife
- Wetlands, vernal pools, wildlife habitat
- It's a beautiful place
- High quality wildlife habitat including wetlands, forest, meadows, and ponds.
- Diversity-wetlands and wetland species; beaver ponds; historical mill features/housing sites/land use; old fields; deciduous/coniferous/mixed forests/ songbird and mammal habit; diversity of topography; heirloom appletrees
- Natural communities, beaver ponds, undisturbed areas where there is wildlife refuge
- Sugar maples
- Timber, maple sugaring, farm land
- Extensive undeveloped area
- The ones that are already mapped
- We have a really nice mix of habitats

Wildlife

Survey respondents identified the following wildlife using the forest:

- Beavers
- Coyotes
- Marsh birds
- Deer
- Occasional moose
- Bobcat
- None since the trails were installed
- Turkeys
- Bear
- Fox
- Mice
- Moose
- Fisher
- Birds



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- Waterfowl
- Bobcat
- Porcupine
- Weasel
- Song birds
- Small game
- Chipmunks
- Rabbit
- Insects
- Small mammals
- Hawks
- Owl
- Eagle
- Frogs
- Nuthatch
- Siskins
- Jays
- Juncos
- Woodpeckers
- Flickers
- Newts
- Salamanders
- Mink
- all indigenous species (sign)

Natural Resource Protection Concerns

When asked “Are there any human activities (existing or planned) that may conflict with these resources?” survey respondents answered:

- none that I know of
- Trails were built in deer wintering areas - the deer have moved
- trail riding would have to avoid the wet areas
- Sugaring, Logging, Horseback riding
- With good planning, and professional guidance, I don't think that new trails or proposed timber sales will negatively impact the forests natural resources.
- Not if restricted to certain areas, such as Thompson Road
- Logging, bike paths, sugar lines, atvs
- Sugaring lines
- more aggressive path and trail making. wheeled vehicles (including bicycles).
- snowmobiling possibly
- logging
- Overuse and motor vehicles (snow mobiles)
- snowmobile trail
- none that i know of
- Some timber harvesting
- I don't know
- I don't know
- snow machines, logging, building, motor bikes
- new trails



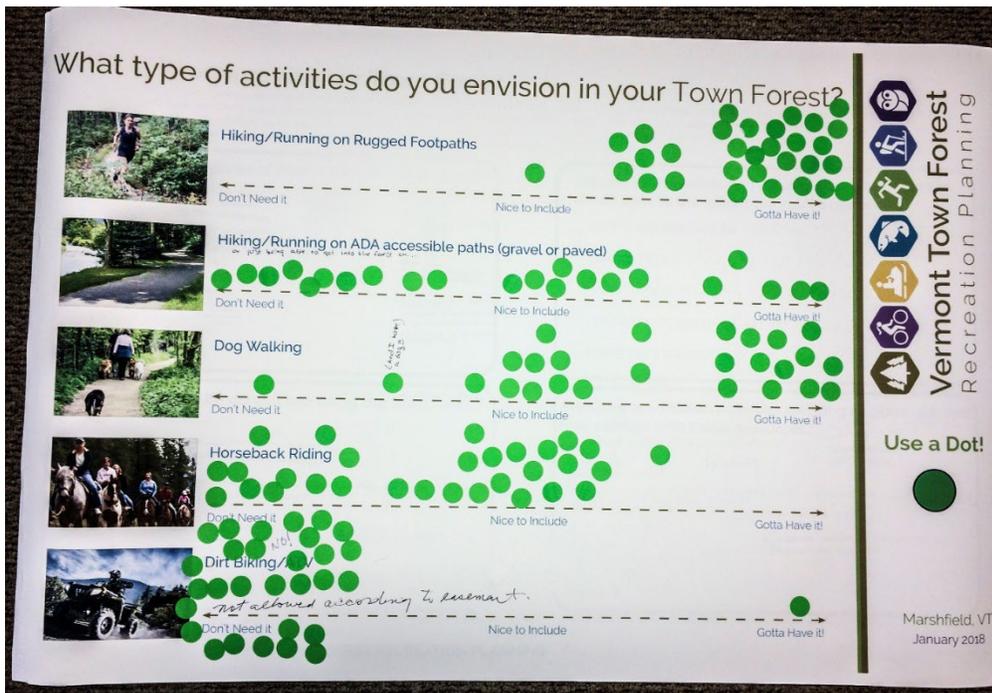
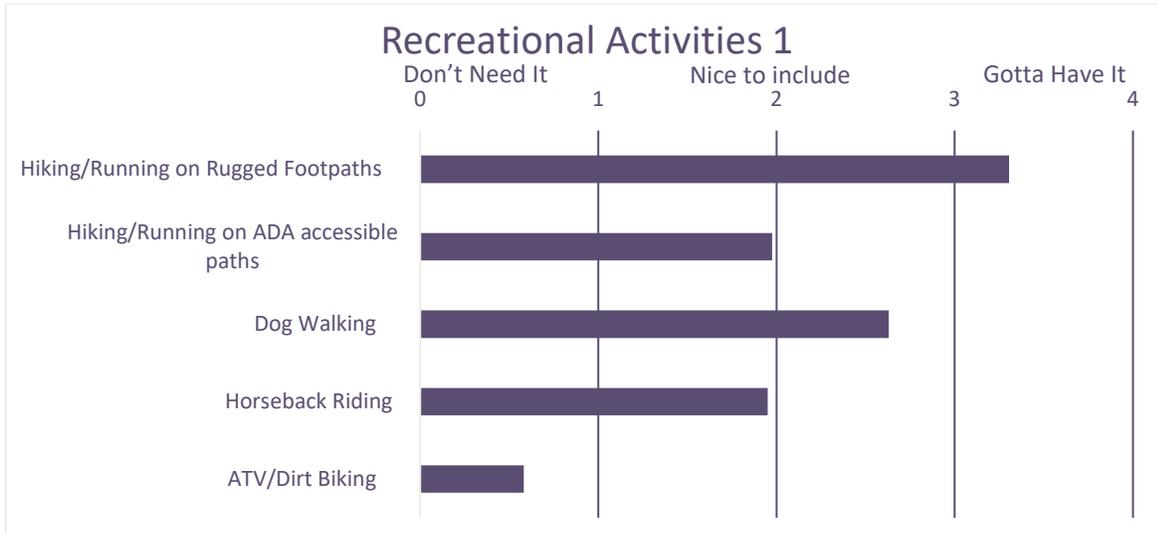
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Recreation Planning

- Depends on how you define "conflict." MTB trail builders are exceptionally ecologically aware. They are eager to work with biologists and foresters to plan a sustainable network that benefits many
- Don't know
- Snowmobiles and motorized vehicles
- excessive recreation, overuse, excessive logging
- Any motorized activity destroys the experience for all other users
- Anything motorized, unleashed dogs, mountain biking
- Logging
- logging, snowmobiles
- Yes. An Overly protectionist few.
- hunting and logging would conflict with these activities
- Logging, trails
- Yes
- Any activities that would impede the natural healthy environment of a NE forest.
- Any human activity
- I think any activity that turns it into a state or national park would not be appropriate
- Expanded trails might distract wildlife patterns (eg salamanders)
- I will hope to always have a respectful existence to the plants,waters, animals of this precious gift. Thanks to the Stranahan family and our towns work to help preserve it.
- More mountain biking and keep at the same level, timber harvest, add very little
- ATVs, Snowmobiles
- No to any motorized activity
- Hiking
- Don't feel qualified to comment
- Timbering, building of structures, motorized use, unregulated bike riding
- Yes, conflicts with animal travel due to piping forming fences. Timber farming can impede wildlife
- Mountain Biking
- Overdevelopment taking away from the natural beauty
- Logging would be extremely destructive
- Not to my knowledge, most human activity seems to be low impact recreation, and potentially low impact and forestry landscapes.
- Bike Trails
- Only during sugaring season
- Potential logging. I'm less concerned about mountain biking etc.



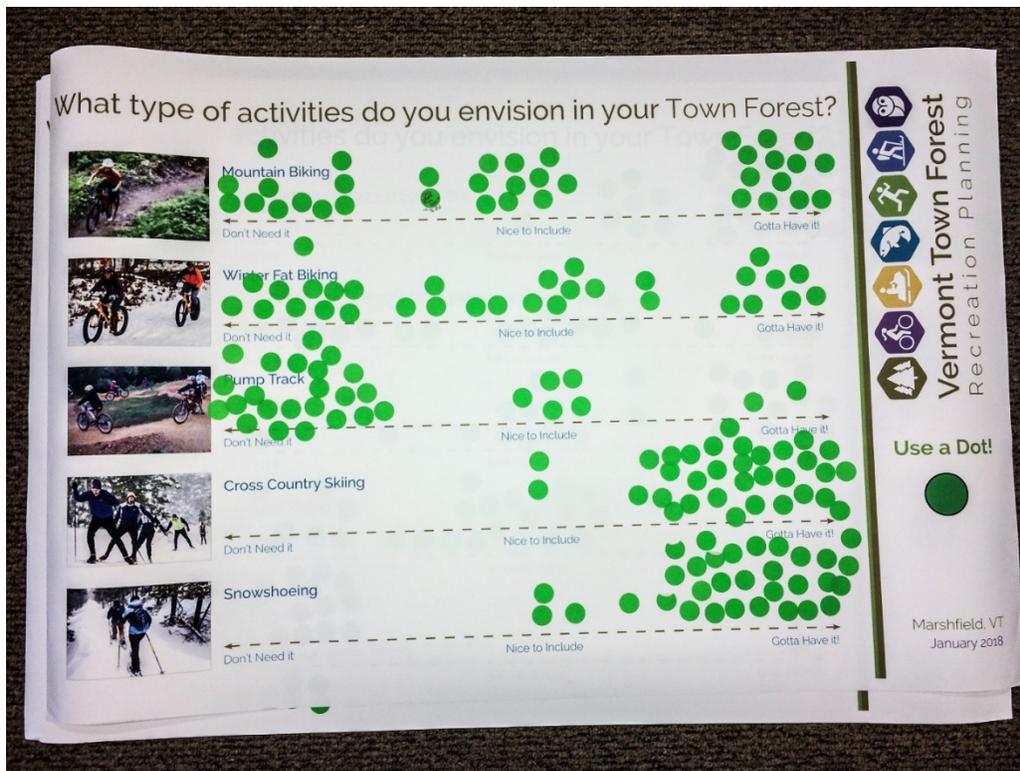
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Both the survey respondents and workshop participants indicate support for rugged footpaths and have more apprehension for ATV/dirt biking. There was also some support for dog walking from both groups and a neutral sense towards ADA accessible paths. The survey respondents were also neutral on horseback riding, while workshop participants expressed less support.



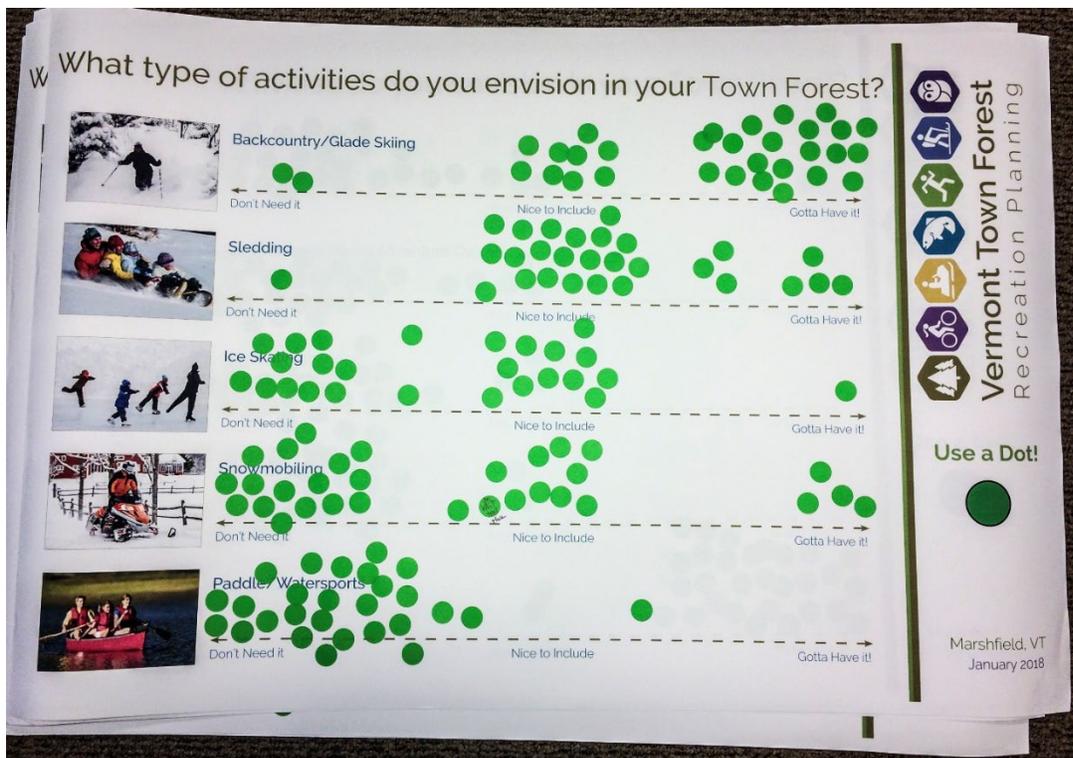
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There was general consensus for support for cross country skiing and snowshoeing from both workshop participants and survey respondents. Similarly, there was general alignment between all respondents around apprehension for a pump track. On the issue of mountain and fat biking, respondents from both groups had varied responses with no clear consensus.



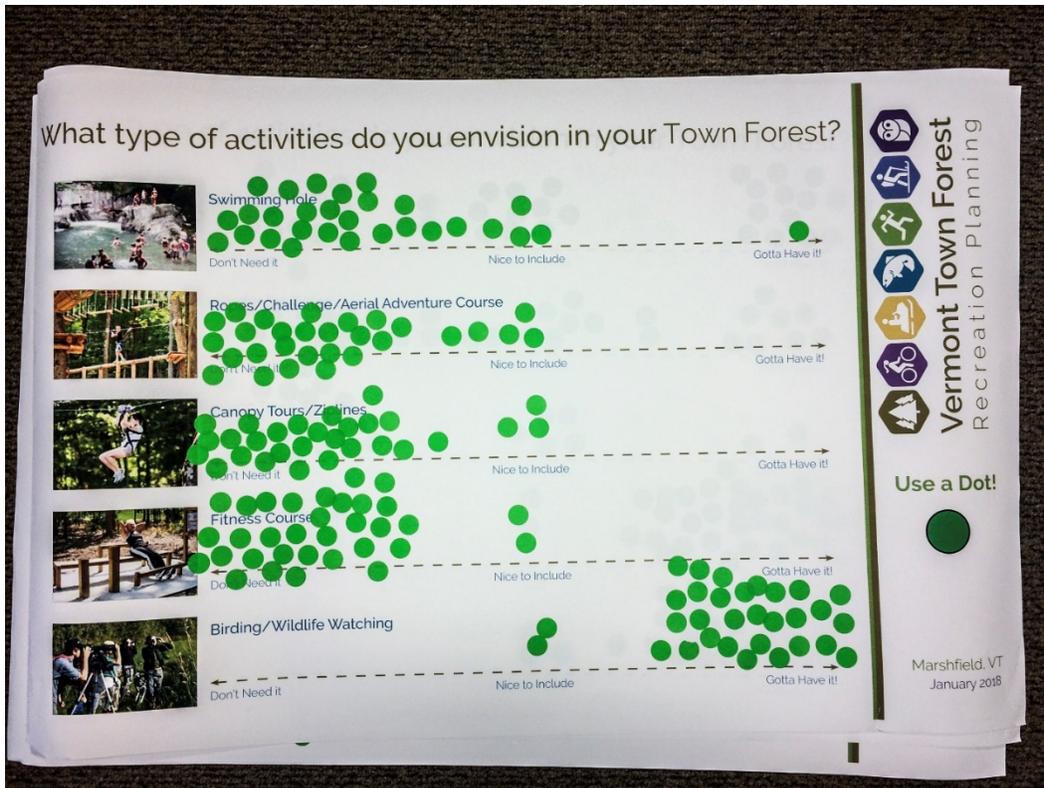
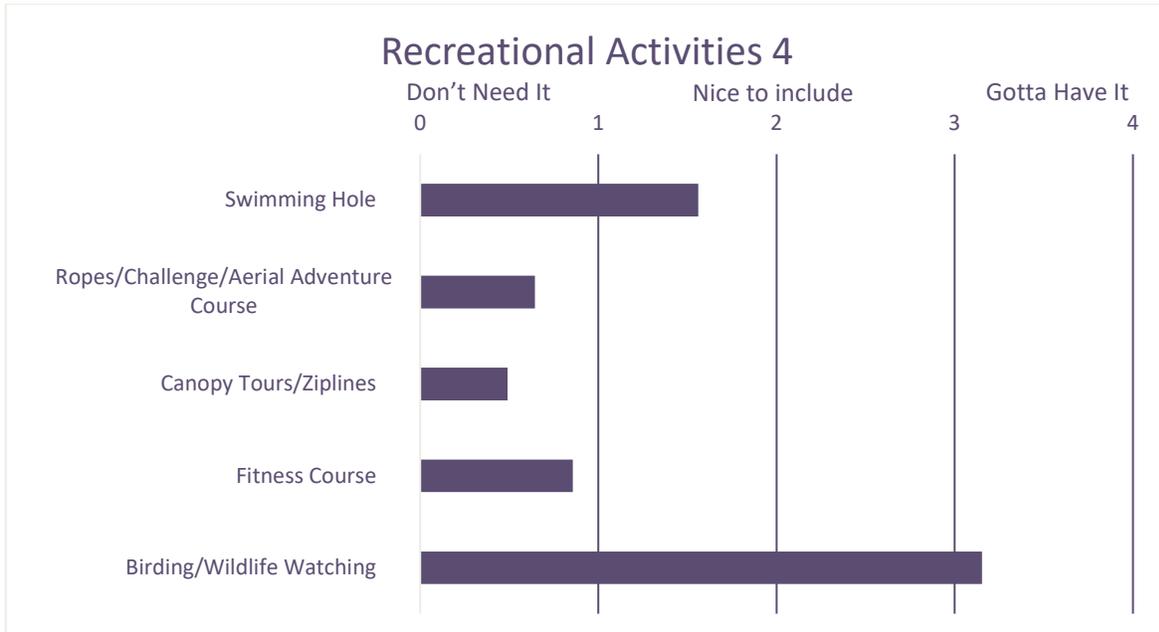
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Both the workshop participants and the survey respondents were neutral towards sledding, with some apprehension towards ice skating and snowmobiling. The workshop participants expressed an interest in backcountry/glade skiing while the survey respondents were fairly neutral. The workshop participants had apprehension towards paddle/watersports, while the survey respondents were more neutral.



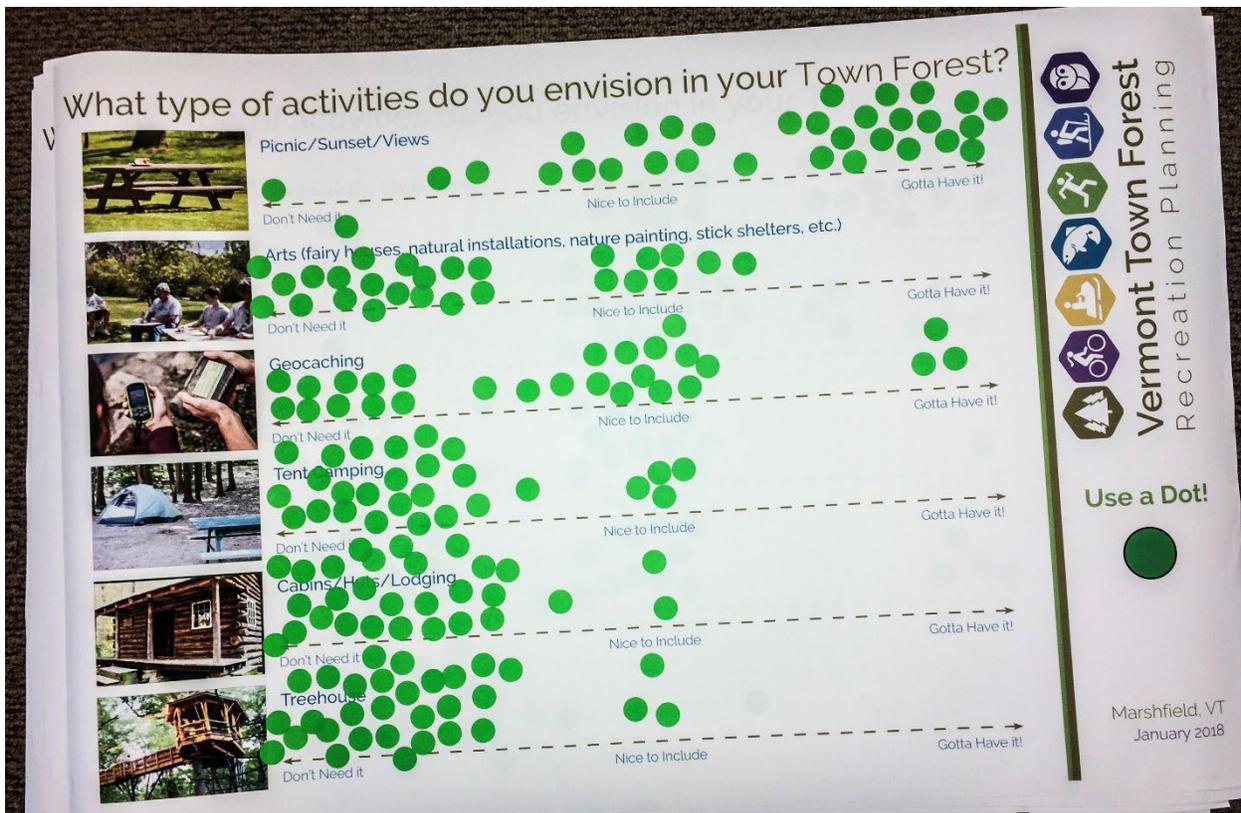
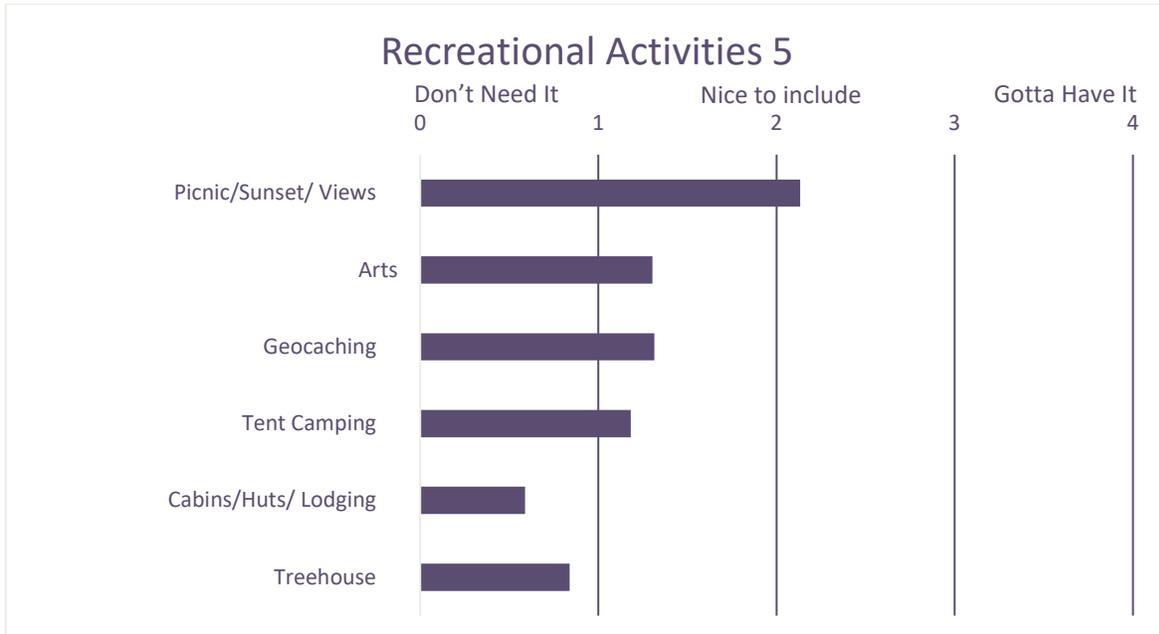
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Both the survey respondents and workshop participants were supportive of birding/wildlife watching. The workshop participants and survey respondents were much more apprehensive about the other activities – fitness courses, canopy tours/ziplines, and ropes/challenge/aerial adventure courses, and swimming holes.



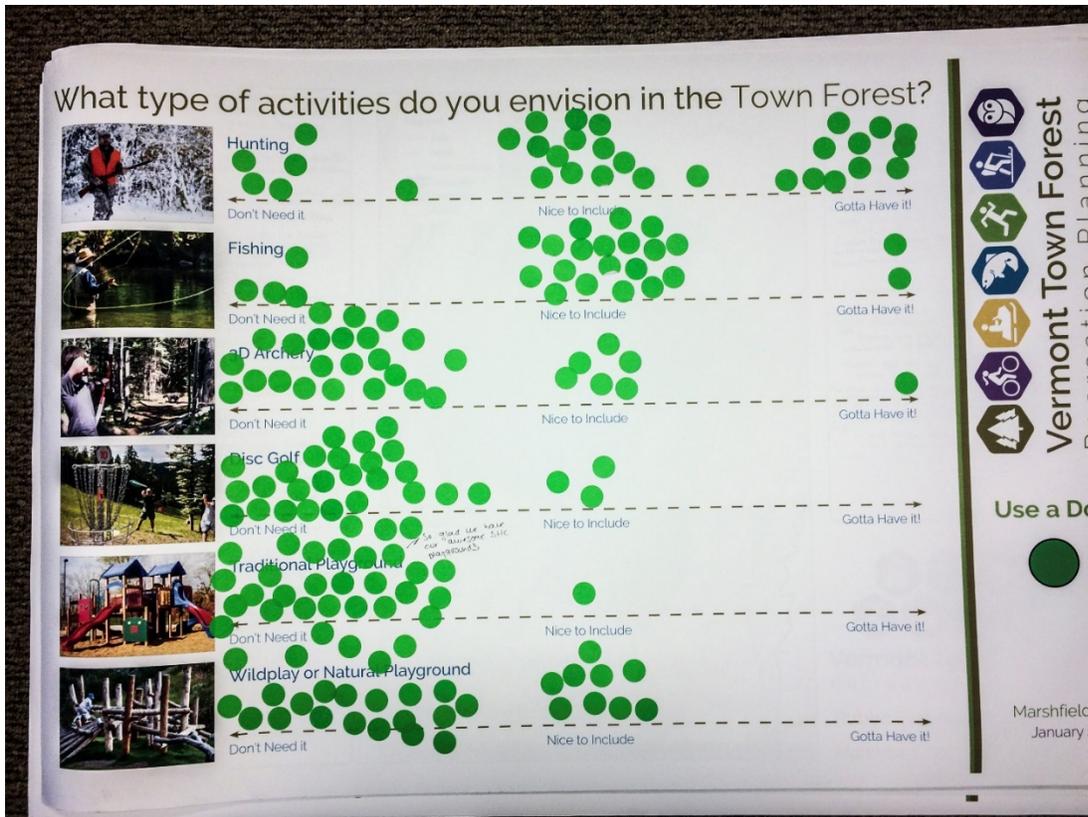
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The workshop participants were fairly supportive of picnic/sunset/views, while the survey respondents were less so. Both groups were apprehensive about arts, geocaching, tent camping, cabins/huts/lodging, and treehouses.



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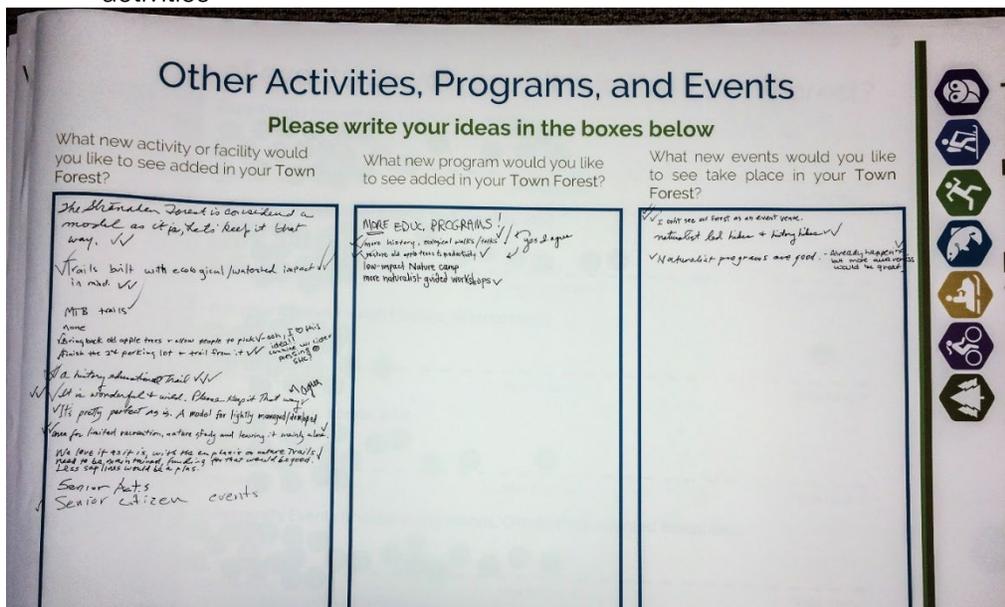
Both workshop participants and survey respondents were neutral towards fishing and hunting with split responses. There was greater apprehension towards 3D archery, disc golf, or a traditional playground, with modest support for wildplay or natural playground from both groups.



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Open ended responses to the question “Are there other activities or facilities you would like to see added to our town forest?” included:

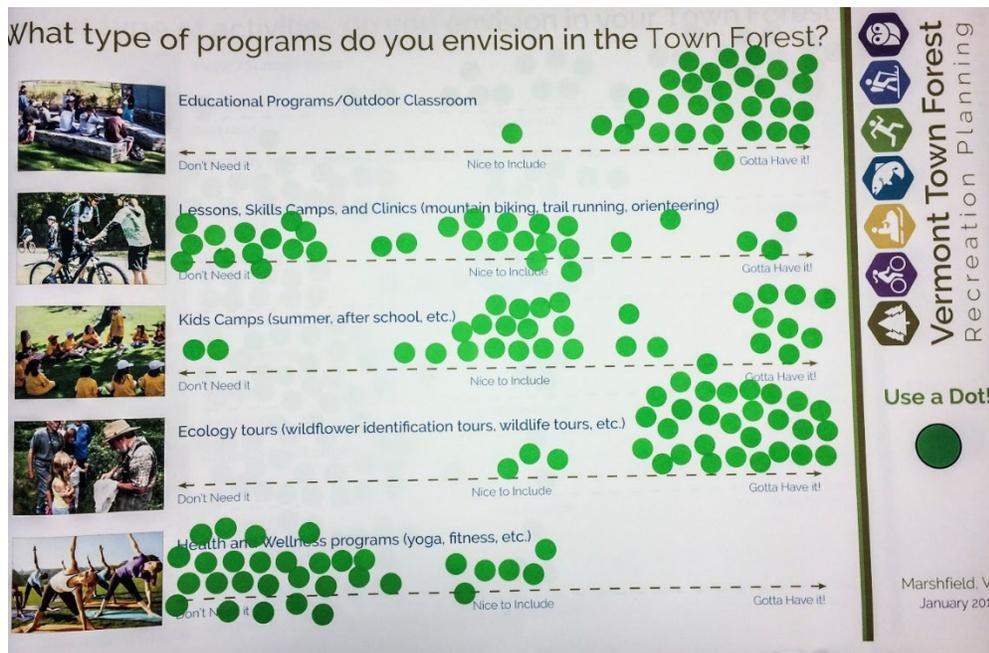
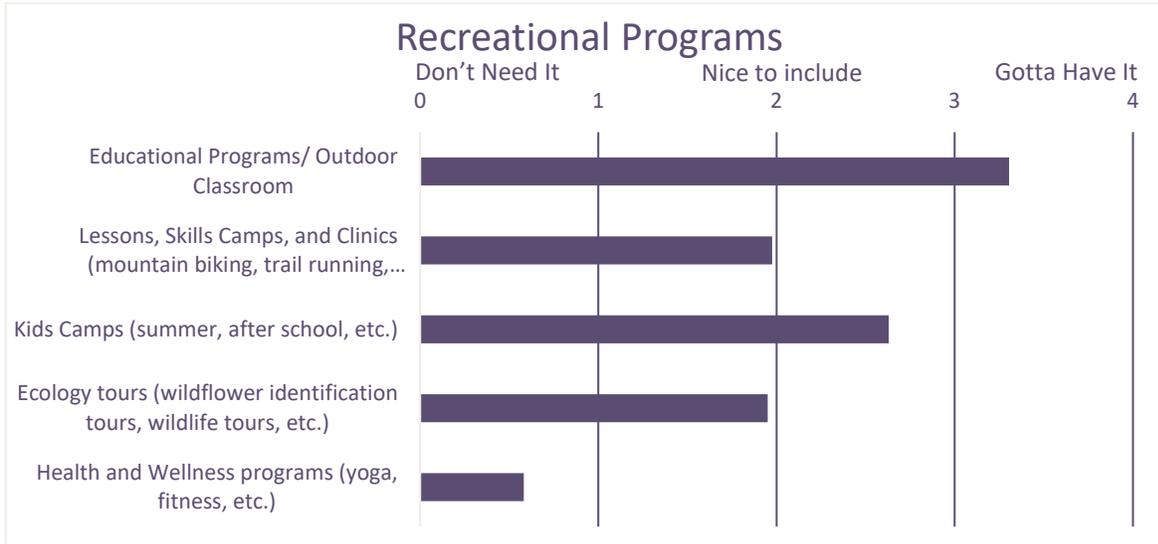
- I want the forest for wildlife, animals, and any human activities that will allow wildlife to live.
- limited ada access
- totally wild areas. habitat for predators.
- All the preceding ones - can't think. Of anything else
- preserve the natural habitat as much as possible
- classes for primitive skills
- I love the Town Forest as it is--mostly wild and open with mostly untended trails. I would hate for too much development ... Love the idea of gently managed woodlands--that's about all.
- Sign in sheet or comment sheet at kiosk
- garbage- bathroom
- I'm pretty happy with how it is now. Maintaining the trails is a lot of work, so more funds/help with that.
- Adult education and conservation activities
- Keep it natural
- better walking path through swampy, mosquito-y areas
- horseback riding, multi use trails, more historical markers for information
- orienteering course
- please no motor vehicles!
- better access from Jake Martin Road
- Orienteering
- More biking and horseback trails
- outhouse
- How about keeping it wild for the sake of wildlife?
- Volunteer trail maintenance
- If we do archery or disc golf, it needs to be certain times in specific places so walkers/hikers don't get hurt. Not willy nilly all over the place.
- like to see low impact activities allowed -- don't feel the need for much built infrastructure in general, maybe a shelter or two somewhere? Trails, etc.



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Recreation Programming

Survey respondents and workshop participants were asked about the recreation programs they envisioned in their town forest by indicating their feelings about a number of programs on a spectrum from “Don’t need it” (0) to “Nice to include” (2) to “Gotta have it” (4).



There was strong support from both survey respondents and workshop participants for outdoor classroom/educational programs. Both groups were fairly neutral towards lessons, skills camps, and clinics, slightly supportive of kids camps, and had greater apprehension for health and wellness programs. While workshop participants were supportive of ecology tours, survey respondents were more apprehensive on the program.



Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning

Open ended responses to the question “Are there other programs you would like to see added in our Town Forest?” included:

- Land use history. Geology. Cosmology
- Ecology tours sums it up; maybe orienteering and wilderness skills; wildcrafting & survival;
- History of area
- viewing sta., map display, habitat description like Owls Head
- Orienteering, nature walks and kids programs are a good fit
- I think less is more. unspoiled forest is better than adding all kinds of activities and uses. understood that tapping sap is helpful economically.
- Adult education: wildlife, ecology, geology, forest management and conservation
- I don't want to urbanize the forest. We have towns for that.
- more wildlife watching
- lessons on how to be still and respect the quiet.
- Hunter safety classes
- carpooling to the programs
- Edible forest landscaping -- practice and workshops

Other Activities, Programs, and Events

Please write your ideas in the boxes below

What new activity or facility would you like to see added in your Town Forest?	What new program would you like to see added in your Town Forest?	What new events would you like to see take place in your Town Forest?
<p><i>The Shenandoah Forest is an unspoiled & magical as it is, let's keep it that way. ✓</i></p> <p><i>Trails built with ecological/unspoiled impact in mind. ✓</i></p> <p><i>MTB trails ✓</i></p> <p><i>Bring back old apple trees - allow people to pick ✓ eat. If to build finish the 2nd parking lot - trail from it. ✓</i></p> <p><i>A history adventure trail ✓</i></p> <p><i>It is wonderful & wild. Please keep it that way. ✓</i></p> <p><i>It's pretty perfect as is. A model for lightly managed/developed space for limited recreation, nature study and learning; + nearby school. ✓</i></p> <p><i>We love it as it is, we've got our plan in our minds. Trails to lead to the same program, forest is a great natural classroom. ✓</i></p> <p><i>Senior Arts</i></p> <p><i>Senior Citizen events</i></p>	<p>MORE EDUC. PROGRAMS!</p> <p><i>more history, natural walks, trails ✓</i></p> <p><i>more all age friendly ✓</i></p> <p><i>low-impact Nature camp</i></p> <p><i>more naturalist-guided workshops ✓</i></p>	<p><i>I just see our forest as an event space.</i></p> <p><i>naturalist led hikes + history hikes ✓</i></p> <p><i>Naturalist programs are good. - already happens but more would be great.</i></p>



Vermont Town Forest

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Events in the Town Forest

Survey respondents and workshop participants were asked about the events they envisioned in their town forest by indicating their feelings about a number of events on a spectrum from “Don’t need it” (0) to “Nice to include” (2) to “Gotta have it” (4).



There was little alignment between survey respondents and workshop participants around events. While workshop participants were apprehensive about all types of events, survey respondents indicated support for traditional race events and adventure races. They were neutral on race series, festivals, and private events and were apprehensive about community events.



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Final Thoughts

Open ended responses to the question “Are there any other thoughts, concerns, or comments you'd like share about our town forest or outdoor recreation in our community?” included:

- It's probably possible to find compatibility between sugar making, light logging, and recreational use of the existing and any future trails, just hard to find a happy balance. I sort of hope there's not a lot of fancy add-ons, stick buildings, classes, but these are all tolerable. Mudding is not. Motorized noisy vehicles would be problematic.
- I've walked the Stranahan forest for many years with my dogs. we've seen deer, fisher cats, turkeys, owls, coyotes, fox. I think the forests should be preserved for the animals. It is their home. Most of the activities you have listed would only hurt them.
- your terms at the outset are not clear and may yield unintended outcomes as a result thank you
- Leave it beautiful, with very limited commercial or motored use.
- The main emphasis should be conservation.
- Re-wilding of Vermont. Natural areas are precious. No motors. Sounds of nature only. No artificial light. No plastic sap lines. Wild walking areas. Less trails actually. Walk like First Nations people--soft footwear--less obvious trails. No heavy machinery doing forest management. More bird habitat. More predator habitat. More birds of prey. VOLES! Meadow mice. Less deer browsing. More fishers, martins, otters and wolverines. Catamounts. Wolves. No guns. No archery. More beavers. More wetlands. Keep cars farther away. No cell phones. Orienteering classes using no maps or compasses or GPS--just by "learning the land." Are you getting my drift?
- Thanks for the survey!
- The forest should be for the enjoyment of the towns. Our town is small and whatever events (horseback riding, trails, etc) will not ruin the natural habitat for animals.
- As a local, I like having a place to go to hike or bike that is not crowded with tons of people. And the people you bump into are neighbors or other locals. It feels safe and private that way.
- Can't wait to check it out. Before adding infrastructure remember to asses where wetlands are first. The inventory maps are just estimates.
- This land (the Stranahan) was bought by a bunch of local people to keep a tract of beautiful land in its natural state. There are lots of other resources available for folks who are interested in various sports, etc. Not here.
- The town forest is limited and can't be everything for every person. Natural history study & education should be 1st followed by whatever recreational uses are compatible. Limited logging is ok but shouldn't overly interfere with primary uses.



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

- I have watched the number and degree of uses at Stranahan increase over the years with some concern and frustration. Personally, I liked it better before recent waves of logging, sugaring, and mountain bike trail building. Massive efforts have gone into trails and resource extraction while little is done to tend to ecological needs of the area. For instance several invasive species are present at low levels and could be easily controlled with even a small fraction of the energy that has gone into trail infrastructure and logging. I'm most concerned about increasing impacts from mountain bike trails and impacts related to the perceived need to make money off the forest - not that these need to be absent from the forest but, having stronger impacts, they should not be major uses or affect most of the area. Leaving substantial areas wild and without trails is important too and supports different interests/experiences than trail oriented recreation. I strongly favor leaving significant areas trail-less to support dispersed activities such as hunting, foraging, and simply exploring a wild place. This can also help minimize potential conflicts between user groups, such as hunters and trail users, and is of course highly compatible with most ecological goals.
- I would not like to see the habitat destroyed or altered for human activities. I think walking, cross county skiing and show shoeing are ok and don't require much alteration of the terrain, or maintenance. Just a few simple trails.
- Concerns that too much development might happen ... What's best about this forest is its untouched nature people tend to be gentle and respectful because it is mostly left alone. I love this!
- The relaxed environment of the trails are an asset to this hiker, which does set this forest in Marshfield apart from larger settings offering too many options. I would not want it to be over-used and I would not want it to be motorized.
- seems like a weird survey to ask if you want to have all these activities in a forest...maybe should change it from forest survey to a park survey. also suggest you separate out paddling from watersports (non-motorized v motorized)
- no motor vehicles or motor boats except in parking lot(s)
- I would like to see the town forest become more accessible for multiple uses, not only for those of us who want to ski or ride a horse or hike, but also for people who may not be as mobile; i.e., improve some of the trails so they wider and easier to negotiate. Other than that, I appreciate all that the town forest committee has done!
- Better signage and marked trails. We're our guests and we are big fans.
- Keep the emphasis on the natural environment. Too many mountain bikes will be a problem for walkers, animals and the terrain in the forest. I wish there were fewer sap lines permanently in the woods, not eyesore and inconvenience are not worth the financial return to the town.



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

- I believe a small group of friends dictates usage and works to keep only their agenda in place shutting down any plans that were agreed upon at initial town meeting selling the forest to the community!
- I would hope the forest can be a sanctuary, both for wildlife (including plant life) and humans. I think it takes very little to undermine the experience of being in an intact ecosystem, and that there are other places where these activities can occur. I am also concerned about the impact on wildlife of most of the suggested activities and events. Note re: dog walking -- thought that was already an option so not clear what's envisioned. As long as people clean up after their dogs, it seems low impact. Not sure what the impact of dogs is on wildlife.
- I want to keep them wild- my answers pertain to Virginia Stranahan Town Forest. It is a lovely, peaceful place with trails for walking, hiking, Xcountry skiing, bird watching. I don't want it opened up to ATVs or noisy machines, PLEASE!
- Most of these suggestions are geared to creating a sort of "disneyland" of outdoor activities & events. What's wrong with appreciating the natural wonders that are already there?
- I would rather see no hunting and no public access to motorized vehicles. Both activities conflict with quiet use of the forest on foot for nature viewing and meditation.
- Would love a picnic area added to the Spruce Mountain lookout spot. Would be great to see some small signs along the path naming types of trees and often-seen birds and animals. The forest is very serene and accessible for the community, and serves as a natural place to enjoy a hike for those of us who do not own land of our own. I would hate to see the land commercialized (weddings, concerts, etc), but would like to see educational options like bird-watching or flower identification workshops, or tasteful art commissioned for the forest to add to its enchantment.
- I'm probably in the minority but I like the natural space as it is. I don't need Hubbard Park, not keen on wondering if I'm going to be hit by a bike or atv (and don't like the lingering gas smell). I realize snowmobile trail might stay and that provides decent walking path w out snowshoes. The other development ideas sadden me other than non-intrusive education. Let's have the woods be the woods. VERY important to me - it's the only good place I can walk my dog from October to January given hunting season. I go to be in the woods...I don't need an amusement park. The birds, trees, sights and sounds amuse me just fine. Do I sound grumpy? I don't mean to... just love that space.
- I would like to see the town forest use continue at the same level... same activities. The number of users will go up, as the knowledge of this relatively unspoiled area increases. The existing trails, including hiking trails and bike paths are enough.
- Open more access for mtn bikes



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

- love that the forest is being used in a variety of ways such as the sugaring and the trails. wish it had multi-use trails as it looks like the amount of trails is fragmenting the forest. would love to see horse back riding in some areas.
- I am not able to attend Monday meetings of the town forest committee. I use the town forest regularly for personal and professional excursions. I bring groups of 10 or more clients on hikes and orienteering challenges and would like to include more activities like Mt. biking, skiing and low challenge course activities. I volunteer in the town forest helping to remove blow downs and clearing trails and trash removal. And would be very willing to help maintain trails for better recreational uses.
- The Stranahan Town Forest is an incredible place. It really doesn't need to be jazzed up with lots of activities or events; it's wildness, though relative, is a big part of what makes it so special. If lots of things started happening there (especially loud/fast things) I would be sad and probably stop going. Thanks!
- seems best to keep it simple: lightly maintained trails, NO motor vehicles,
- I respect and appreciate the efforts of the more 'ecologically conservative/sensitive ' residents, but feel that too much of the town forest has been barred to use by groups such as mountain bikers. The vast majority of the trails say NoBikes. The mountain biking community is one of the most rapidly growing outdoor groups in Vermont. I feel we need a major policy shift to find ways to include many more miles of newly built trails. And while some residents may chafe at the idea, I have heard that some possibly incomplete information was presented about the damaging effects of mt. bike trails by people who are were not necessarily qualified to be making such presentations. In order to fully understand the impacts of mt. bikes on the town forest I think there needs to be a trip planned to look at other town forests with many miles of bike trails (Hinesburg comes to mind) where the various groups have found ways to work with one another. And while I fully support protecting our sensitive habitat areas such as vernal pools, I feel that there needs to be a more inclusive 'weight' given to the importance of other uses of the forest. After all it was a working farm and forest for many years, and I do not agree with the decision to put large swaths of it off-limits to bikers. I have scouted many potential routes that would be great candidates for super new appropriate bike trails. Thanks.
- I have been impressed with the VMBA chapters throughout the state. They engage in public processes well, plan insightfully and go out of their way often to build support. They've proven to be fantastic stewards of trails and subscribe to a multi-use philosophy. Backed by VMBA, I encourage the planning process to centrally involve the local chapter.
- Keep the forest as pristine for wildlife as possible while still providing 'ecologically sustainable' usage by citizens. No logging, hunting, trapping or other similarly harmful practices. No motorized vehicle use.
- Quiet places are vanishing. We need to wake up to the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to escape the ubiquitous noise noise of our mechanized society.



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

Absolutely No ATV's should be allowed in public quiet places (keep in mind we have an obesity epidemic). Minimal mountain biking and frenetic 21'st century frenetic behavior unless done with a respect for the quiet. Perhaps that activity could be off limits on designated quiet days.

- RIPM has demonstrated that it is a responsible partner and steward. RIPM and its volunteers have already increased recreational opportunities in the Stranahan, and its pending trails plan will greatly improve access to the Stranahan for *all* users.
- Please keep the Stranahan Town Forest a FOREST. 1. Wildlife 2. Education and opportunities for folks to enjoy the forest as a FOREST.
- The Stranahan Forest is a valuable resource to be shared with fellow animals, birds, fish, reptiles, and insects. Respect should be the watchword and love our guide. May an attitude of responsible stewardship rule. The less tampering with nature the better. Some things in life are more precious than profits. The Stranahan Forest is one of them.
- The Stranahan forest has value beyond "Recreation"
- I like the forest as it is as of right now it has almost a little of everything for everyone; it has balance. I am hesitant to add anything as it will destroy the naturalness and peacefulness that i enjoy there now.
- A mixed use forest that sustains the health of the forest is the goal I support.
- Do not want to see this turned into a recreational Park. I believe this lovely natural forest area should be preserved in its natural state as much as possible.
- I am mostly interested in quietly and unintrusive observation of the forest animals and glorious views and her wild flowers herbs fruits nuts etc. low impact.
- Keep development the same. Maintain existing trails.
- Keep it natural!
- Exciting brainstorm -- I'd love to have more reminders and motivation to get out there.
- I think it should be left as pristine as is possible. I don't agree with commercial enterprises.
- Everywhere the natural world is preserved by our species and the web of live is unraveling. We must protect our town first as a haven of fun.
- Dog owners should pick up after their dogs!
- I'd like to see the forest maintained and managed with a very light touch. There is no need to add built environment to enjoy this natural resource.
- It is about the longevity of the forest and keeping it healthy. If a professional is hired (say forester) they should be listened to. THEY are looking at the best interest of the forest.
- It would be nice to see this forest opened up to multiple use. Seems all we do is have meetings and surveys with no action. The options for activities in this forest are many. Life can coexist with wetlands if no one is willing.



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

- I am interested in the vision of the future use of this land from the person who donated it to the town.

Notes

Lunch

- Project Scope comments
 - Committee looking at this project as part of a management plan
 - Some want this to be more comprehensive and not just focus on recreation. Unsure if the Stranahan needs more recreation and this project doesn't seem to provide what they need to improve the Stranahan
 - Suggestion that it is more than a place for recreation (many historical resources, impressive natural features...)
 - Suggestion that the outcome of the plan becomes finding a mechanism that will balance the uses in the forest
 - Want the Forest Committee to have approval over the steps of the project process
- Survey specific comments
 - Complaint that the survey/project has nothing for seniors (not included in any of the images)
 - Many of the questions in the survey seem more appropriate to be about the whole community – many of these suggested uses are not appropriate for the Stranahan
 - Perhaps the grant should be directed at a town committee
- Community related comments
 - Concerns that some parts of the community won't show up because they're mad about disallowed uses
 - Close connection to Plainfield – how do we include them in this process
 - Perhaps this project can be a communication opportunity to various user groups

Forest Walk

- Many proponents of “letting it wild”
- Significant interest in historical interpretation and interpretive signage
 - Lots of historical research being done about the forest land: deeds, photographs
- Some interest in logging (controversial – none, for management, commercial) but seen as possible source of funding
- Many trails on old logging roads
- Very large (multiple house) stone foundation in the forest, interest in possible picnic site (for seniors) on that property)
- The Riders in Plainfield Marshfield Club has recently built a couple of miles of mountain bike trails in the forest



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

- Lots of volunteer hours, latest techniques, working well with Maple Sugarer (have system for lowering and raising lines)
- Hosting trail building workshops in the forest
- Maple Sugarer started using the land after the founding of the forest
- Apple orchards, meadows, very diverse landscape within the forest
- Great views from Moon Field near eastern entrance to forest (also used for haying, backcountry skiing, sledding)

Steering Committee Meeting

- Basic Information
 - Enormous amount of volunteer efforts have gone into the forest (trail building, maintenance, securing grants, ecological surveys, protecting the forest)
 - Have snowmachine trail that offers fat biking and cross-country skiing for winter recreation
 - Have another forest parcel – location not well known, not looking for it to be sold or logged
 - Limited by conservation easement to two 6-car parking lots but nearby landowners have trails in from their properties
 - Have the same schools as Plainfield (share many facilities)
 - Have made it cumbersome (requiring committee approval) to hunt on forest
- Committee Backstory
 - Selectboard felt previous committee wasn't working because it was set up around personal interests (i.e. VAST representative, schools representative, etc.)
 - Wanted a committee that would focus on the forests and not their interests
 - Select board disbanded the committee and formed a new one June 2016
 - Currently select board largely stays out of forest committee affairs
 - Committee responsible for day to day management, select board for big policy
 - Forest Management Plan includes a section on how the committee should operate
 - Have Select board support for this grant but want to give them a significant heads up
- Weaknesses and Opportunities
 - Want more data on who the forest users are and what they're doing – in the process of putting in sign in sheet at the kiosk
 - Suggestion of volunteer or electronic trail counts (volunteer may be better as they want to know user types)
 - Want more handicap accessible areas in the forest
 - People want to use the forest for activities that could happen in other areas
 - See opportunities to work with Town Recreation Committee (has not been very involved so far), Conservation Commission, School (for more field trips), High school community service projects, Upper Winooski naturalists, Riders in Plainfield and Marshfield, local VAST chapter, Renaissance Mentoring Program at the school



Vermont Town Forest

Recreation Planning

Comment Cards

#1 – Lets keep it the way it is. It isn't broken. We don't need to turn it into a theme park. I walk, attend educational offerings, and snow machine there and love it. I gave a good bit of money and want it kept natural. Hundreds of people enjoy it the way it is. It costs the town very little money.

#2 – Maybe give every one a sheet or two of dots when they walk in? I liked folks writing on the dot voting board – allowed for clarification/conversation. Maybe encourage this for other communities.

#3 – As an avid outdoor recreationist, naturalist, I would like to see more of an open mind and appreciation of our town forest. Our Town Forest should be for everyone and not a select few. As a younger town resident who plans on settling here. The Town Forest is a huge asset to the town of Marshfield and surrounding communities. Please open our minds and let everyone enjoy it. Not a select few.

#4 – As you can see, our community has strong views on our town forest! There has been a deep and lively history here of local engagement on the forest. We would hope you'd be sensitive to that and not "parachute in" with a plan that doesn't relate to our specific needs and desires for the forest. Not sure, frankly, that we need this plan at all. But hopefully it will be of some help making the forest an even better community asset.

