

Let your voice be heard! Vote on November 2nd!

Benefits of a new Barre Town Forest

Compiled by the volunteer Town Forest Study Committee:
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October 4th, 2010

Recreational & Health Benefits

Current uses that would be protected & continued:

- Guaranteed **free public access** for walking, snowshoeing, birdwatching, fishing
- Part of a 70-mile trail network for mountain biking
- More than 20 miles of groomed cross country skiing trails
- Snowmobiling on designated VAST trails

Potential new uses that could be considered:

- Swimming
- Horse back riding
- Rock climbing
- Scuba diving
- Community garden
- Picnic shelter

Economic Benefits

- Permanent protection of the land in Town ownership will not only attract new businesses and homeowners to Barre Town but also ensure that the land remains in active forest management, supporting local resource-based jobs and providing occasional timber revenues to the Town.
- According to Russ Barrett, Washington County Forester, the property is fully stocked with medium to high value tree species, and has good to excellent potential for sustainable forest management now and in the future. He estimates 271 acres of the proposed Town Forest are accessible and could be managed for sustainable forest products. The total timber volume is 928,000 board feet of saw timber and 3,409 cords of pulp and fuel wood, with a current value of \$143,000. The town will benefit from occasional revenue from timber sales.
- Recreation and tourism are recognized statewide as one of the fastest growing and cleanest forms of economic development. Outdoor recreation generates \$12.5 billion in sales and services in Vermont and supports 35,000 jobs.
- Acquiring this Property creates the possibility that Millstone Trails Association will continue to manage a 70-mile trail system on the proposed Town Forest and adjacent private land. The Millstone Trails currently bring thousands of people to Barre Town from all over New England, Quebec, and beyond. The Millstone Trails have been featured in the *Boston Globe Mountain Bike Magazine*, *Bike Magazine*, *Vermont Life*, Montreal's *La Presse*, and others.

Example of Kingdom Trails & its economic benefits to East Burke, VT

- Founded in 1996, the non-profit Kingdom Trails Association has created a 100-mile network of mountain bike and ski trails over public and private land.
- Brings in 40,000 visitors annually.
- Kingdom Trails adds \$4 million annually to the economy of East Burke
- Visitors eat at restaurants, buy gas, rent houses, and stay in campgrounds and new B&Bs that have opened to respond to the demand Kingdom Trails has created.
- Average age of visitor is 38 years old, with an average income of \$75,000 per year.
- More info at www.kingdomtrails.com

- Just as the Kingdom Trails have brought revenue and provided customers to support existing and new local businesses in Burke, Millstone Trails are bringing new life to a part of Vermont that has largely been passed over by Vermont's growing recreation-based tourism economy.
- Millstone Trails are a draw for local businesses trying to recruit new employees to Barre Town.
- Protecting Barre Town Forest will increase the value of nearby homes. Property owners will benefit from higher property values when they sell their homes and the town will benefit from an increased tax base, over time. According to a 2001 survey by the National Association of REALTORS® by Public Opinion Strategies, 50 percent of respondents said they would pay 10 percent more for a house located near a park or open space.
- The Websterville Fire District is considering using a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the parcel they own to pay off an existing bond, which would then decrease the water bills of Websterville ratepayers.

Protection of Drinking Water (See Barre Town Forest Map available on www.barretown.org)

- Will permanently protect 205 acres (77%) of the Source Water Protection Area for the Websterville Water District, that supplies drinking water to 420 people in Websterville
- Will permanently protect 27 acres (37%) of the Source Water Protection Area for Barre Town Water System that supplies drinking water for 1,210 people.
- Conservation of this property, and proper management, will ensure the water quality and safety of these two drinking water supplies. All activities on the property will need to follow the rules set out in the Source Water Protection Plans of both water sources.

Quality of Life & Community Opportunities

- Less than 2% of Barre Town is conserved public land, compared to 15.2% of the State. Having public land close to population centers is important not only to the physical and mental health of the community, but having protected areas within walking or biking distance decreases car travel.
- Place for historical and cultural education
- Local office workers visit existing trails for lunchtime rides.
- The Spaulding high school cross-country team practices on the property and hold meets there. Because of the interconnected trail network, it is one of the few cross country meets in the region to not have to cross any roads nor worry about safety or delays related to traffic.

Historical & Cultural Education

- National Park Service is currently helping create a Cultural Heritage Trail
- Current trail network has been located to highlight the property's granite history, great for school field trips to learn about Barre's history

Fish & Wildlife Habitat

- The 375-acre property provides habitat for deer, fox, small mammals and the occasional bear, moose and coyote.
- Acts as a "stepping stone" of habitat between Groton State Forest and a diverse, and relatively unfragmented forestland in Williamstown & Brookfield.
- Mature hemlock stands provide important deer wintering areas on the property and quarries provide unique deep-water aquatic habitat.
- Twenty-eight abandoned quarries provide 17 acres of open water for wildfowl, amphibians, and fish.