

INTEGRATING WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP AND RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ON TOWN FORESTS



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AGENDA



- Introduction to resource management with multiple goals
- Framework for decision making
 - Landscape Scale
 - Parcel Scale
 - Species Scale
- Case Study
- Questions



MANAGING FOR MULTIPLE GOALS



- Town Forests can:
 - Provide important habitat for wildlife
 - Support clean air and water
 - Promote flood resilience
 - Provide income to town through responsible forest management
 - Provide recreation opportunities for residents (including dispersed or trail-based)
 - And more!



IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PUBLIC OUTDOOR ACCESS



- One third of Vermonters recreate in town forests
- Mental health is the top reason Vermonters recreate outdoors
- Costs for gear, equipment, use fees, travel were cited as top constraints
- Creates connections to community and economy

Ranking	Motivation to Recreate
1	To improve mental health
2	To relax and recharge
3	To experience calm, peace
4	To view scenic beauty
5	To get away from the usual demands of life
6	To connect with family/friends
7	To improve physical health
8	To be close to nature

WILDLIFE HABITAT NEEDS



- Food & Water
- Cover
- Space

- Arrangement on the landscape
- Access to these elements



IMPACTS OF RECREATION ON WILDLIFE



- Direct mortality
- Additional stress & energy expenditure
- Avoidance or changed behavior
 - May just leave the area
- Habitat alteration
- Continuous disturbance
 - Expanding the disturbance zone further

Perry Hill

Legend

- Winter Trails
- Ungroomed Corridor
- Parking
- Winter Recreation Zone
- Deer Wintering Zone

Winter Management Zones

Two winter management zones—winter recreation and deer wintering—have been established at Perry Hill with the intent of providing a quality winter recreation experience in one area and reducing the amount of recreation activity in the other. The goal of this management approach is to balance both the public's use of the property and protect valuable winter wildlife habitat. This is a pilot effort and data will be gathered to help guide future management. The Waterbury Area Trails Alliance is working with partners and volunteers to groom trails within the Winter Recreation Management Zone. Please focus activity on groomed trails and follow all recommended user ethics.

Deer Wintering Habitat

Over 60% of Perry Hill is mapped deer wintering habitat. Deer wintering habitat typically has good winter tree canopy allowing for less snow accumulation on the ground compared to open areas or areas with mostly deciduous trees. Hemlock is a tree species typically associated with quality deer wintering areas.

Winter Recreation Ethics

- Please stay on groomed trails.
- Fat bikes and hikers avoid soft snow. If trees or boots sink in snow more than an inch, do not use.
- If you are recreating with a dog, please leash and pick up after your pet.
- Pack in, Pack out
- Respect the experience of other trail users.
- Be prepared by having adequate layers to ensure warmth, water, cellphone, snacks, and first aid kit.

Winter Challenges for Deer

Deer survive the winter by living off fat reserves and woody browse. A consistent winter with deep snow can be fatal to deer. Deer are driven to wooded areas with consistent canopy and less snowpack where it is easier for them to move around to find available browse. Any time a deer is spooked by recreators or dogs in this situation they expend some of the limited energy they have available.

Winter Yield Protocol

YIELD

YIELD TO TRAIL USE LISTED ABOVE YOURS

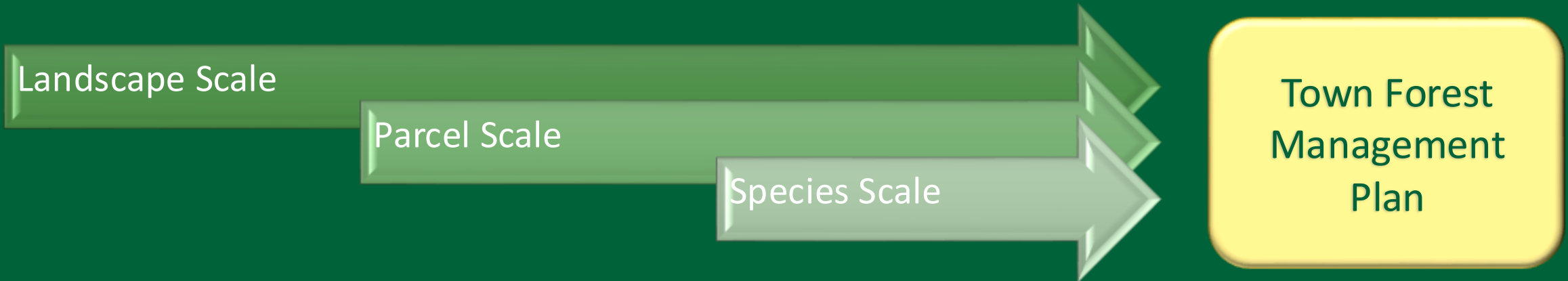
Deer Wintering Habitat

Location Address For Emergencies Call 911

Trail Network Managed By: WATA

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
Wildlife Rehabilitation is provided on a non-exclusive basis. All wildlife rehabilitation is provided on a non-exclusive basis. All wildlife rehabilitation is provided on a non-exclusive basis.

DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK



LANDSCAPE SCALE QUESTIONS



- What does the community want or need from the town forest?
- What current recreation opportunities exist?
- What surrounds the town forest parcel?



PARCEL SCALE QUESTIONS



- What natural communities exist on the parcel?
- Are there important food sources?
- Where are the water resources?
- What recreation opportunities currently exist on the parcel?



SPECIES SCALE QUESTIONS



- Are there notable features people will access?
- Are there any known RTE species or habitat?
- Are there any unique habitat features (e.g. cliffs, ponds)?



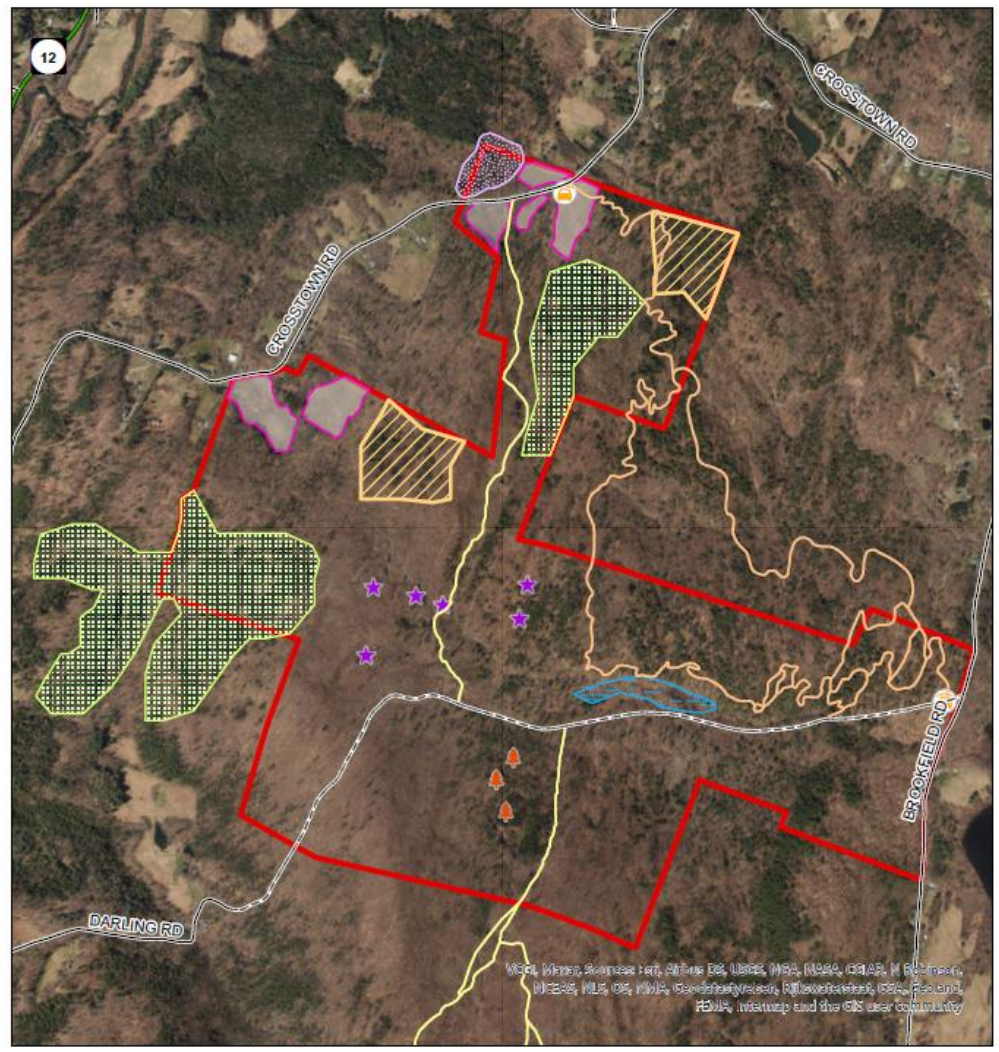
BIG QUESTIONS



- Now that you know more about the town forest, can potential impacts to wildlife be avoided?
- If not, can you reduce the potential impact?
- Will additional trails detract more than they add?



CASE STUDY



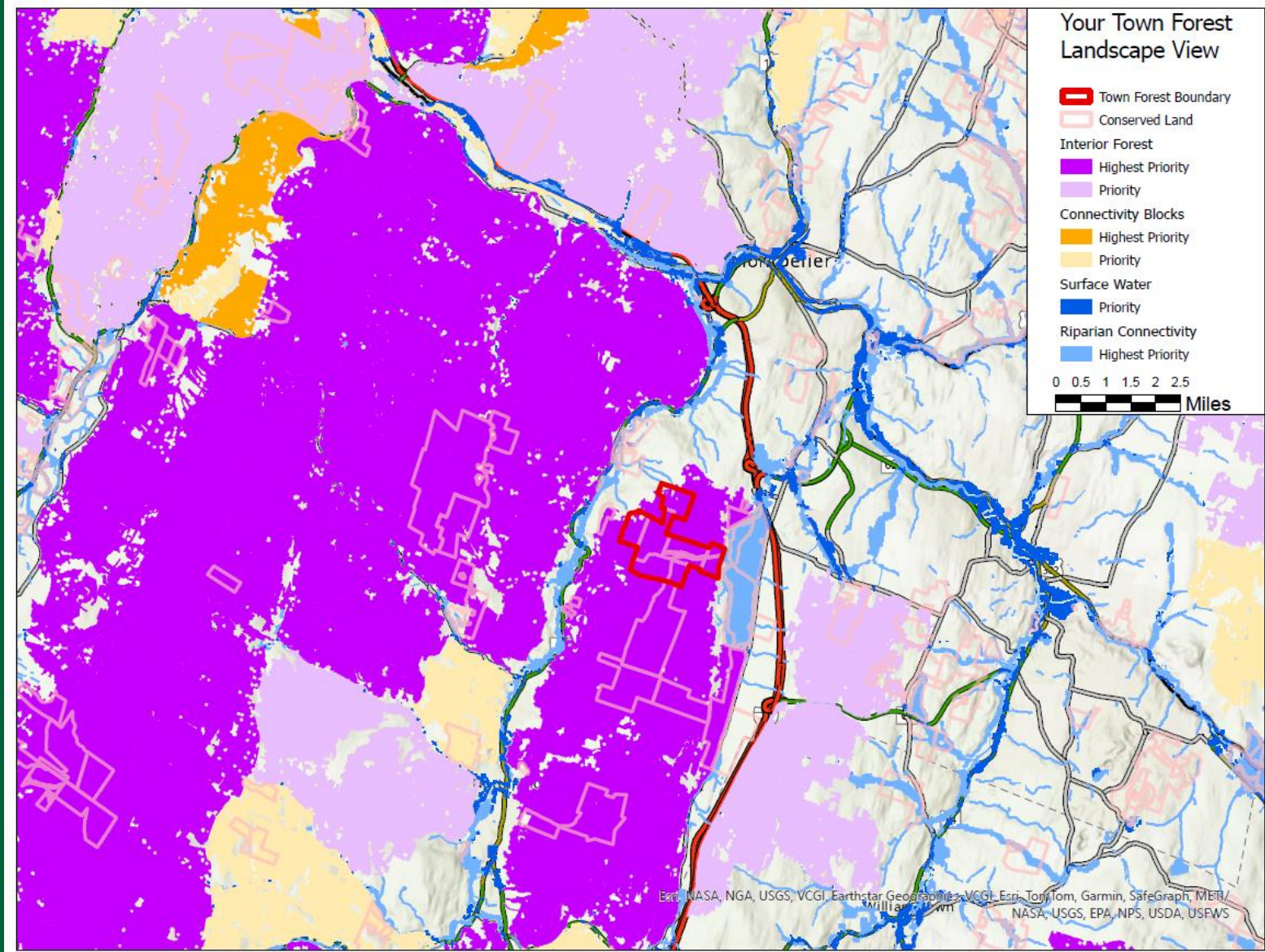
Your Town Forest 670 Acres

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 Miles

Established Parking Area	Deer Wintering Area	Open Field	State Highway
Vernal Pool	Mast Stand	Singletrack Biking/Hiking	Class 3 Town Road
Goshawk Nest	Wetland	Snowmobile Trail	Class 4 Town Road
Town Forest Boundary	Rare Natural Community	Legal Trail	



CASE STUDY



A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains in the background, a large body of water in the middle ground, and a dense forest in the foreground. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly hazy light, possibly during dawn or dusk. The text "QUESTIONS?" is centered in the middle of the image, with a horizontal line underneath it.

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!



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