

<p>HOW SHOULD OUR FOREST BE USED?</p> <p>Options:</p>	<p>PROS</p>	<p>CONS</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVE/WILDERNESS (minimal human activity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can co-exist with <i>low-impact</i> recreation and snowmobiles if trails avoid sensitive habitats • Can co-exist with occasional, environmentally motivated, <i>low-impact</i> logging in forests, even under carbon offset contracts • Supports low-impact logging jobs (small equipment or horses) • Cost-benefit ratio of possible selective timber harvests improves as stands mature • Maintenance costs decline as erosion declines • Forest & forest floor allowed to reach maximum carbon storage capacity • Restoration of forest soils and fungal networks improve forest health • Research opportunities for monitoring effects of climate change, non-intervention management, and effects on species diversity and ecosystems • Access to a wide range of environmental grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational vehicles other than snowmobiles denied access • Carbon sequestration declines as trees mature • Openings & forest diversity depend on natural attrition of canopy layer • Income for maintenance limited to grants & carbon offsets (decline as forest matures if no openings are created for new growth) • Supports only loggers equipped and willing to do low-impact work (but more researchers & carbon monitoring technicians)
<p>RECREATION, Low Impact (hiking, skiing, hunting, etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can co-exist with Environmental Preserve • Public access to natural and historic features • Healthy outdoor exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes people with mobility challenges • Requires safe, maintained, mapped and signposted trails

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection with the natural world • Spiritual and psychological renewal • Hunting to control deer populations and provide food is part of many family traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue operations may be required • Limited cell phone coverage • Hunting accidents are rare but happen • Hunting for sport is unpopular with many residents and can target natural predators that help control prey species
<p>RECREATION, non-motorized vehicular (biking, horseback riding, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access for horse owners and enthusiasts of mountain biking and e-bikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can damage hiking trails, vegetation, tree roots
<p>RECREATION, all motorized vehicles except snowmobiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access to the forest for people with physical challenges, including elderly residents • Facilitates transport of game, tools and materials for trail work, trash removal, etc. • Emergency evacuation of injured visitors or workers • Sport riding • Wildlife viewing (some animals are less fearful of people in a vehicle than on foot) • Properly sited, designed, and constructed OHRV trails can greatly reduce damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abrades trail surfaces, damages vegetation and wildlife habitat, compacts soils, and contributes to erosion • Most Fairlee Forest's 'trails' are too steep or wet for vehicular use, per State guidelines • The volume and kinds of Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRVs) using Fairlee Forest has increased dramatically • Increasing speeds and aggressiveness of off-road vehicle sports multiplies the damage they cause • Noise and exhaust from motorized vehicles diminishes the forest experience for others • Design, construction, and maintenance of safe, erosion-resistant OHRV trails is costly • Projected increases in heavy rains will amplify sediment discharges into the streams & lake

RECREATION, motorized vehicles (snowmobiles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAST (Vermont Assoc. of Snow Travelers) members help maintain trails • Groomed VAST trails improve access for all winter forest visitors • Most newer snowmobiles are relatively quiet and unobtrusive in the landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile treads on bare or wet ground cause abrasion and erosion • Older snowmobiles create noise and air pollution
FOREST ACCESS, (allowed but not promoted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces numbers on trails and competition for game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizes possible business & town revenue from visitor purchases & taxes
FOREST ACCESS, (promoted as hiking destination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational materials make the forest more accessible and interesting to all visitors • Access to State grants for forest recreation • Visitors discover Fairlee and patronize our restaurants, gas stations, shops, and lodgings <i>(some case studies in other Vermont towns show significant income from forest tourism)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic on trails, crowding in parking areas, more vehicles on Bald Top Rd. • Possible increase in need for amenities like outhouses, signs, benches, trash receptacles
TIMBER HARVESTING: Sustainably moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can yield income for trail maintenance • Artificial forest openings can improve forest diversity (layers and species) • Forest openings, natural or artificial, favor some species of wildlife and migratory birds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In our forest, costs often exceed revenue, a trend projected for forests throughout Vt. • Disturbs forest floor, soil organisms important for forest health, and causes erosion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest openings promote growth of young trees that <i>sequester</i> (i.e. absorb) carbon • Some logging roads and skid trails can be repurposed for recreation • Properly closed out logging roads eventually revegetate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openings are often repopulated by invasive species • Openings remove mature trees that <i>store</i> carbon, and growing (“pulpwood”) trees that are <i>sequestering</i> carbon. • Most logging roads are too steep for maintainable recreation • The heavy logging equipment used today compresses the soil and requires wide roads and large landings that take years to heal.
<p>TIMBER HARVESTING: Minimized or discontinued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can co-exist with Environmental Preserve • Forest continues progress toward a natural state not achieved since late 18th Century • Potential 5-figure annual income from sale of Carbon Offsets (see https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/VFCSWG-Report-Final-Report-1.4.20.pdf) • Erosion and other negative impacts of logging gradually decline • Species that favor undisturbed forest may return or become more successful • Quality of water in the streams may improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income to Fairlee from timber harvesting declines • Area loggers lose income from our forest • Fairlee’s definition of “working forests” would change as the “product” shifted from wood harvesting to carbon storage and forest tourism