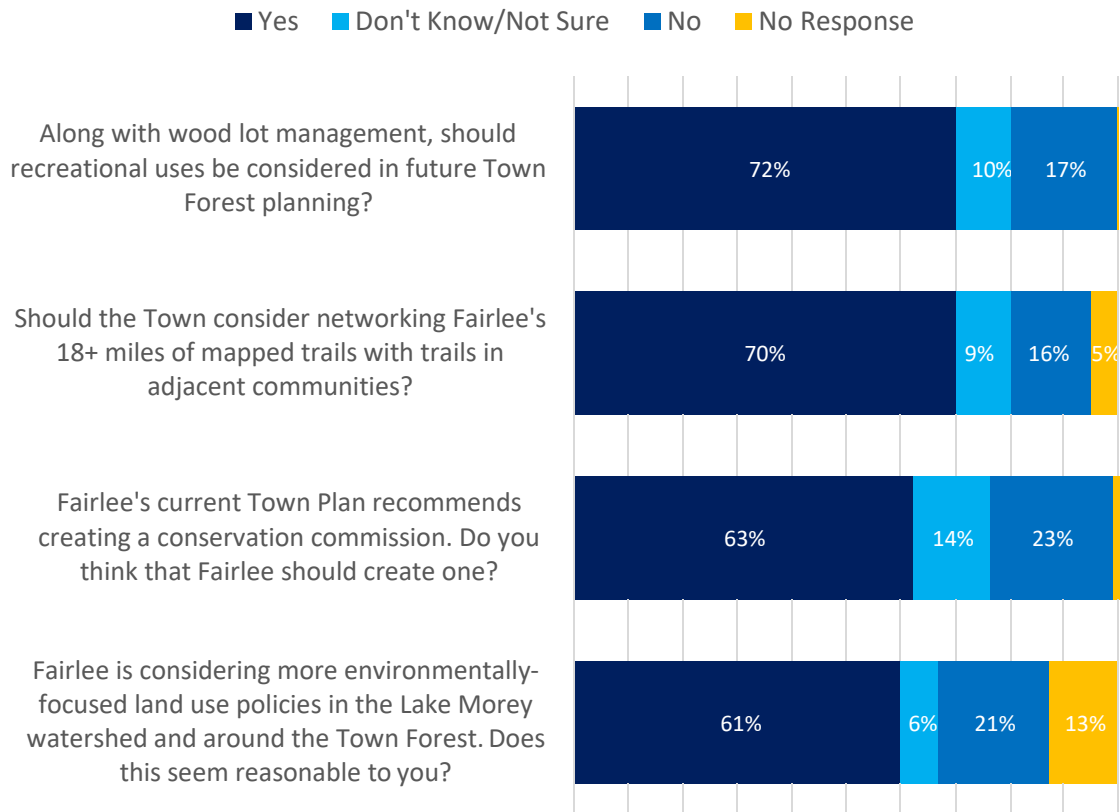


FAIRLEE 2020 TOWN PLAN, pp. 61-110

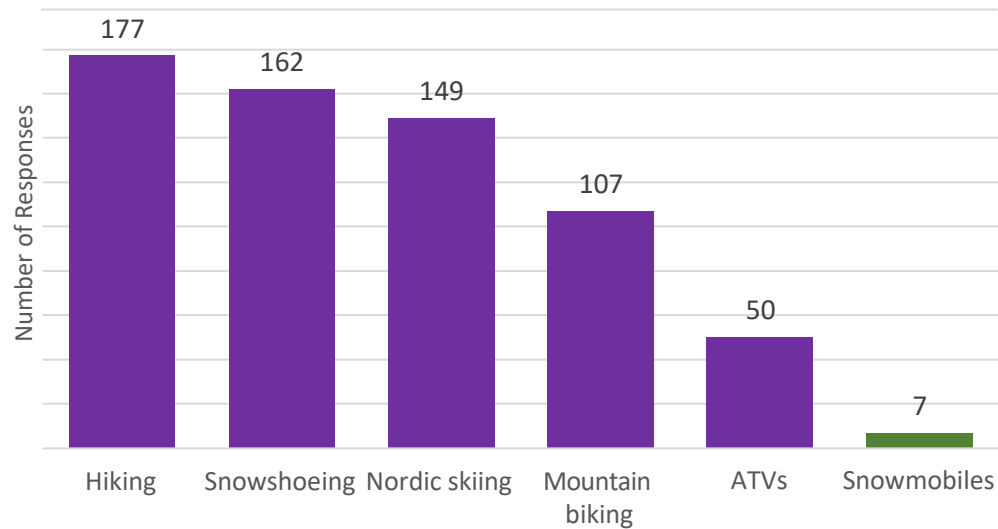
Natural Resources & Land Use

Along with wood lot management, should recreational uses be considered in future Town Forest Planning? Should the Town consider networking Fairlee’s 18+ miles of mapped trails with trails in adjacent communities? Do you think that Fairlee should create a conservation commission? Do environmentally focused land use policies in the lake Morey watershed and around the Town Forest seem reasonable to you?



Most responses were Yes. No responses accounted for 16% to 23% of responses. Thirteen percent of survey participants did not respond to the question about environmentally focused land use policies.

Who or what do you think should have access to trails in the Town Forest? (Check all that apply.)



Hiking, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, and mountain biking each earned more than 100 responses. Mistakenly, snowmobiling was not included as one of the possible responses. The fact that seven survey respondents wrote snowmobiles next to “Other” is significant. Respondents also mentioned horseback riding, hunting, birdwatching, ATVs, ziplines, and winter-time toboggan runs.

Please share comments and opinions about Fairlee’s trails.

Comments and opinions included:

“Look forward to better signage at entry points (trail heads)”

“Wheelchair accessible”

“No activity should unduly impact trails [and lead to] excessive maintenance issues.”

“Keep them as natural and protected as possible”

“ATVs and snow machines if users maintain trails to prevent erosion”

“[Be sure to] include the Forest board. There are strict guidelines on the use and management of the forest.”

“Connect trails and better trailheads and signs and maps”

“Do not allow motorized vehicles”

“Hunters, birders, equestrians, prepare some area to be wheelchair friendly; ATVs for resident and non-resident landowners”

“I am not familiar with the forest/trails.”

"Leave them just as they are."

"I haven't walked the trails, but if there is a migration corridor to preserve as well as the Lake Morey watershed, it would be best to limit public access to those areas (i.e., just foot traffic, no vehicles)."

"Limited mountain biking or biking restricted to certain trails"

"ATV and mountain biking on DESIGNATED trails and forest roads ONLY"

"NOT ATVs, NOT snowmobiles, yes to hunting during season - keep it quiet and natural"

"Not developed thus providing wildlife habitat"

"Who uses these?"

"Residents and taxpayers only for motorized and mountain bikes"

"Unimportant"

"We are fortunate to have such an active trail group and school interest."

Please share comments and opinions about Fairlee's natural resources and land use.

Comments and opinions included:

"Concerned about the poor water quality in Lake Fairlee. Please work with the other towns to fix the problem."

"A policy that takes into account all current and potential uses would be appreciated."

"Access to enjoy (and protect!) the natural resources for the area should be a high priority."

"Are you talking about Fairlee's property or are you talking about private property in Fairlee that you want to control? Leave the good people of Fairlee's private property alone."

"Access to natural resources needs to tread a fine line between protection and access. As the wealth divide increases in this country, access is becoming more and more for the rich only. On the other hand, unregulated access is a disaster. Some areas such as the heron rookery need full protection with a good buffer zone around them. Other areas can tolerate heavier access as long as there is support for repair that such access inevitably requires."

"Are you saying you are going to restrict land use? Does that make it more impossible to build housing areas if you are going to say what you can do with land? Let people build as they see fit around the lake. Don't let seasonal people dictate how our town should be grown."

"Conservation Commission members should have minimum qualifications that include relevant education, experience and competence to evaluate plans and impacts. Individuals seeking to be on the Commission must run for an election and be vetted through a public process that is transparent and open. Large landowners should NOT be allowed to serve. The Commission must

be intentionally balanced to represent lake front, forest, suburban, village and BUSINESS interests....It must be a cooperative Democratic process.”

“Educate about/encourage conservation easements”

“Fairlee has the potential to be a regional recreational destination. Its natural resources might be managed to encourage this development.”

“Fairlee's natural capital is beyond compare, and it should not be degraded in the interest of development and growth like so many similar communities around the world. We must be vigilant in our management of Fairlee's footprint to always act in the interest of future generations.”

“Fairlee's natural resources sets it apart from neighboring towns, we need to preserve them at all costs. I am all for anything that will keep Fairlee uniquely Fairlee but just with more people to love the town and support it.”

“Form a Conservation Commission and move forward in a similar direction as Bradford and Newbury.”

“From what I can see, the Selectboard and the Planning Commission are forward thinking and I endorse their recommendations about the Town's natural resources and land use.”

“How are you going to ask us on availability of housing and then suggest we restrict land use? You either must decide to not restrict it and allow people to build or say you can't build. Protection of the lake community is not important to some.”

“I am 100% in favor of preserving and protecting Fairlee's natural resources using environmentally-sound/research-supported practices.”

“I have lived in Fairlee since 2003 and only within the last 2.5 years became aware of the Town Forest. What the heck! It is important to pull in all who care about environmental focus to preserve these wonderful resources. Thank you for bringing awareness to those of us who were formally unknowing.”

“I have never heard anyone in town say, “Let’s conserve all this private land and piss everyone off,” so why are you now stirring up trouble?”

“I think the town should work to preserve and protect the resources we have.”

“It comes without saying it should be used by those who care for it.”

“Leave our property alone.”

“Maintaining existing trails and intelligent conservation sound good. Limiting any destructive activities or development also sounds good.”

“More than 15% of Fairlee's +/- 12,000 acres is forested and available to all members of the public.”

“Need to continue to monitor the health of the lake – its water quality and species health. Blue green algae is a major threat to lake and animal health.”

“Need to make sure the Lake is not polluted with sewage from old camps, focus on erosion issues, keep milfoil at bay. Strict laws on new building work. Keep the camps going; they are a bonus. And not just the lakes, but also the Connecticut River...we have falcons, bald eagles, I think a lot of people aren't even fully aware of what is in our own backyard. We need to educate and preserve going forward.”

“No need for natural resource planning. Leave it alone.”

“Not only do policies need to be established, there needs to be more support of public education initiatives explaining the importance to everyone of preserving and protecting our natural resources, and some enforcement of these policies--if only signage at forest entrance points informing/reminding people what the policies are.”

“Please use science to determine what is allowable. Climate change is going to put pressure on Fairlee as people from the south migrate north over the next decades. We should prepare for growth and embrace it, while at the same time letting the carrying capacity of the land determine what happens here.”

“Protect the lake and the surrounding watershed. Without a healthy lake, the town's most significant property tax base is at stake.”

“Rt 91 is full of out of state cars going by Fairlee with bikes and skis to places with trails, rentals. Planned recreational development would bring revenue, jobs, and done right would help the environment.”

“Seems to work fine until someone thinks they should tell property owners what they should do with their land.”

“The beauty of VT is its well maintained and managed lands. In addition to the lakes, I believe the forest is one of Fairlee's most important features. It should be managed well, as should use of the forest. Engaging young people in understanding this is also important to its future.”

“We have a town forest; I think that is enough natural resource for one town.”

“Would like to know what landowners will have to deal with as far as the wildlife corridor is concerned. For example, permits for building, etc.”

“The forests and lakes are Fairlee's greatest assets. It is of the utmost importance to be good stewards!”

