Buffalo Mountain Town Forest Steering Committee
Public Meeting
September 29, 2026

Committee Members Present: Joe Nudell, Andy Gilbert, Leif Goldberg, Margery Prevot, James Kelley, Lucian Avery, Dylan LaFlam, Julie Sullivan, Rachel Kane, Marie LaPré Grabon

Committee Members Absent: Paul Cillo, Brendan Buckley, Tyler Buswell, Sue Rivard, Renaud Demers, Eric Remick

Advisory Member Present: Hannah Redmon

The public meeting began at 6:10 p.m. with introductions by the committee to the public.

Hannah introduced herself as as the advisor to the steering committee from the Trust for Public Land, and that the steering committee had been meeting for the past 4 months to create a Management Plan for the new town forest. The Management Plan would guide the future management of the town forest and that this guidance would be helpful for the next 20 - 30 years forward. She provided a list of the descriptions of what is in the Management Plan, and that the plan can be modified within the first 10 years and after that any changes made to the plan will be kept. She told the public in attendance that the Management Plan would be delivered to the Selectboard on Thursday, October 1.

Hannah explained the public outreach that the committee used to get input from the Hardwick community e.g. the community survey.

Joe then described the response to the survey…287 response in total and 197 Hardwick resident responses. He described the most popular items on the survey e.g. light recreation, and most controversial issues i.e. dogs on leashes and trapping. He also presented a handout with results of the survey that included facts, figures, charts, which also described the respondents views on goals and fund. Joe went on to inform the public about the outreach event at the Farmers Market and the public walks and bicycle rides.

Dylan talked about the formation of the Stewardship Committee that would include 7 members with a 3 year rotating term and would include a variety opinions and points of view, and that full authority of management would lay with the Selectboard.
He explained that the operational management would include local resources.

Julie reported on the recreational prospects of the town forest that would be available to the greater Hardwick community. These would be compatible uses such as rustic sustainable hiking trails, hunting, fishing etc.

Julie also described the Proposed Action Schedule. This is the plan to be proposed to the future Stewardship Committee. This includes: signage, a kiosk, meeting with a trail builder, public outreach etc.

Questions from the public:

-Would signs go up after trails open?
Answer: this would be established by the Stewardship Committee.
-How would funds be raised to create trails etc, and a question about the purchase.
Answer: NRLT and TPL would help with fundraising. Due diligence has been done. There needs to be updates on the title with a direct deed to the town. The current conservation easement works with the Management Plan.
-What is the cost re: the development of trails?
Answer: This will be a soft start with primitive hiking trails. There is plenty of areas in which to expand. Committee members found that single track hiking trails cost significantly less in maintenance costs than groomed ski trails or mountain bike trails, which helped inform the committee's initial recommendation to explore hiking trail construction.
-Question from the public as to when the next walk would take place?
Lucian answered October 3, 9 a.m.
-Question: has the committee received any questions from the public who were in opposition to the purchase?
Answer: This was according to the survey--Joe found the percentage of survey responses largely opposed to the forest were about the same as the percentage of voters opposed to funding the forest.
-Question: As the committee moves to a new phase who will stay on the new Stewardship Committee?
Answer: The Buffalo Mtn Committee anticipates there will be new faces on the new committee.
Question: What will the relationship be between Hardwick Trails and the new trails on the Buffalo Mountain Town Forest?
Answer: The committee recommended that the future Town Forest Stewardship Committee work with Hardwick Trails to handle regular trail maintenance.

Comments from the public to the committee…

Ron W. acknowledged that creating and maintaining a Management Plan for Buffalo Mtn Town Forest is a “continuing balancing act”, and thanked the committee for all the work they have done.

Hannah ended the meeting saying the committee had great conversations about the Management Plan…that there was caution about the costs of developing trails etc., and that the committee, after many discussions had compromised on a couple of topics.

The meeting ended at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marie LaPré Grabon