

# Saxon Hill Vision Framework



TOWN OF  
*Essex, Vermont*

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## Acknowledgements

All community plans are the result of a collective effort. In the development of this Vision Framework many individuals provided considerable input and expertise to the outcome. The Town would like to thank them for their tremendous assistance.

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With consulting assistance from:



# Saxon Hill Town Forest Vision Framework

A vision framework is a critically important tool that will inform the direction of the management plan for the Saxon Hill Town Forest. The vision framework encompasses all forest uses to understand the community's overall intent for the forest. The vision framework is directional, descriptive, and aspirational, communicating what the community believes are the ideal conditions for the forest—how things would look if all opportunities and issues were perfectly addressed.

The vision framework includes four sections:

1. Visioning: A description of the community's desired future character for the forest;
2. Management Balance: A discussion of the management balance in the forest;
3. Management Considerations: A discussion of important considerations and topics for the future management of the site; and
4. Activities and Programs: A list of activities, programs, and amenities community members would like to see.

The vision framework is broad enough to encompass a variety of local perspectives. Unlike a simple one or two sentence vision statement, a vision framework allows for more complexity to be communicated and better illuminates the community's desired character for the Town Forest—which is often multi-faceted. All aspects of the vision framework should work together to communicate the community's overarching aspirations for the forest.

This vision framework has been developed under the direction of the project steering committee and is based on public input and feedback received through a Forest Walk Event held on July 8, 2019 with an estimated 35 community members in attendance, a Public Open House on July 16, 2019 with estimated 80+ community members in attendance, and a community survey with over 400 responses. A draft Vision Framework was presented to community for final input and refinement on September 10, 2019. The community's vision for the Saxon Hill Town Forest will likely change over time, and this document should be updated as needs, desires and conditions change.

## 1. Project Site

As depicted on the map below, the Saxon Hill Town Forest is a 245-acre parcel that is connected to a separate 90-acre parcel owned by the Essex Westford School District. These two parcels are often thought of as synonymous and there isn't a clear understanding of this ownership nuance within the community. The 90-acre parcel is leased to the Town of Essex by the Essex Westford School District and is where many of the purpose-built mountain bike trails are currently located (Flow, Extendo, etc.). The trails within the 90-acre parcel have been managed and maintained for the last 20 years by the Fellowship of the Wheel (FOTW).





## 2. Visioning

At the public visioning workshop and in the community survey, attendees/respondents were asked, “What word or phrase best describes your EXISTING experience with the town forest in your community?” and “What word or phrase best describes your DESIRED FUTURE experience with the town forest in your community?” The results of these exercises are demonstrated in the word clouds below. The size of the words in the word clouds corresponds to the number of times that word was used in the responses.

### Existing Experience



Survey respondents and open house attendees both focused on mountain biking as their primary existing experience at the forest. Many people also brought up other activities they do in the forest (snowmobiling, fat biking, hiking, dog walking) and the ease of access. In general, people shared positive feedback about their current experiences in the forest, using lots of words like “fun,” “awesome,” and “great.”



## Management Goals

1. Expand the recreational offerings to appeal to a wider range of users with more trail types and recreational experiences provided in the forest.

2. Strike the right balance between the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and the development of recreational assets.

3. Maintain primarily forest-based activities. Additional development should maintain the general character that exists currently—keep it natural!

4. Support economic development by encouraging economic activity in the Town and Village and by leveraging the site to attract and support development in the surrounding area.

5. Improve communications about the forest and its management with clear signage, well-marked trails, and enhanced online presence and promotion.

6. Ensure connectivity of the trail system both within the forest and to the areas surrounding the forest.

7. Promote successful partnerships and collaboration amongst all partners and forest users.

8. Maintain the opportunities for solitude, rest, and rejuvenation the forest currently provides.

9. Emphasize accessibility and encourage community and visitor use. Strike a balance between serving both local and visitor needs.

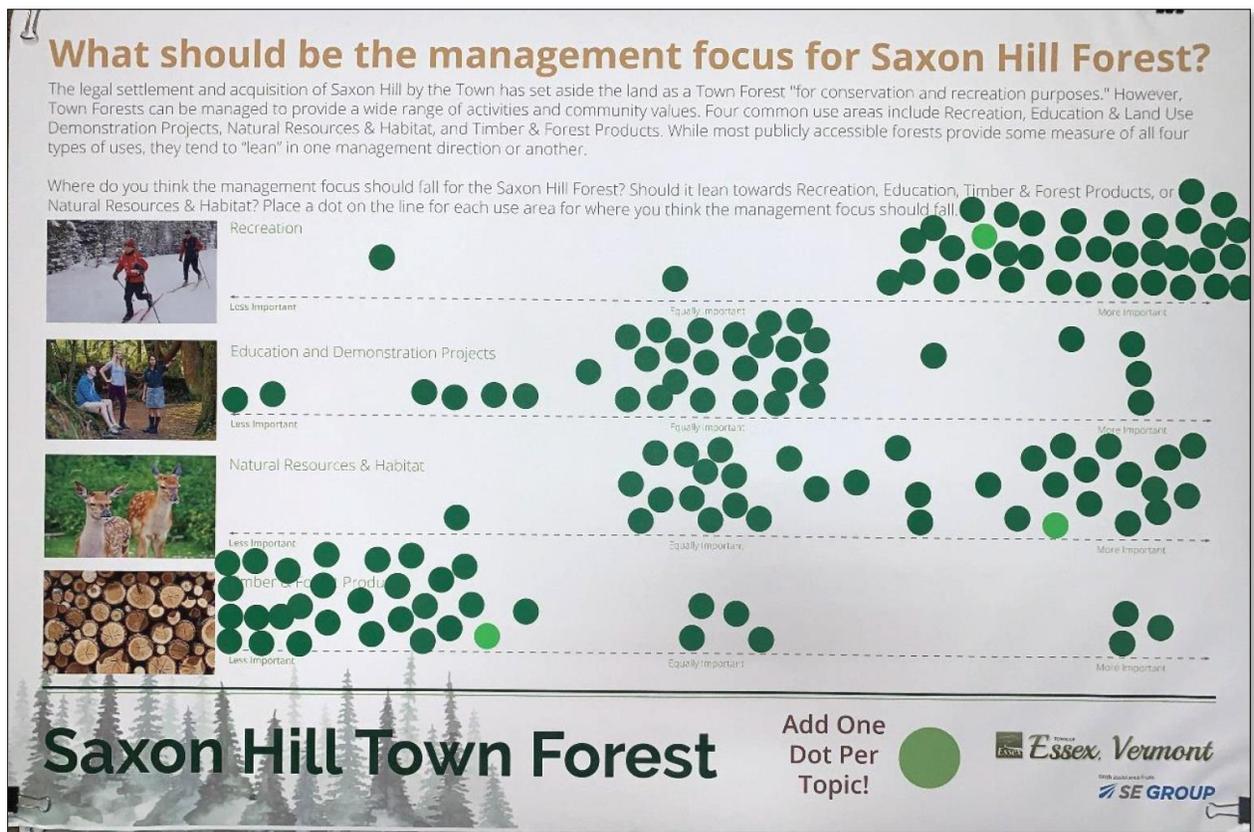
10. Provide sustainable and well-maintained trails, trailheads, access, and parking.

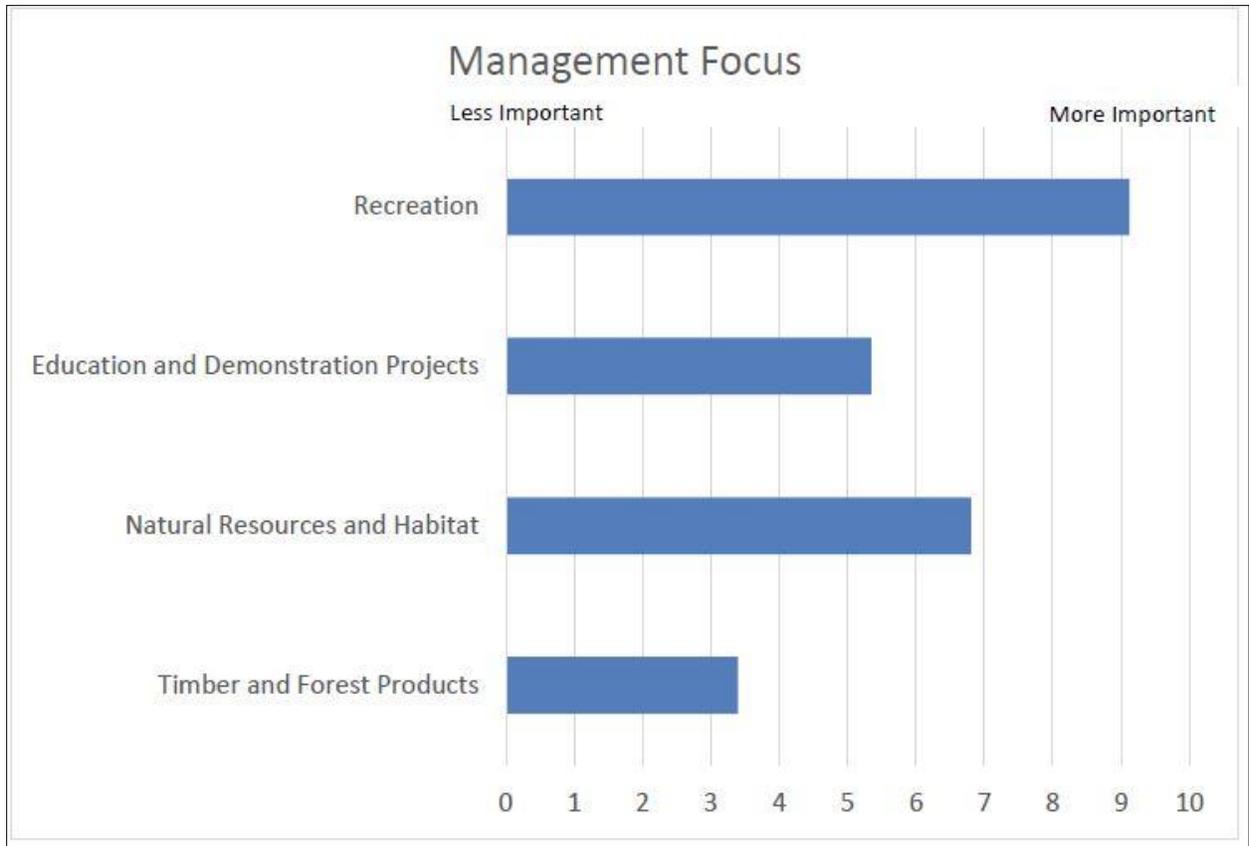


### 3. Management Balance

Town Forests can be managed to provide a wide range of activities and community values. Four common use areas include Recreation; Education & Land Use Demonstration Projects; Natural Resources & Habitat; and Timber & Forest Products. While most publicly accessible forests provide some measure of all four types of uses, they tend to “lean” in one management direction or another.

To understand the desired balance for Saxon Hill Town Forest, the steering committee considered this internally throughout the Visioning Process and asked survey and workshop participants “Where do you think the management focus SHOULD fall for the Town Forest in your community? Should it lean towards Recreation, Education, Timber & Forest Products, or Natural Resources & Habitat?” Their responses are below:





*Survey respondents were asked to indicate how important the four management categories are to them on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being less important and 10 being more important. Bars in the chart represent the average of all survey responses.*

Survey results and open house attendees overwhelmingly indicated that recreation was the most important management focus for Saxon Hill. Both groups felt that natural resources and habitat were also important, but with significantly less emphasis on this use. Education and demonstration projects were thought of as slightly less important than these other two, while timber and forest products was considered the least important by most workshop attendees and survey respondents.

The results were presented to the project steering committee in late July. Attendees mentioned that these management priorities can be applied to different zones within the forest, though multiple priorities can be pursued within the same zone. This might take the form of demarcating ecologically sensitive zones, expanding recreation opportunities, and practicing ecologically sound timbering practices when needed.

Ethan Tapper, the Chittenden County Forester mentioned that if the deer population continues to increase, allowing a week of permitted hunting on the parcel could avoid ecological damage to the forest.



## 4. Management Considerations

Below are various management considerations we felt were important to highlight in the Town Forest Vision Framework. Recognizing the importance of the geographical context, site history, and local laws and ordinances is helpful when creating an effective forest management plan. For Saxon Hill specifically, respondents stated that they wanted to see a clear and cohesive management style throughout both property parcels. These comments were specifically in reference to trail maintenance, dog walking, signage, and the general character of the forest.

### History of Forest Management<sup>1</sup>

#### Natural History

The vegetation, soil types, and topographic features in and around Saxon Hill are all affected by a glacial recession process that took place around 12,000 years ago. As the glaciers melted, a mix of clay, fine sands, pebbles, and larger rocks became the foundation for the soils today. The large boulders found around the forest illustrate the sites glacial legacy.

Like much of Vermont, Saxon Hill was essentially clear cut for agriculture in 1800s, but between 1924 and 1944, the area was planted with 574,600 scotch pine, red pine, white pine, and white cedar trees. Today, Saxon Hill is composed of three primary forest types; 1) red scotch pine plantation, 2) natural white pine forest, and 3) dominantly red oak forest, with red maple, hemlock, ash, beech, and aspen as associate species.

#### Site History

In the early 20th century, Essex's growing population put intense pressure on the water supply and culminated in the "water famine" of 1923. This was the main driver behind the establishment of the Saxon Hill and Indian Brook forests as water conservation areas and land in these areas was purchased, conserved, and managed by the municipalities for water over the next two decades.

By the early 1970s, continued population growth in Essex outstripped the water supply capacity of both Indian Brook and Saxon Hill and the Village connected to the new Champlain Water District (CWD), a regional public water utility, discontinuing use of the Indian Brook and Saxon Hill water systems. Eventually these areas were sold to private landowners to help recoup the costs of the infrastructure to connect to CWD. In 1978, 90 acres of the original forest was deeded to the Essex Westford School District for recreation, conservation, and educational purposes. Since 2004, the school district has leased this land to the Town of Essex for public recreation, including hiking and mountain biking.

Over the years, several land use proposals have been presented for the remaining private lands at Saxon Hill. After a decades-long debate over rezoning and development, the Town has finalized all agreements, settlements and approvals and has acquired approximately 245 acres of the original

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Vermont NR 206 (2017). Historical Analysis of Two Town Forests in Essex, Vermont.



Saxon Hill forest for conservation, forest management, and recreational purposes—the balance of which will be explored through this public engagement process. The remaining 410 acres of the original forest continue to be privately-owned and either developed or developable.

### Town Forest & School Parcel

As is stands now, the Town will manage the 245-acre parcel separately from the 90-acre school district parcel. However, Essex Westford School District has formed a property/ownership task force that will evaluate management strategies for the 90-acre parcel. Currently ownership and management across the two parcels often thought of as “Saxon Hill” is not consistent. The trails within the 90-acre parcel have been managed and maintained for the last 20 years by the Fellowship of the Wheel (FOTW). While FOTW has expressed interest in helping to maintain other mountain-bike trails on the site if the Town chooses to develop them, they have had minimal involvement in the management of the trails on the 245-acre parcel since the Town has acquired it.

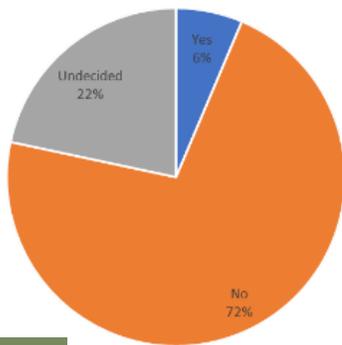
Community members have expressed a desire for the two parcels to be managed comprehensively, but the School District has not yet decided if it will include its 90-acre parcel in the same management plan for the Town-owned land. From a land management perspective, it will be much easier to manage public access on the two parcels if the management (rules, allowed uses, signage, etc.) are consistent across the two parcels. If the two parcels are managed separately, it will be important to make that clear to forest users by signing the boundaries, making this information clear in maps, regulation postings, and signs, and possibly by giving the two parcels different names (e.g., “Saxon Hill Town Forest” and “Saxon Hill Mountain Bike Park”).

### Fees

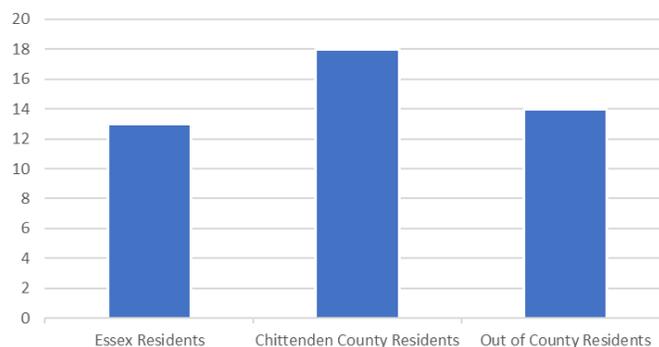
Survey respondents felt strongly that there should be no fee at Saxon Hill Town Forest with 72% voting “No Fee”. When asked who should have to pay a fee if it were to be implemented, survey respondents were more in favor of non-Essex residents paying. At the open house, no attendees voted for Essex residents paying, with most responses lying in “undecided”.

The management plan process will need to identify potential funding sources for site improvements and maintenance. Use fees capture the population that uses the Town Forest but may also require on-site staff to collect fees at the various entrances.

Should there be a fee at Saxon Hill?

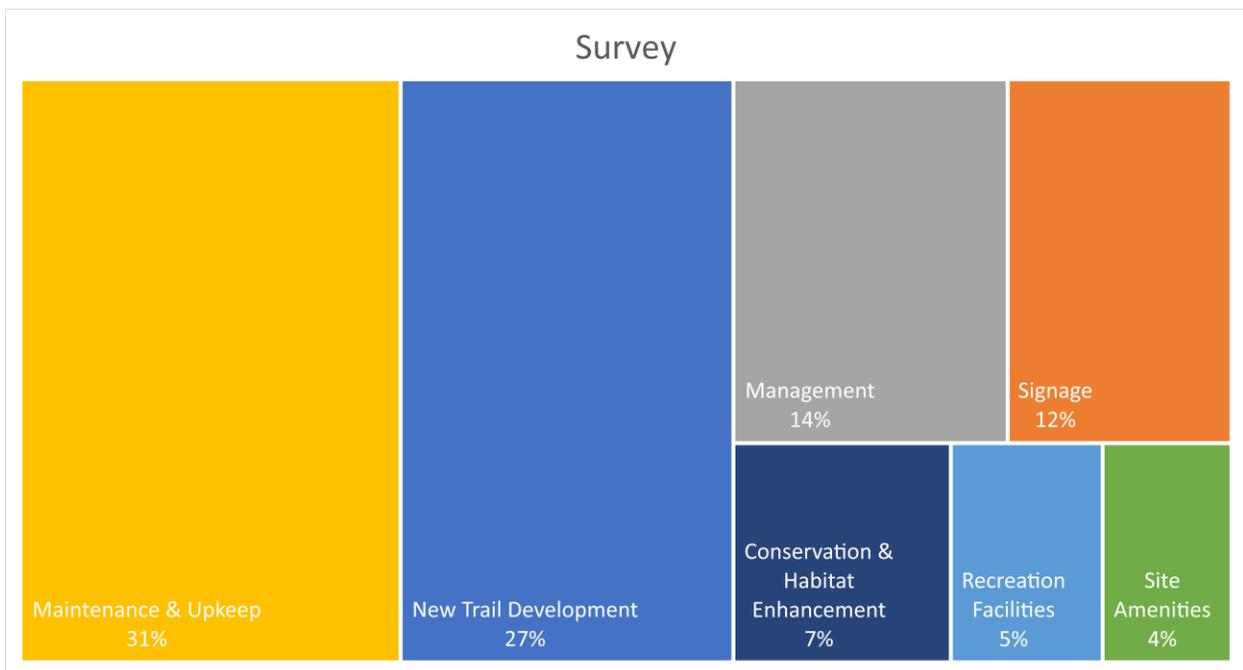
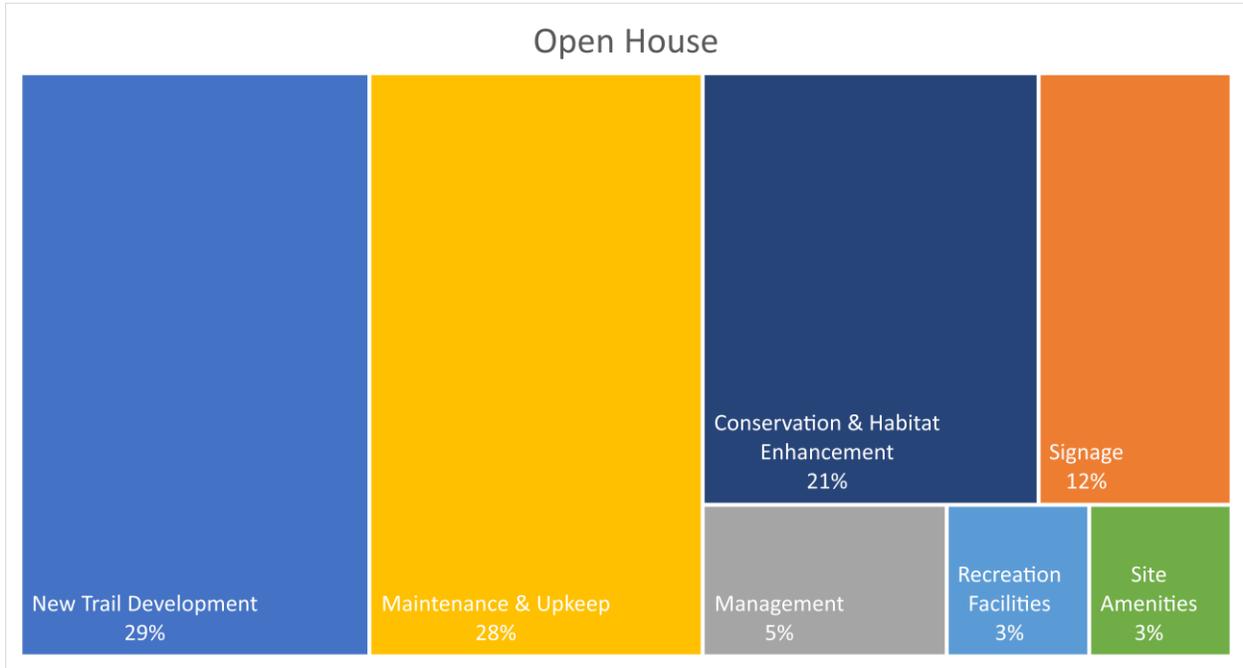


Who should pay a fee?



## Funding Priorities

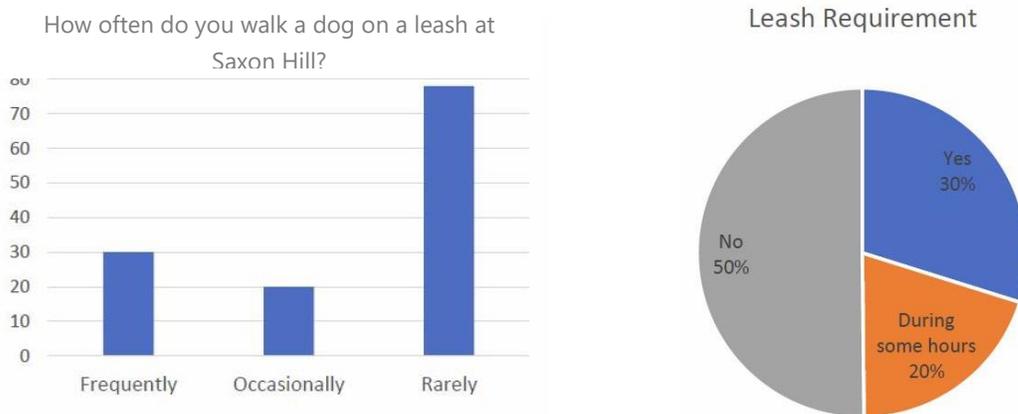
Through the survey and open house, community members were asked to allocate “Forest Bucks” (i.e. Monopoly© money) among various forest expenses. The following charts show how each group allocated their money.



Both open house attendees and survey respondents felt that maintenance and upkeep and trail development were the most important expense categories. Survey respondents allocated slightly more money towards maintenance and upkeep, and open house attendees allocated slightly more to new trail development but both groups allocated about 30% of funds to each and 60% overall between the two categories. The next three most important categories were management, signage, and conservation and habitat enhancement, although the degree of allocation varied. Neither group felt it was important to allocate significant funds to recreation facilities or site amenities.

### Dog Walking

The Town of Essex is working with the Village of Essex Junction towards a comprehensive dog control ordinance that will be implemented throughout both jurisdictions. The Town should allow this process to unfold and institute dog policies for the forest based on the outcome. There are currently no dog-walking or leash policies at Saxon Hill Town Forest, and respondents were split on the issue. In answer to the question “should there be a leash requirement at Saxon Hill?” open house attendees were evenly split between the answer categories of “yes” “no” and “during some hours”. Half of survey respondents leaned towards “no” with the rest split fairly evenly towards “yes” and “during some hours.” Graphical results are presented below.



### Parking & Access

The Thompson Drive parking lot is a “temporary lot” but currently serves as the primary parking area for the Saxon Hill Town Forest. The Thompson Drive parking lot has adequate space for most users, but during peak times the lot does overflow, forcing cars to park alongside the road or in nearby parking lots, both of which are unsanctioned. As the Thompson Drive parking lot was recently created, use and capacity of the lot should be studied with parking counts conducted on both weekdays and weekends throughout the year to capture both fluctuations in seasonality and year-over-year use trends to inform the final size and design of a permanent parking lot for the forest.

When the final Thompson Drive parking lot is created, the parking capacity of the lot should be considered in relation to the destination orientation of the forest. The ability to park snowmobile trailers and “pull through” opportunities for large vehicles should also be considered.



The Saxon Hill Road lot should remain as an overflow or secondary lot to provide an alternative access point and help accommodate the demand for parking at the site. Clear signage denoting parking areas and no parking zones should be added to improve communications.

Increasing bicycle and pedestrian access to the site can increase accessibility and reduce parking demand. Town officials are currently working with property owners to maintain contiguous pathways leading to the Town Forest property. This practice should be continued as new owners move into the industrial zone.

## Communication

The town-owned parcel currently abuts several industrial zones and existing trails weave on and off town-owned property. For many reasons, it is important that property boundaries are adequately signed and mapped. If existing property owners allow visitors to use trails or access points that pass through their property, it is beneficial to make that clear to all users. Signage will not only assist in orientation and wayfinding but can also increase safety and enhance a sense of stewardship.

Survey respondents felt it necessary to have an improved trailhead map showing the trails and property boundaries though didn't specifically request maps throughout the forest.

The southeast border of Saxon Hill Town Forest is adjacent to a firearm discharge area. While the Town of Essex is currently deciding on how to adjust the boundaries of the discharge zone, the Saxon Hill Parcel may not be affected by the changes. At Indian Brook, Town officials were faced with similar public safety challenges and decided to create a 500-foot "Safety Zone" that prohibits firearm use around heavily-trafficked areas. Discussions around safety zones at Saxon Hill Town Forest should include plan feasibility, the Indian Brook model, and options for permitted hunting.

Another area where improved communication will be important is around parking and access. With the new parking lot on Thompson Drive being constructed and the parking area on Saxon Hill Road being altered, conditions have been in flux over the past year or so which has created a lot of confusion among forest users. The primary parking lot at Thompson Drive should be heavily promoted, but the Saxon Hill Road lot should also be acknowledged—even as an overflow or secondary lot—online and in official communications if it is to remain. Clear signage denoting parking areas and no parking zones should be added.

The Town should work with FOTW to ensure consistent communication and messages are being shared across all platforms. The FOTW communication channels should be leveraged to reach the broadest range of users. Communications that are not under the direct control of the Town or FOTW should also be encouraged to share the new consistent messages. For example, a Google Maps Error should be reported to get the correct address of the new parking lot on Thompson Road to be associated with the Saxon Hill Town Forest (currently listed on Google as the "Saxon Hill Bike Trail" with the Reinhart Foodservice Building as the address). Other online resources such as the VT Trail Finder website or the Trail Forks website should also be updated, if possible.



## Destination-Orientation

Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked how destination-oriented the forest should be, on a spectrum from a neighborhood park to Kingdom Trails. Most community members felt the forest should be right in the middle, balancing locals needs with the needs of visitors. The size of the parking lots is an important consideration for the destination orientation, as is the extent and type of marketing, promotion, and communications about the trails.

## Deer Population

Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper mentioned that deer populations have been determined to be overpopulated in Chittenden County by Vermont's Fish and Wildlife Department, and that populations in Essex and Essex Junction appear to be very high. Allowing hunting on the property could help improve the health of forests at Saxon Hill and avoid ecological damage associated with overpopulations of deer.



## 5. Activities, Programs, and Amenities

Survey respondents and open house attendees listed the following activities, programs, and amenities as resources they enjoy having or would like to see added to Saxon Hill Town Forest.

<u>Activities</u>		
<b>Gotta Have It!</b> Mountain Biking Winter Fat Biking	<b>Lean Gotta Have it!</b> Snowshoeing Hiking/Running on rugged Footpaths Dog Walking Cross Country Skiing Birding/Wildlife Watching Snowmobiling	<b>Nice to Include</b> Pump Track Hiking/Running on ADA accessible paths Picnic Area Wildplay or Natural Playground

<u>Programs</u>	
<b>Gotta Have It!</b> Lessons, Skills, Camps and Clinics	<b>Lean Gotta Have it!</b> Kids Camps (summer, after school, etc.)

<u>Amenities</u>	
<b>New Amenities or Facilities</b> Restrooms Mountain Bike Trails Water Fountain	Changing Facility Outdoor and Indoor Shooting Range Covered Shelter with Picnic Tables Bike Repair/Bike Wash Station

### Mountain Biking



Mountain biking is a popular activity at Saxon Hill Town Forest although respondents did wish to see more mountain bike trails and amenities developed at the site. This could include expansion of the existing trail network, the addition of a skills park, a pump track, and the expansion of winter fat biking at the site.

## Mountain Bike Trail Network

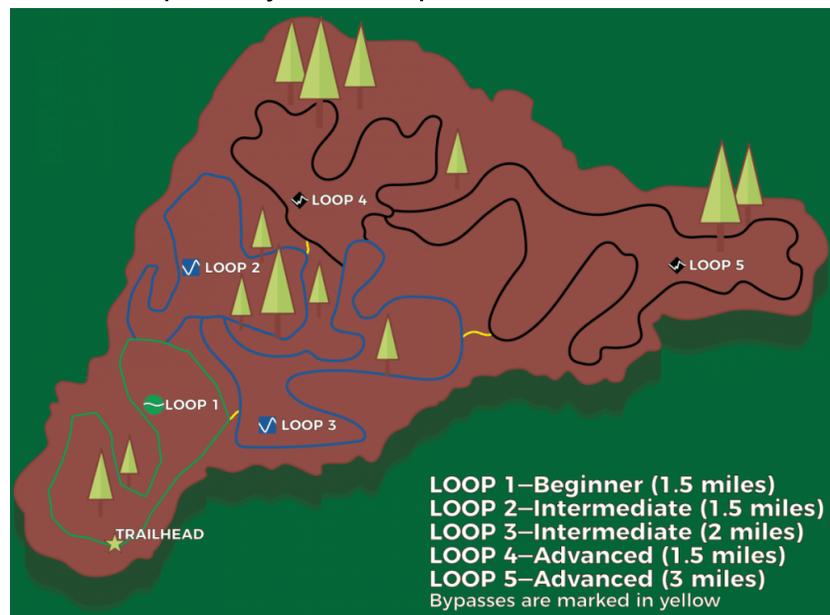


The trails maintained by the Fellowship of the Wheel are a great example of high-quality multi-use trails that incorporate special features for mountain bikers. These singletrack trails feature smooth “flow” sections with berms and banked turns as well as technical jumps and drops. The current mountain bike trails include a range of trail types which provide different mountain bike experiences (flow/downhill, cross country/technical, jump lines, etc.).

A successful mountain bike network must serve a broad range of rider types, ability levels, and fitness levels. Currently, the FOTW trails do have signage for beginner, intermediate, and advanced riders, but could be expanded to create a wider diversity of mountain bike trails. Expansion of the mountain trail network should focus on expanding the diversity of trails in the forest, adding longer and more diverse route options, and creating ideal learning progression opportunities at the site. This means offering trails of increasing difficulty levels within each trail type of flow, cross country/technical, downhill, and jump lines so riders may progress from one to the next while not pushing themselves too hard. Trail systems that include options for all experience levels create an inclusive environment by bringing people of different skills and fitness into the sport.

Utilizing the concept of “stacked loops,” a mountain bike trail network can be developed in phases, while maintaining the balance of offerings for riders of different abilities. A stacked loop is where successive trail loops are “stacked” upon each other, connecting in such a way as to give users options for extended distance or varied routes. Green trails are typically found closest to the parking areas, with expert trails “stacked” farther away and intermediate trails in the middle. Trail systems are often constructed this way so that one or two loops can be opened to the public while successive loops are constructed and added over time.

### Stacked Loop Trail System Example



## Bike Skills Park



A bike skills area usually includes a variety of natural obstacles such as rocks and logs, imaginatively constructed features like teeters and ladder bridges, and dirt jumps. These areas provide a place for riders of all abilities to hone their skills, making the technically challenging sport more available to the general public. Riders return to these areas repeatedly to improve their riding. Bike skills areas serve as an additional outlet for riders, that's technically oriented, convenient, controlled—and a lot of fun. These areas are typically developed close to parking areas to make it easier for

beginners to access and so visitors may utilize the space to warm up.

## Bike Pump Track



A Pump Track is a continuous bicycle trail loop with dirt berms and rollers. The goal is to ride around the track without pedaling, by gaining momentum from a pumping motion as you ride up and down. This facility provides a fun ride for any skill level rider. Pump Tracks are ideal exercise grounds for mountain biking, but the workout is effective for training for other sports like skiing, snowboarding, and track sports. Mountain bikes, BMX bikes, other types of bicycles can be used on a Pump Track for

training at any skill level, especially to increase bike handling skills for younger and beginner riders. Again, these facilities are typically developed closer to the parking areas.

## Winter Fat Biking



A fat bike is an off-road bicycle with oversized tires to allow riding on soft terrain such as mud and snow. As the sport grows, many areas have begun to create fatbike-dedicated groomed winter trails. Saxon Hill has been an increasingly popular fat biking destination in the winter. Moving forward, the design of new mountain bike trails should consider this winter use in the design and planning. The grooming program at Saxon Hill—facilitated by FOTW and volunteers—should continue to be supported and expanded upon.

## Multi-Use Trail Network

### Hiking/Running on Rugged Footpaths



General hiking/running trails are natural surface trails used largely for recreation and experiencing the natural environment. The width and character of the trails relate to the setting, intended trail user, and site-specific trail needs. Typically, these trails will be marked on a map and have signage. At Saxon Hill Town Forest, such a trail could take many forms. A hiking/running loop could be separate from existing uses (i.e., mountain bikes) and tour through the various natural features the forest provides. In most cases, loop trails that provide some physical challenge are preferred (2 to 5 miles average length).

While the existing trails at Saxon Hill are multi-use and allow for hiking and running, the trails are not necessarily optimized for this use. For example, the number of switchbacks on the bike-optimized multi-use trail “Flow” is desirable from a biking perspective but may not be from a hikers perspective.

### Destinations and Pause Places

More so than on mountain bike trails, “destinations” within a hiking and multi-use trail network are crucial to attract visitors and residents of all ages. Hikers and runners like to have a goal to guide their forest walks. Fortunately, the Saxon Hill Forest has a perfect destination already—the pond.

With a light touch, the pond area could be enhanced to make it more of a destination within the system. It might include a picnic table, interpretive signage about the history of the forest and ponds, and low-key other seating or benches.

Throughout the Forest, the Town should install “pause places.” Pause places are rest and/or informational stops for forest users to take a break, appreciate the scenery, and learn about the forest. Like the pond, these pause places act as mini destinations, making Forest visits more exciting, rejuvenating, and interesting. These pause places should be placed in locations with opportunities for views, birding/wildlife viewing, and natural and historical interpretation. All pause places should include a bench or appropriate rocks/boulders for seating.



## Snowshoeing



In the winter, snowshoeing often takes the place of running or hiking. The sport of snowshoeing has a low barrier to entry as it is easy to learn and relatively safe and inexpensive. Snowshoe trails are compatible with most other summer natural surface trails. They typically follow the path of summer hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking trails. They can be on groomed, packed or have loose snow surfaces. Wider snowshoe trails are often shared with cross-country skiers. Signs indicating shared use trails should be used to help avoid conflicts and promote winter trail etiquette. Moving forward,

new trail development should consider this use and programs and promotion of the forest as a snowshoeing venue should be explored.

## Cross Country Skiing



Cross-country ski trails are winter snow trails that are typically wider than snowshoe trails. The trails can be groomed, packed, or loose snow. Although widths will vary, groomed trails should be wider to accommodate more skiers and faster speeds. Trails can be bi-directional or one way. One-way trails are typically found on groomed trails systems on trail sections with steep slopes and sharp curves. The terrain, or the slope of the trail, determines the ability-level rating of the trail. Moving forward, new trail development should consider this use and programs and promotion of the forest as a snowshoeing venue should be explored.

## Hiking/Running on ADA accessible paths



Universal access trails provide recreational opportunities for people of all ability levels allowing them to experience the natural environment and the many benefits it provides. While generally located on gentler terrain these trails should provide a variety of user experiences and take advantage of naturally occurring features along the route. Natural features such as changes in topography, views, waterways and other places of interest should be considered during layout. Additionally, ADA accessible paths are great candidates for interpretive and educational signage. These could be added near the parking area on Thompson Drive.

## Snowmobiling



Snowmobiling at Saxon Hill Town Forest is currently limited to the VAST trail that crosses through the property. The trail enters at the Saxon Hill Road parking lot and continues along Saxon Hill Road before swerving slightly to the east and connecting with River Road. While survey feedback and open house responses did not express a big desire to create new snowmobile trails in the forest, many expressed the desire to maintain current access. Additionally, the opportunity to utilize the Thompson Drive Parking Lot as a staging area was raised as desirable. The design for the permanent parking lot at Thompson Drive should ensure the lot is large enough to

accommodate multiple snowmobile trailers and to allow for “pull through” navigation. A short connector trail—or even just signage—to get snowmobilers from this parking lot to the existing VAST Trail would be needed. This would greatly enhance the desirability of Essex as a starting point for the VAST system and could help spur additional economic activity in the Town and Village.

## Birding/Wildlife Watching



Birding or wildlife watching is a recreational activity that is usually done with the naked eye or through binoculars. Wildlife viewing towers or observation platforms can create a formalized place for these activities and serve as a resting place for other users. As listening to bird and forest noises is a large component of wildlife watching, users attempt to find areas with little or no noise pollution.

Planning for observation zones should be done in conjunction with the development of pause places within the forest.

## Picnic Area



Picnic areas can be scaled up or down to blend in with the character of the Town Forest. In general, picnic areas include tables, a covered shelter, and waste facilities. Some may also incorporate small charcoal grills, restroom facilities, and dish washing areas. Most picnic areas are located within a short walk of main parking areas. Placing such a structure near the parking areas would help maintain the character

and naturalness of the forest while also adding this amenity to the site.

## Wildplay or Natural Playground

Wildplay or natural playgrounds use natural landscapes, vegetation, and materials to create an interactive environment for play and exploration. Natural playgrounds can include boulders, rock structures, dirt, sand, wooden fences, and natural water features.

As Saxon Hill is a town-owned property, certain safety standards must be met so the scale and type of wildplay should be considered. This might include play features made of natural materials or that utilize natural features that are still able to meet playground safety inspection standards such as mazes, embankment slides, gardens, sticks and natural materials for construction play, and waterplay.



## Kids Camps



Trail and forest activities can provide attractive options for local youth and nearby summer camps. Hiking and mountain biking trails, and nature-focused venues can provide outdoor education opportunities and a balanced range of summer camp activities. The forest and its offerings should be promoted to local camps and programs, as well as considered for inclusion in the Town and Village recreation programming.

## Skills Camps



These may include bike, trail running, or other fitness-oriented programs. Guided nature walks, photography, orienteering courses, mountain biking lessons, and other activities can further complement the range of current uses and especially engage an active, local demographic. Winter-oriented skills may be the focus for additional camp programming during the winter months.

## New Amenities or Facilities



When asked what new facilities or amenities people would like to see at Saxon Hill Town Forest, many responses included facilities that had already been asked about, indicating their high level of importance. In general, people wished to see amenities that better served the existing users without heavily increasing built infrastructure at the site. Amenities and facilities included were restrooms, water fountains, changing facilities, covered picnic shelter, and a bike repair/bike wash station.



Restrooms facilities at Saxon Hill Town Forest are currently limited to two portalets at the Thompson drive parking lot. A need for more permanent restroom facilities was cited several times in the survey and open-house responses. In addition to restrooms, respondents also wanted a changing facility and water fountains. These three amenities are often found within the same facility. A bike wash station could also be incorporated into the facility if there is adequate drainage. There are sewer and electrical connections available if more formal restroom facility is pursued. However, composting toilets within a sheltered structure could serve as a restroom and changing facility if connecting to the sewer is not a preferred option.



Bike repair stations typically include a bike stand, an air pump, and a small set of tools for minor fixes and last-minute adjustments. As mountain bikes often accumulate dirt during the ride, bike wash stations help get most of the dirt and debris. A bike wash station can look similar to the bike repair station but with different tools and attachments to help with cleaning. Attachments include a hose and a variety of brushes for detailed cleaning.

## 6. Appendix A: Survey and Public Open House Results



## **OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY SUMMARY**

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The Open House and Survey are integral parts of the overall public engagement process for the Saxon Hill Management Plan. This document presents the results of both public engagement methods to inform the management plan.

The survey asked the same questions as the open house, to expand participation beyond those who were able to attend the Open House. Both public engagement methods were primarily focused on understanding the community vision related to the Town Forest, the management balance of the forest, the natural resources present on the site, and future activities in the Town Forest. The open house results are presented in the photos of the public engagement “boards” completed by the community while the survey results are presented in tables of the combined survey responses. Key findings are reflective of both inputs, and areas of alignment and divergence are highlighted and analyzed.

As the open house and survey are only one part of the overall community input into the plan, these results should be considered descriptive of community sentiments rather than prescriptive. While these results should help point the way and direct the development of the plan, they must be measured alongside other community and Town inputs and should not be considered conclusive of the sentiments of everyone in the community.

### **OPEN HOUSE**

An Open House for the Saxon Hill Forest was held at Fit2Excel in Essex on July 16, 2019. The meeting was a drop-in anytime, open house format with questions about an overall vision for the town forest; the balance of recreation, education, conservation/natural resources, and forest products; the natural resources present on the site; and future activities in the forest. Attendees wrote responses on boards, completed dot exercises, and drew their ideas and knowledge on maps. Members of the project team were available for one-on-one chats with attendees, and a general comment box was provided for open-ended feedback. Background/baseline information about the project, the community, and the forest, was also provided. 45 people signed in and an estimated 80 people were in attendance.

### **SURVEY**

An online survey was launched at the Open House on July 16, 2019 and remained open through July 28, 2019. The community was made aware of the survey through a variety of methods including flyers distributed around town, press-releases and news articles, and email blasts and social media posts. In total, the survey received 374 responses.

# RESULTS

## Overall Vision

Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked: "What word or phrase best describes your existing experience with Saxon Hill?" and "What word or phrase best describes your desired future experience with Saxon Hill?"

## Open House

### Current Use and Future Vision

Please write your responses in the boxes below

What word or phrase best describes your **existing** experience with Saxon Hill?

MTB DU-TAW BIKERS  
 Mountain Biking, walking, Nordic Skiing  
 RUNNING, WALKING, XC Skiing  
 TRAIL RUN W/ OUR DOGS (SUMMER + WINTER)  
 MT. BIKE (SUMMER + WINTER)  
 LADY SLIPPER ADMIRATION (UNIQUE FLORA HERE)  
 MTN. biking, skiing  
 Multi-use, all ages (MTB, Walking, snowshoe, dogs)  
 Mtn biking, hiking, skiing...  
 SNOWMOBILING ON VAST TRAILS  
 bikes + sled love like I was a kid!  
 getting to be crowded  
 MTB  
 Biking?  
 H. King w/ Dogs - a little crowded  
 Dog swim in pond  
 Snowshoeing  
 X country skiing  
 DIVERSITY OF THE FOREST  
 (trees & animals)  
 MTN BIKE W/ DOGS, ALL AGES + NORDIC SKI, FAT BIKING  
 DESTINATION - MT. BIKE + SKI

ski, bike, run, snowshoe  
 A mixed Suburban, rural and rural within use  
 and mountain bike trail.  
 MTB  
 Single Track (MTB)  
 Great Resource!  
 mountain biking, running, hiking  
 Mountain Bike!  
 SNOWMOBILING ON CORRIDOR TRAIL 7 WHICH COLLECTS WILSON TO ESSEX ON THE VAST TRAIL SYSTEM  
 Saxon Hill Riders, Inc. in 1972  
 SNOWMOBILING ON CORRIDOR TRAIL 2 WHICH COLLECTS ESSEX TO POINTS EAST. JERICHO & LICHMOND, WATERBURY  
 Snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing  
 mtn ride of the week  
 Mountain Biking!  
 MTB  
 Trails use  
 NATURE WATCHING  
 HONEY SUGARSH, FAT BIKING, MOUNTAIN BIKE  
 Biking & hiking multiple times/week

What word or phrase best describes your **desired future** experience with Saxon Hill?

NO GUNFIRE!! - A safe experience - no noise pollution  
 FOR ONE SUSTAINABLE MTB TRAILS ✓  
 SAFETY + FREE OF GUNFIRE ✓  
 Continue usage - safe, forgotten  
 Continued trail usage w/ responsible development ✓  
 Expanded trail network (i.e. FOTW) ✓  
 LEAVE IT ALONE and build more industrial parks elsewhere...? D to A GREAT!  
 MTB trails  
 No major changes needed  
 More bike trails, trail, and  
 No more human feces  
 No more deer carcasses left  
 Diverse & Resilient Forest  
 Snowmobiling  
 Hiking trails + XC ski trails. No development (big buildings or structures)  
 Buy more land please ✓  
 MORE TRAILS, CONCENTRATED DEVELOPMENT  
 A nice reverse plan for future trail maintenance + development, including better signage of trailway lines, re-routing of popular trails that cross main roads and w/o permission. See where bridges are fix  
 AVOIDING MTB TRAILS - TOWN JUMP + GET TO SUMMIT  
 MTB Trails need some work. Some grading.  
 Snowmobiling, skiing + snowshoeing  
 More trails, less development.

Keep it awesome! ✓  
 Share/MTB use. Let hikers be hikers, the only for other things. Let people make their own choices on separate trails. Bikes hikers would be great. Don't mix all trails from  
 STOP RECREATIONAL DEGRADATION! LEAVE AS MUCH AS A RECREATION FOREST ACTIVITIES.  
 MAINTAIN TRADITIONAL USE  
 SNOWMOBILING, SNOWMOBILE TRAIL GROOMING FOR SKIERS + VAST MEMBERS  
 More mountaineering/skiing!  
 Preserve the land. Integrate development - no more clear-cutting  
 PUBLIC TRAIL COMPONENT

# Saxon Hill Town Forest

Essex, Vermont  
 With assistance from  
**SE GROUP**

Existing



See verbatim responses in Appendix A.

Survey respondents and open house attendees both focused on mountain biking as their primary existing experience at the forest. Many people also brought up other activities they do in the forest (snowmobiling, fat biking, hiking, dog walking) and the ease of access.



## Open House

### What should be the management focus for Saxon Hill Forest?

The legal settlement and acquisition of Saxon Hill by the Town has set aside the land as a Town Forest "for conservation and recreation purposes." However, Town Forests can be managed to provide a wide range of activities and community values. Four common use areas include Recreation, Education & Land Use Demonstration Projects, Natural Resources & Habitat, and Timber & Forest Products. While most publicly accessible forests provide some measure of all four types of uses, they tend to "lean" in one management direction or another.

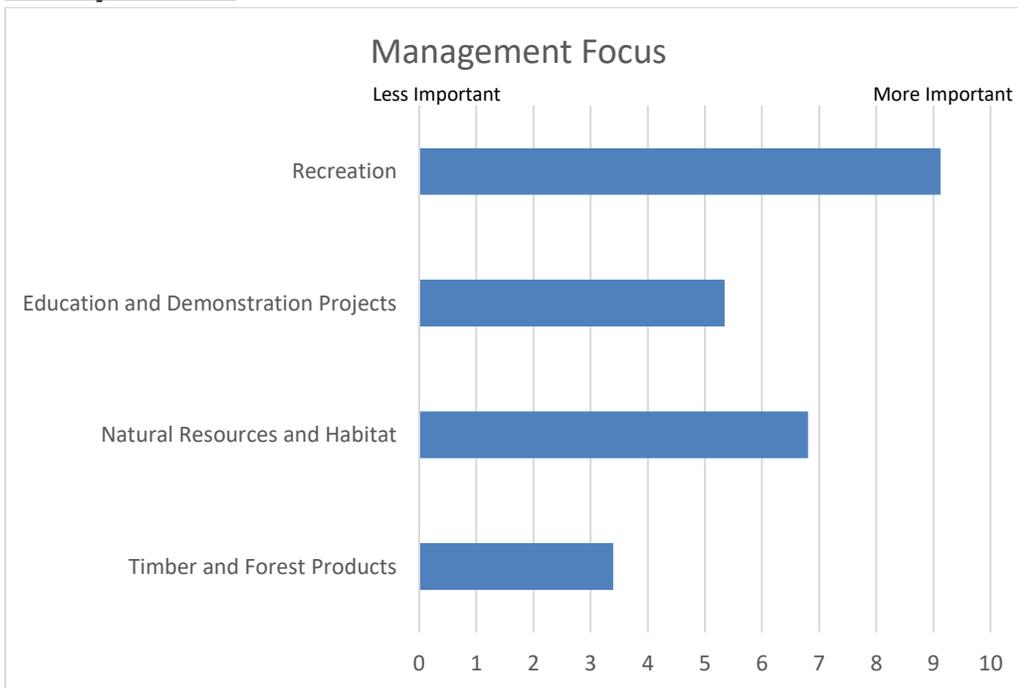
Where do you think the management focus should fall for the Saxon Hill Forest? Should it lean towards Recreation, Education, Timber & Forest Products, or Natural Resources & Habitat? Place a dot on the line for each use area for where you think the management focus should fall.

**Saxon Hill Town Forest**

Add One Dot Per Topic!

Essex, Vermont  
SE GROUP

## Survey Results



Both survey respondents and open house attendees prioritized recreation. Nearly all attendees and respondents said recreation should be more important. Both groups felt natural resources and habitat should also be more important, with education and demonstration projects equally important. Timber and forest products were considered less important by most attendees and respondents.



- Bird nesting areas and other wildlife habitat
- Geologic formations

### **Present Wildlife**

Survey respondents and open house attendees identified the following wildlife present in the forest:

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| • Deer        | • Snakes              |
| • Birds       | • Partridge           |
| • Chipmunks   | • Fox                 |
| • Squirrels   | • Rabbit              |
| • Turkeys     | • Raccoon             |
| • Turtles     | • Mice                |
| • Beaver      | • Voles               |
| • Geese       | • Waterfowl           |
| • Newts       | • Grouse              |
| • Frogs       | • Fisher cats         |
| • Owls        | • Pilated woodpeckers |
| • Black bears | • Skunks              |
| • Porcupines  | • Bobcat              |
| • Coyotes     | • Groundhogs          |

### **Natural Resource Protection Concerns**

Survey respondents and open house attendees identified the following human activities that may conflict with the resources present:

- Mountain biking, especially if not balanced with ecological needs
- Development
- Building warehouses or other construction in the immediate vicinity
- Logging
- Motorized summer uses
- Existing human activities
- Increased human use
- Hunting or not hunting
- Sand extraction

## Destination and Fees

### Destination-Serving

### Saxon Hill and the Economics of Trails

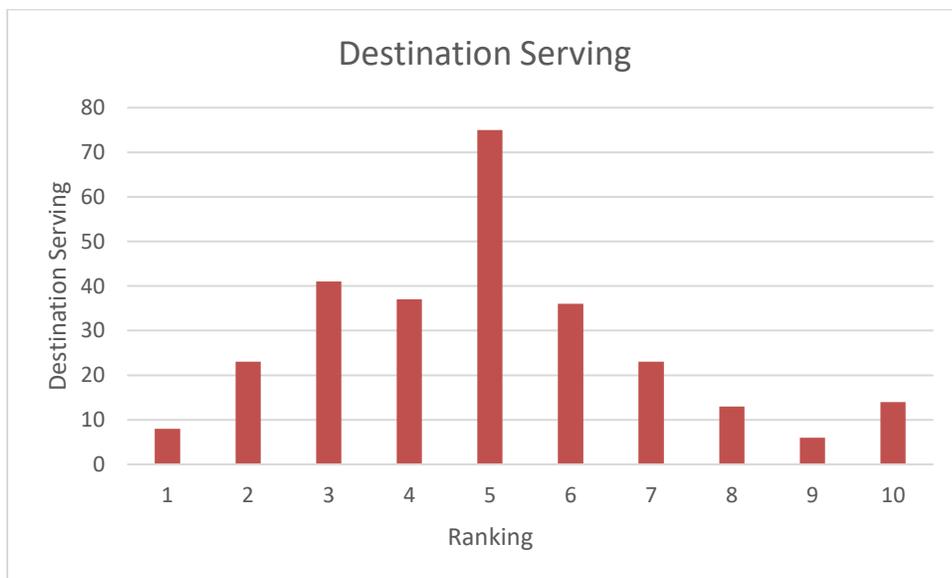
42% of Vermont adults walk for recreation  
34% hike for recreation  
20% bike for recreation

80% of Americans consider having sidewalks and places to take a walk one of their top priorities when deciding where they would like to live.

Saxon Hill has historically been visited by a broad population of local and regional users. The purpose-built trails attract mountain bikers from throughout the region and locals often to bike, walk, run, cross country ski, and simply enjoy nature. Current recreation activities at Saxon Hill are mainly trail-based, and services are somewhat limited. Developing a management plan requires envisioning what new amenities and services Saxon Hill may provide— the quality of which can define who the users might be. High quality amenities and services can attract broad usership and encourage tourist spending but often necessitate greater ongoing maintenance and upkeep costs and may require charging user fees. Future management decisions will play an instrumental role in determining how destination oriented the Town Forest will be. Please indicate where you think Saxon Hill Town Forest should fall on this spectrum.

How destination serving should Saxon Hill Town Forest be?

Local Serving (Neighborhood Park)      In-Between      Destination Serving (Kingdom Trails)



Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked how destination-oriented the forest should be, on a spectrum from a neighborhood park to Kingdom trails. Most open house attendees and survey respondents felt the forest should be right in the middle.

### Fees

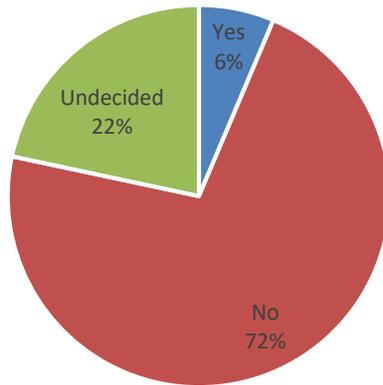
Do you think there should be a fee at Saxon Hill? Place a dot in box that corresponds to your answer.

No      Undecided      Yes

Who do you think should pay a fee? Place a dot for all that apply.

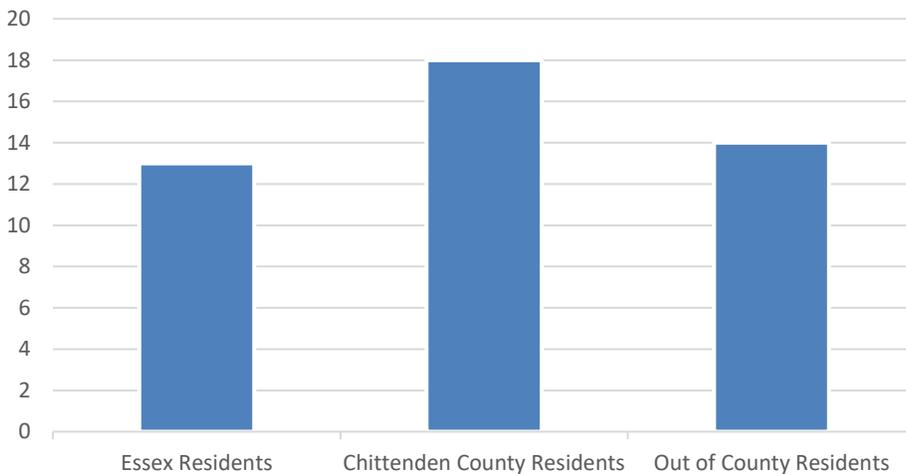
Essex Residents      Chittenden County Residents      Out of County Residents      No/Yes/Undecided

### Should there be a fee at Saxon Hill?



Most open house attendees and survey respondents did not think there should be a fee undecided at Saxon Hill. Only 3% of open house attendees and 6% of survey respondents were supportive.

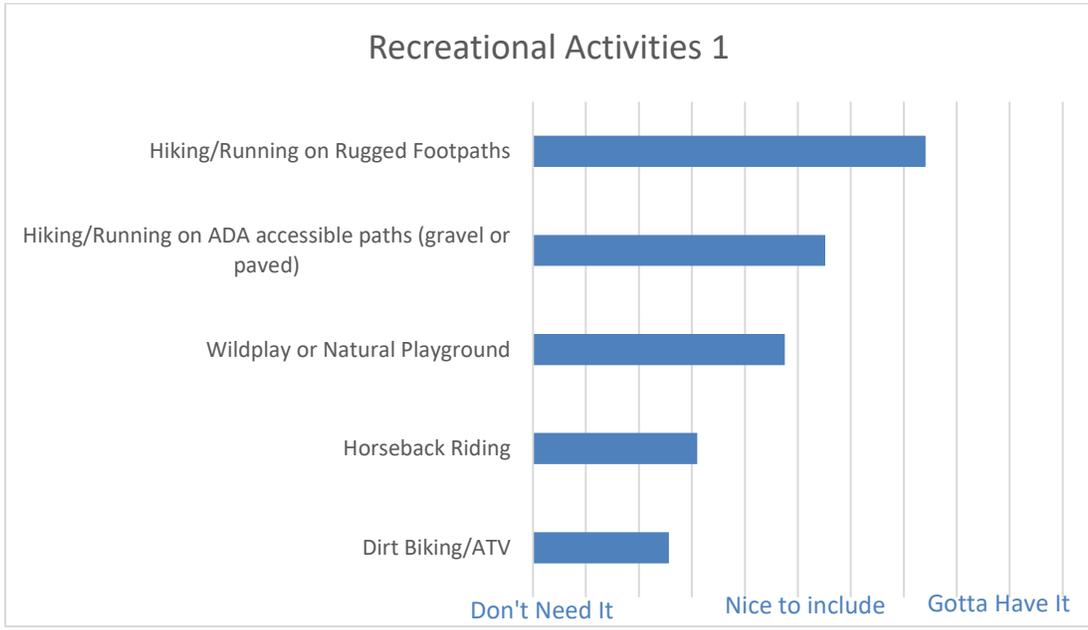
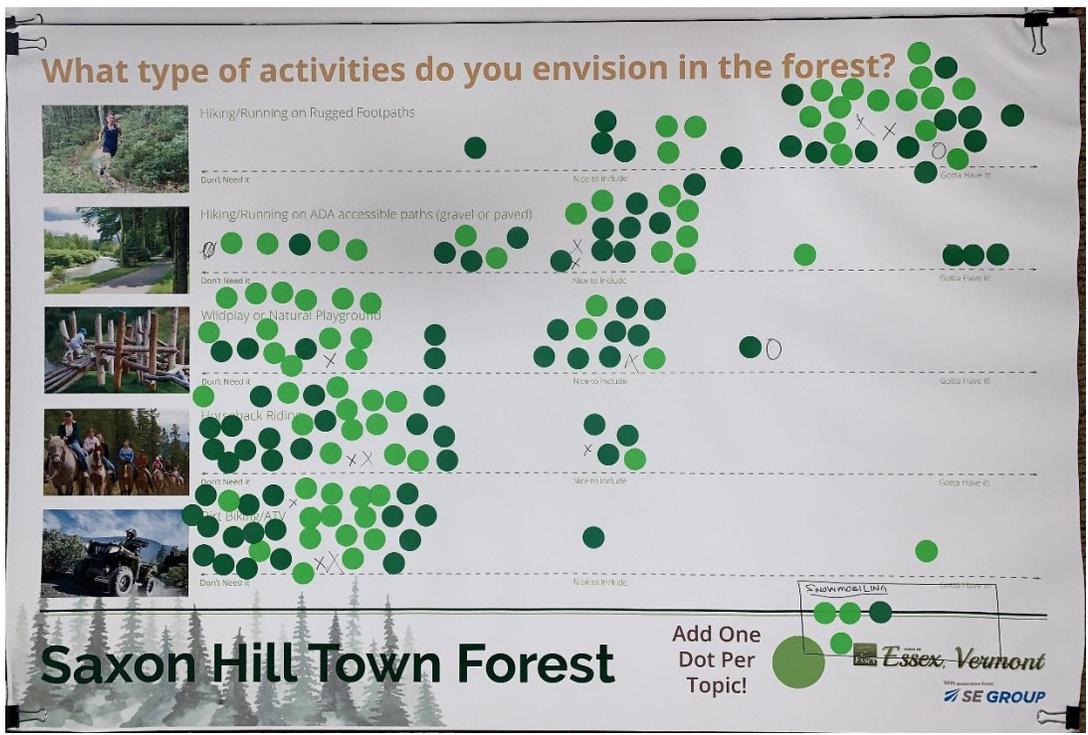
### Who should a fee apply to?



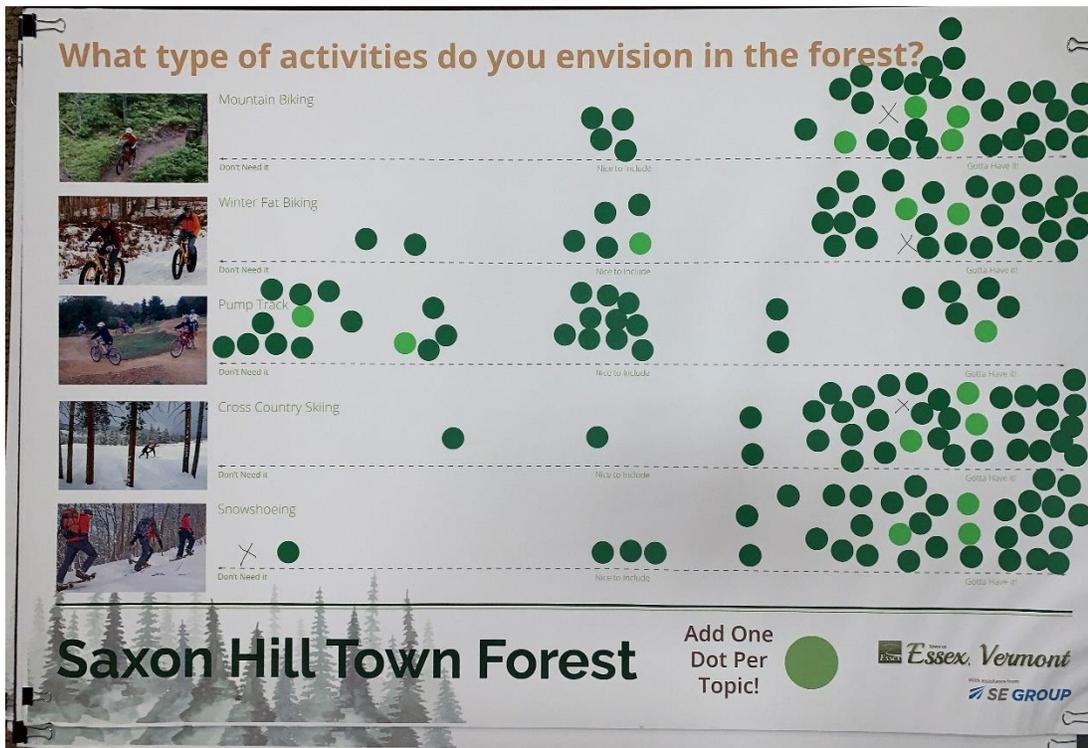
Open house attendees who were open to the idea of a fee felt that only county or out-of-county visitors would have to pay, while survey respondents were more open to the idea that Essex residents would pay.

### Recreation Activities

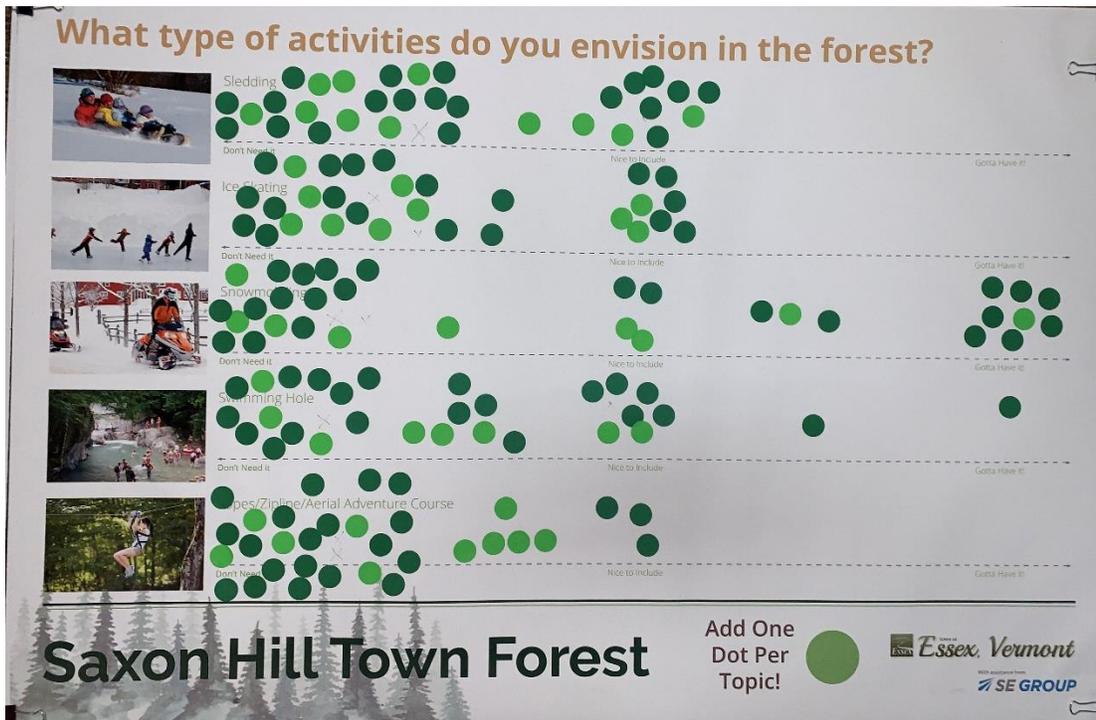
Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked about the recreation activities they envisioned in Saxon Hill by indicating their feelings about a number of activities on a spectrum from “Don’t need it” to “Nice to include” to “Gotta have it.”



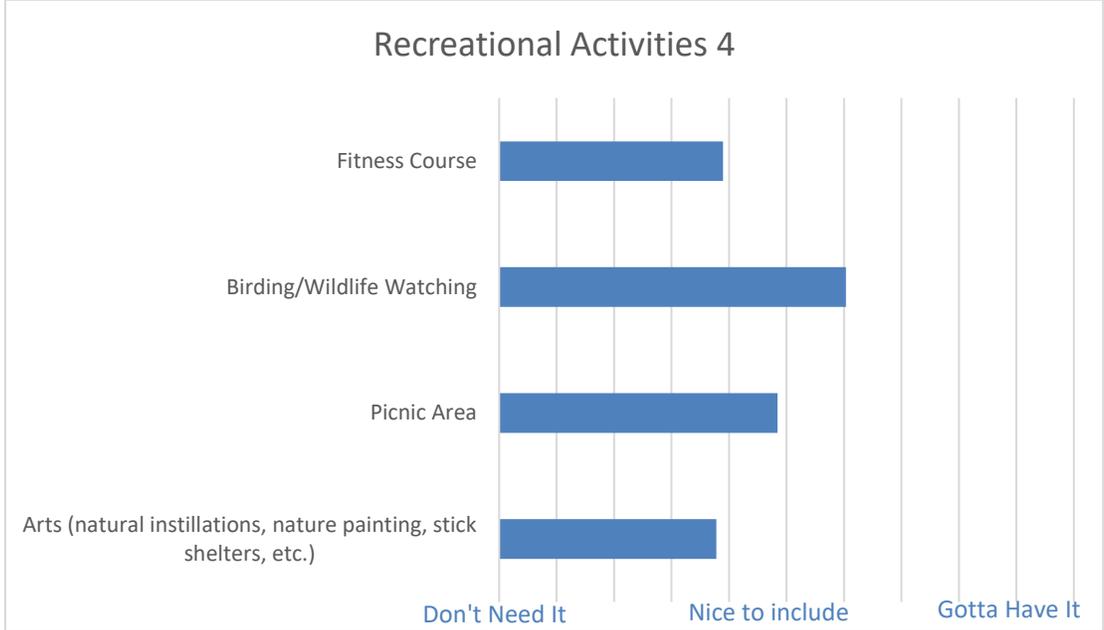
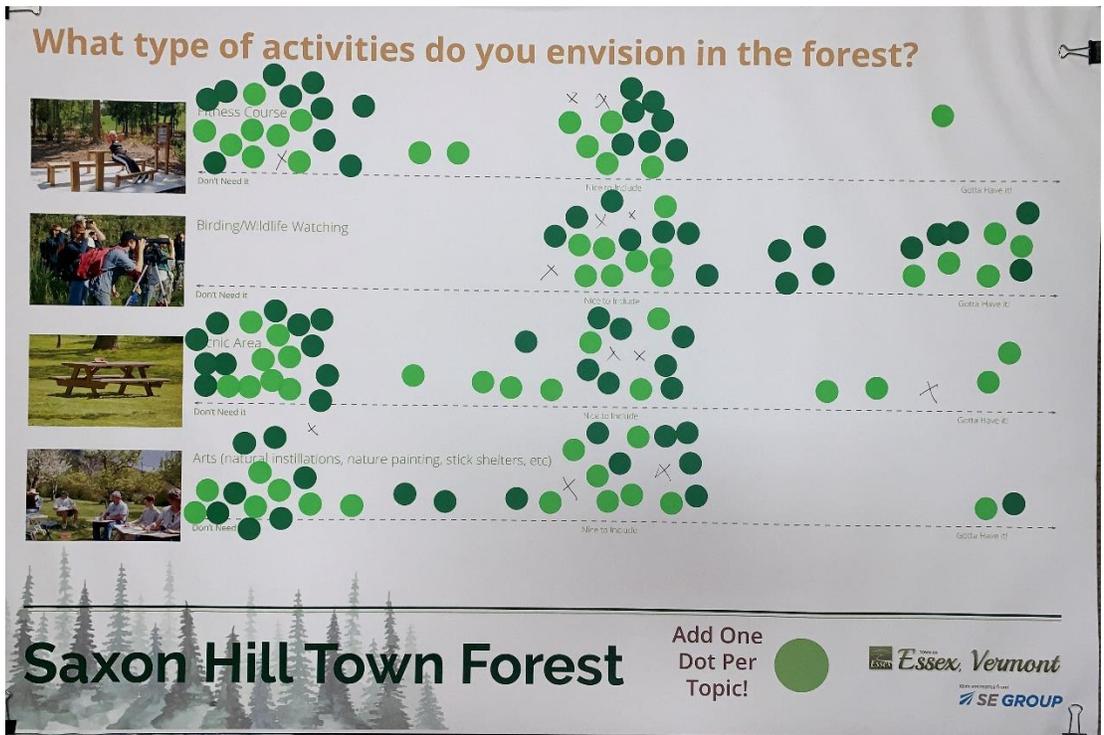
Open house attendees and survey respondents were very supportive of hiking/running on rugged footpaths and felt that hiking/running on ADA accessible paths would be nice to include. Both open house attendees and survey respondents were less interested in the other potential activities. Some people felt that wildplay or natural playground was a nice to include, but no one felt strongly. Neither group showed much support for horseback riding or dirt biking/ATVs.



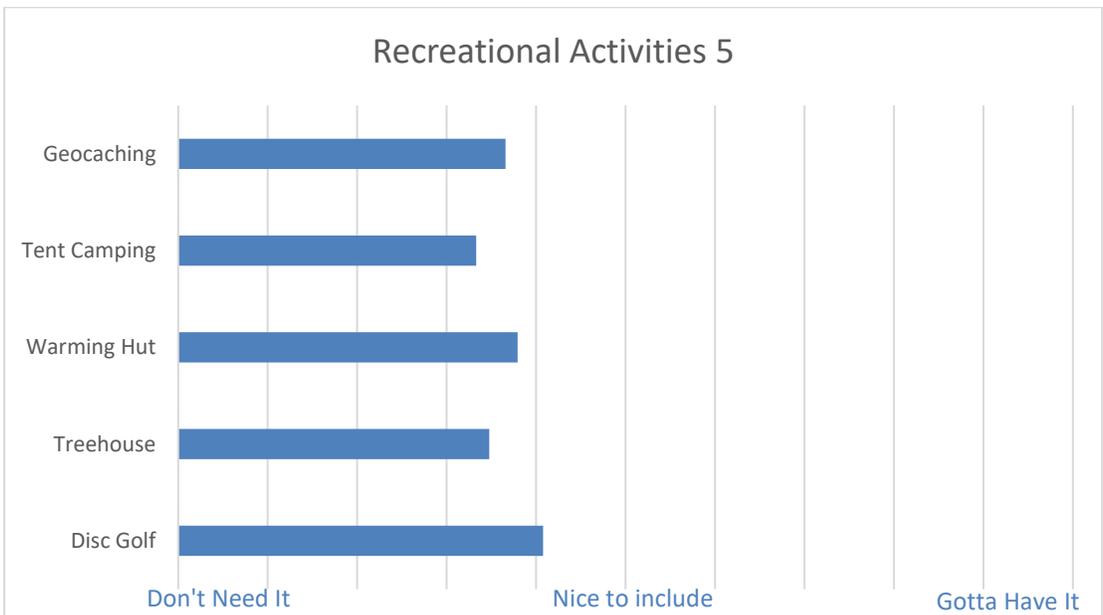
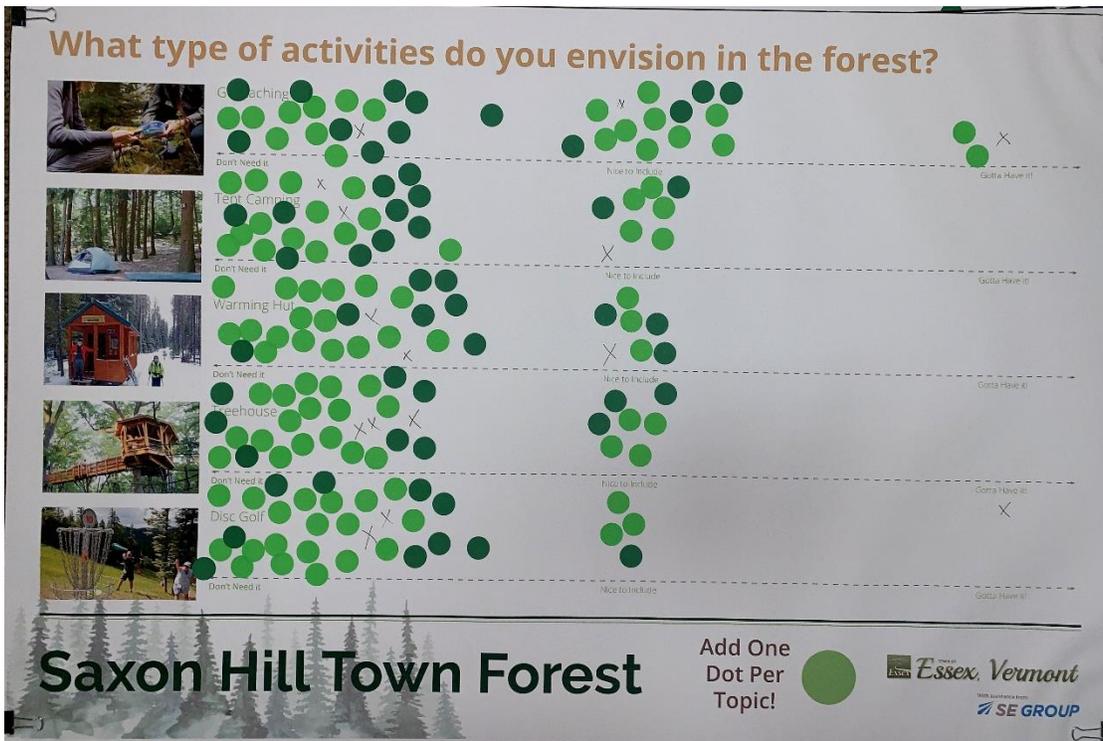
There was a strong degree of support for most of these activities from both survey respondents and open house attendees. Nearly all open house attendees placed their dot on gotta have it! for mountain biking, winter fat biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. Survey respondents expressed slightly less support for cross country skiing and snowshoeing but were generally enthusiastic. Open house attendees were fairly divided on a pump track, while survey respondents leaned towards gotta have it!.



Both open house attendees and survey respondents were less enthusiastic about these activities, with most responses between don't need it and nice to include. Survey respondents, on average, felt that sledding and a swimming hole were nice to include, while open house attendees were less supportive. Some respondents and attendees were enthusiastic about snowmobiling, but the majority felt the forest didn't need it. On ice skating and a ropes/zipline aerial adventure course, most respondents and attendees showed limited interest.



Survey respondents and open house attendees were more neutral about these activities. On a fitness course, picnic area, and arts, the respondents leaned towards don't need it. Both groups leaned towards gotta have it on birding/wildlife watching. Survey respondents were slightly more interested in a picnic area than open house attendees.



Open house attendees showed very little enthusiasm for these activities. Survey respondents were slightly more interested and leaned towards nice to include on most activities. Amongst the open house attendees, there was slightly more support for geocaching, but only a few attendees went beyond nice to include.

# Dog Walking

**What type of activities do you envision in the forest?**

Dog Walking

Don't Need It      Nice to include      Gotta Have It

For the next three questions, please put a tick mark in the box that corresponds to your answer.

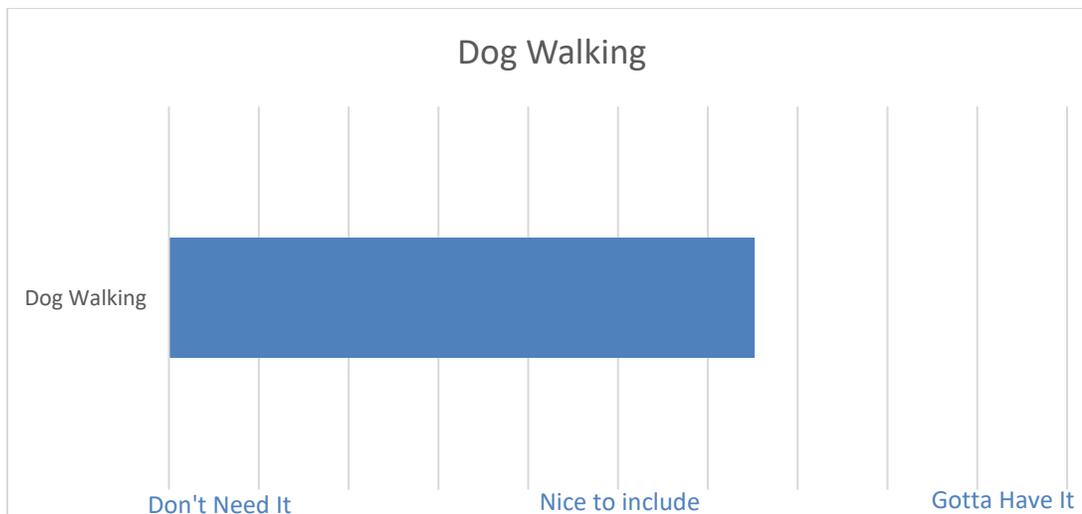
How often do you bring your dog to Saxon Hill?			When you bring your dog, are they on leash?			Do you think there should be a leash requirement at Saxon Hill?		
Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Yes	During Some Hours	No

**Saxon Hill Town Forest**

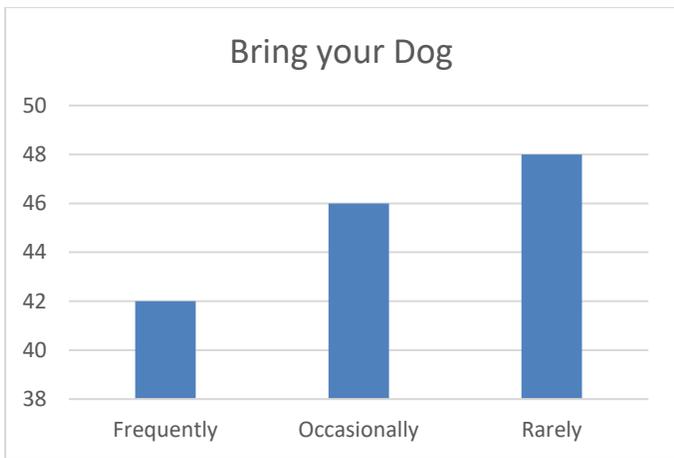
Add One Dot Per Topic!

Essex, Vermont

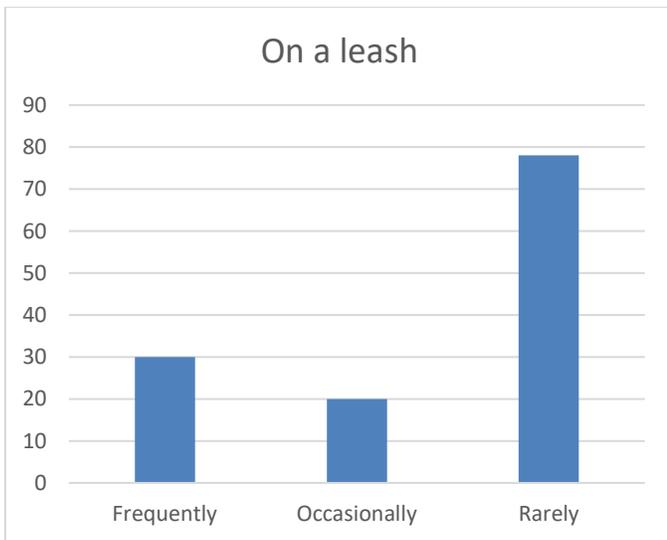
SE GROUP



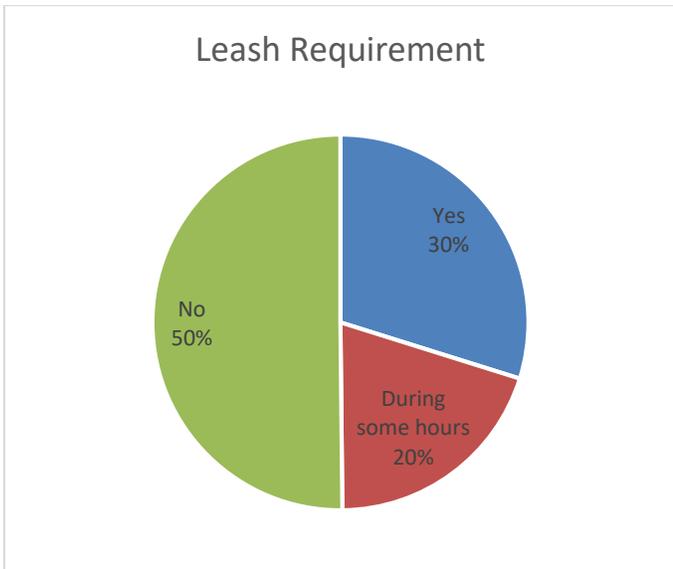
Survey respondents were generally supportive of dog walking in the forest, while open house attendees were very divided.



The survey respondents and open house attendees showed different practices around dogs in the forest. Of open house attendees, there was an even split between those who bring their dog to the park frequently and rarely. Of survey respondents, most rarely bring their dog to the forest.



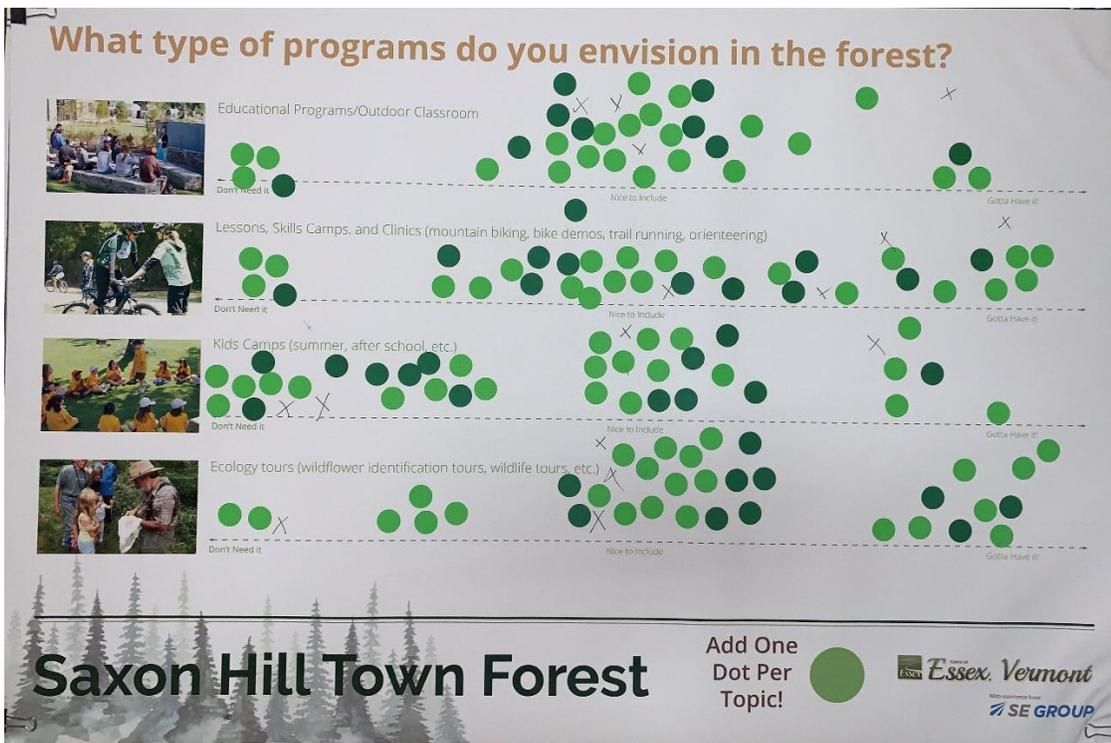
Of open house attendees, many stated they keep their dog on a leash frequently and many stated they do so rarely. Of survey respondents, the vast majority keep their dog on a leash rarely.

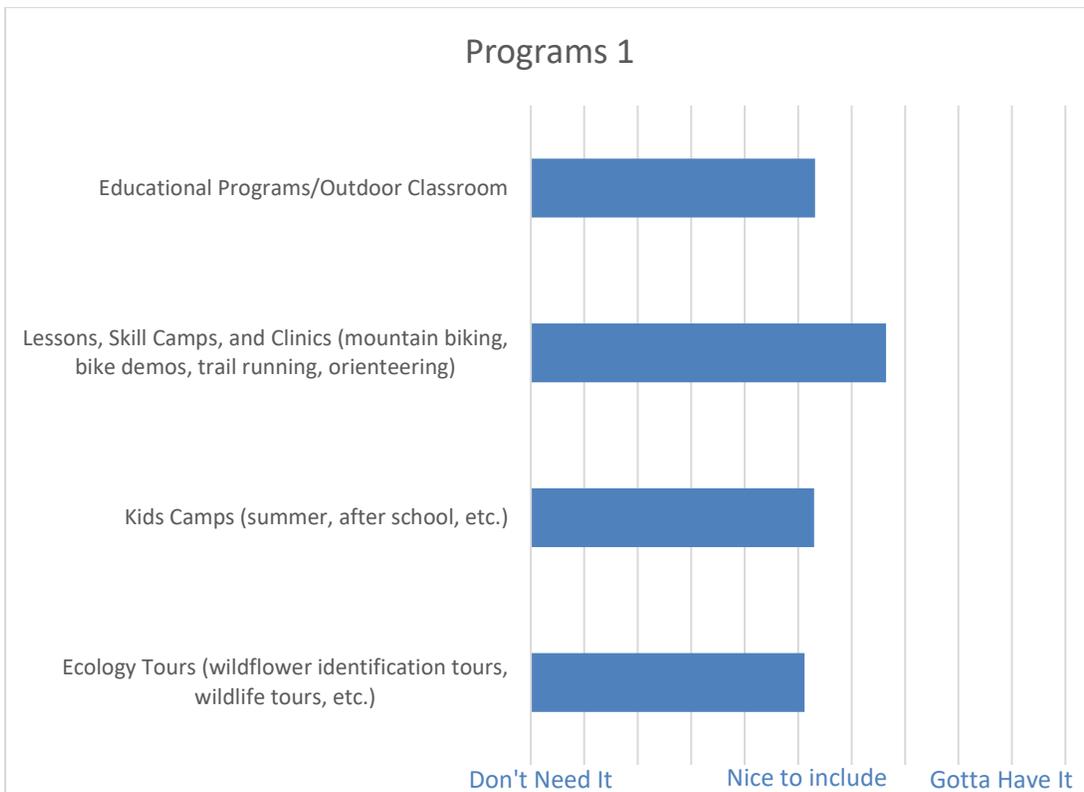


Open house attendees were evenly divided between supporting no leash requirement, a leash requirement during some hours, and a leash requirement. In contrast, about half of survey respondents felt there should not be a leash law, with a small percentage in support of some level of leash requirement.

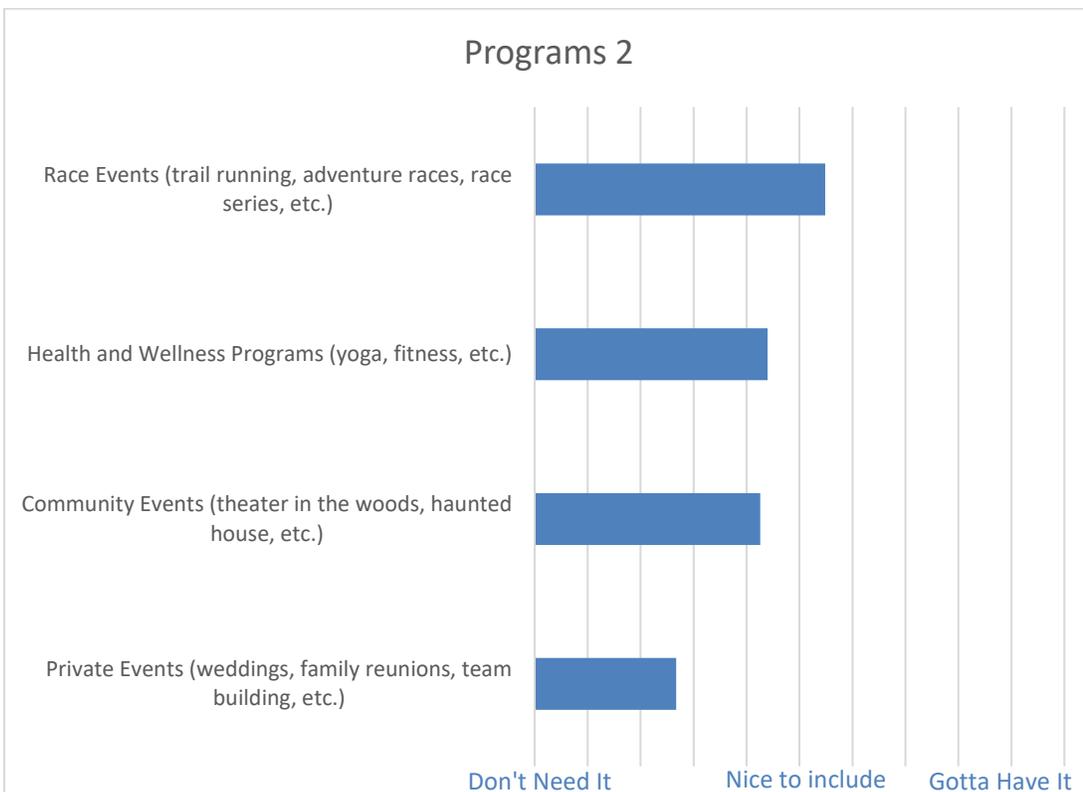
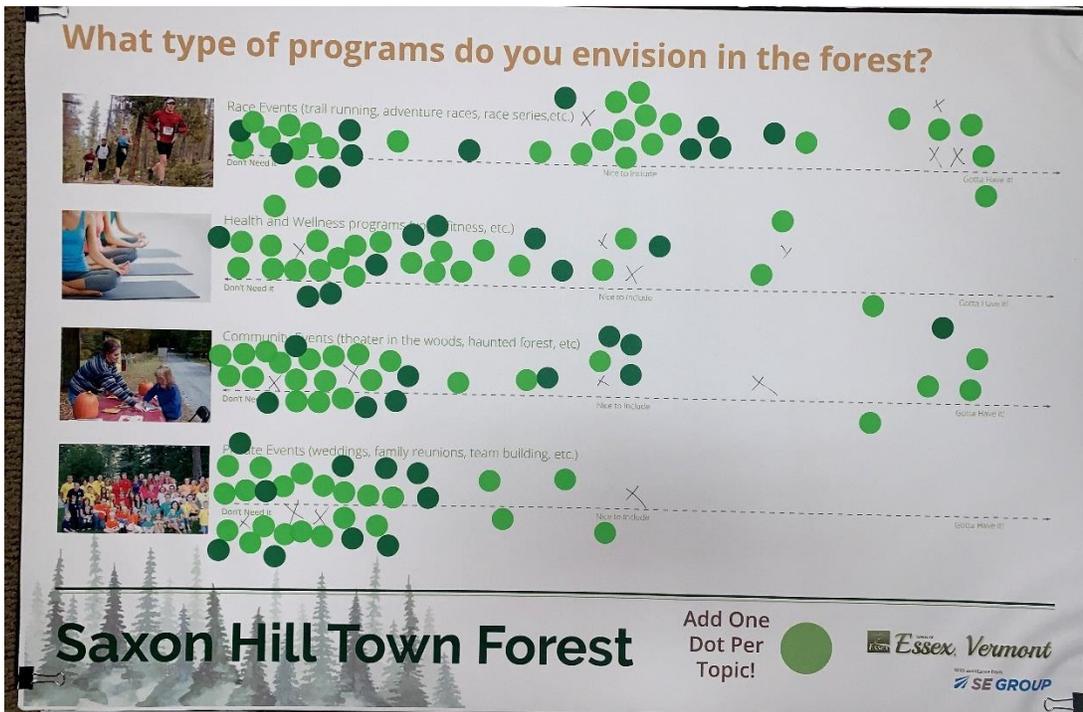
### Programs

Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked about the recreation programs they envisioned in Saxon Hill by indicating their feelings about a number of programs on a spectrum from “Don’t need it” to “Nice to include” to “Gotta have it.”





Both open house attendees and survey respondents were relatively neutral on these programs. Open house attendees were less positive about kids camps and more interested in lessons, skills camps, and clinics and ecology tours. Survey respondents showed slightly more interest in lessons, skills camps, and clinics than the other program types, where the responses averaged out to nice to include.



Survey respondents and open house attendees were somewhat interested in race events, but otherwise did not show much interest in the other programs listed here. Survey respondents were more enthusiastic overall, as they leaned towards nice to include on health and wellness programs and community events, while open house attendees largely felt those were “don’t need it.” Neither group expressed interest in holding private events in the forest.

## Additional Activities, Programs, and Events

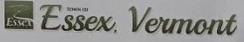
Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked what additional activities, programs, and events they would be interested in.

### Other Activities, Programs, and Events

Please write your ideas in the boxes below

What new activity or facility would you like to see added at Saxon Hill Town Forest?	What new programs would you like to see added at Saxon Hill Town Forest?	What new events would you like to see take place at Saxon Hill Town Forest?
<p>Wildflower, Wildlife, Bird, Tree Identification, perhaps Plant parties &amp; etc. ✓</p> <p>More public parking w/ picnic tables</p> <p>Coffee Shop / Brunch place for after riding/racing</p> <p>✓ WEBSITE w/ TRAIL CONDITIONS, V-FORMS, POG ETIQUETTE, ETC</p> <p>TRAIL MAINTENANCE</p> <p>Wildflower, birds</p> <p>I like the website idea above - trail conditions, etc.</p> <p>FRIENDS OF THE WHEEL CLUBHOUSE AT THAT HOUSE AT THE END OF SAXON HILL ROAD. THERE IS CONSTANT CONFLICT THERE. THE BIKE CLUB SHOULD TRY IT.</p> <p>Restrooms in the winter</p> <p>DEDICATED PARKING FOR SNOWMOBILE TRUCKS &amp; TRAILERS THAT WILL NOT COMPETE WITH OTHER ACTIVITY PARKING.</p> <p>INTERACTIVE SIGNS - HISTORY - HUMAN + NATURAL ESTABLISHMENT NETWORK PRESENT TO VISITORS?</p> <p>Winter bathroom/warming hut in new lot</p>	<p>Free, introductory mountain biking sessions for residents ✓</p>	<p>Trail running races</p> <p>Trail running</p> <p>X-country ski clinics ✓</p> <p>bicycling - structured ✓</p>

# Saxon Hill Town Forest



With assistance from



### Activities

Survey respondents and open house attendees brought up the following additional activities and facilities multiple times:

- Restrooms
- Additional mountain bike trails
- Parking
- Water fountain
- Trail signage
- Outdoor and indoor shooting range
- Covered shelter with picnic tables
- Bike repair/bike wash station

Many survey respondents stated a desire for no additional development on the forest. The full list of responses is included in Appendix B.

## **Programs**

Survey respondents and open house attendees brought up the following additional programs multiple times:

- Group rides
- Kids mountain biking camps and clinics
- Wilderness skills education
- Beginner mountain biking workshops
- Hunter education

Many survey respondents stated a desire for no additional programs on the forest. The full list of responses is included in Appendix B.

## **Events**

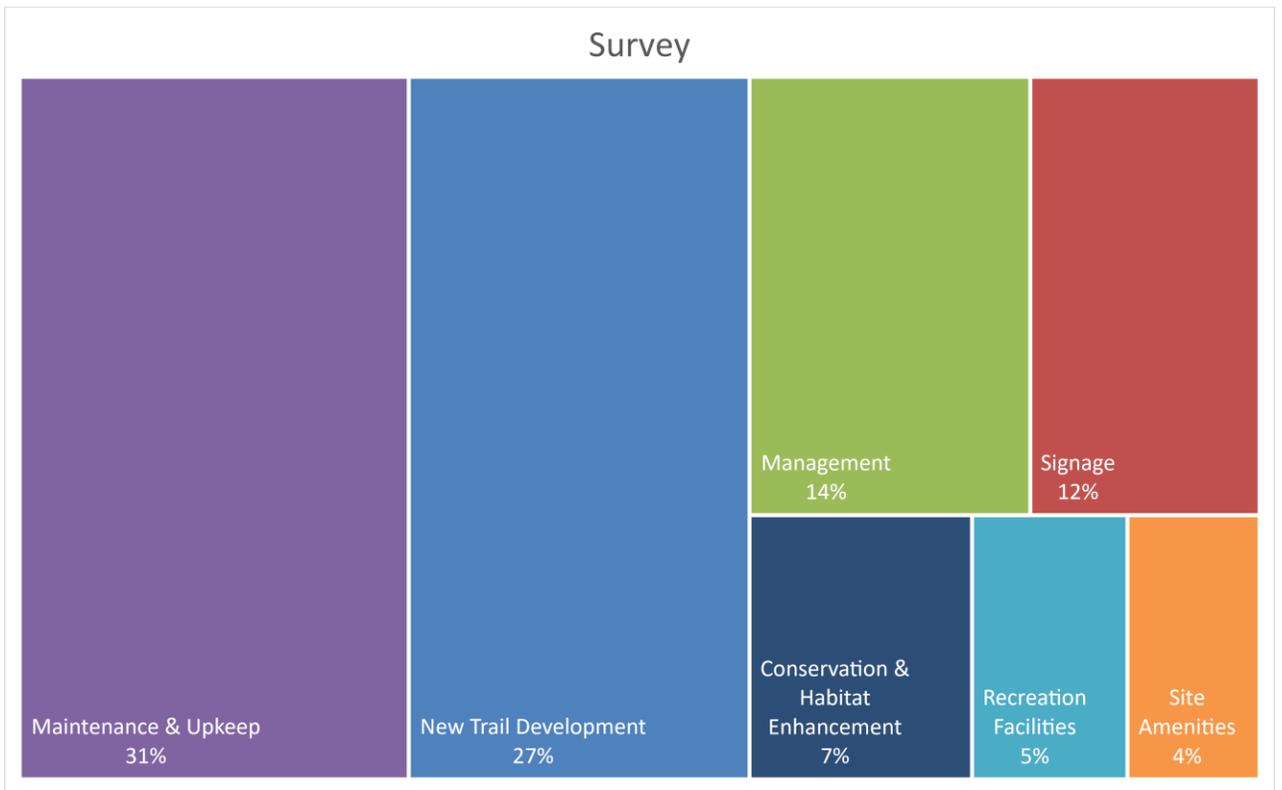
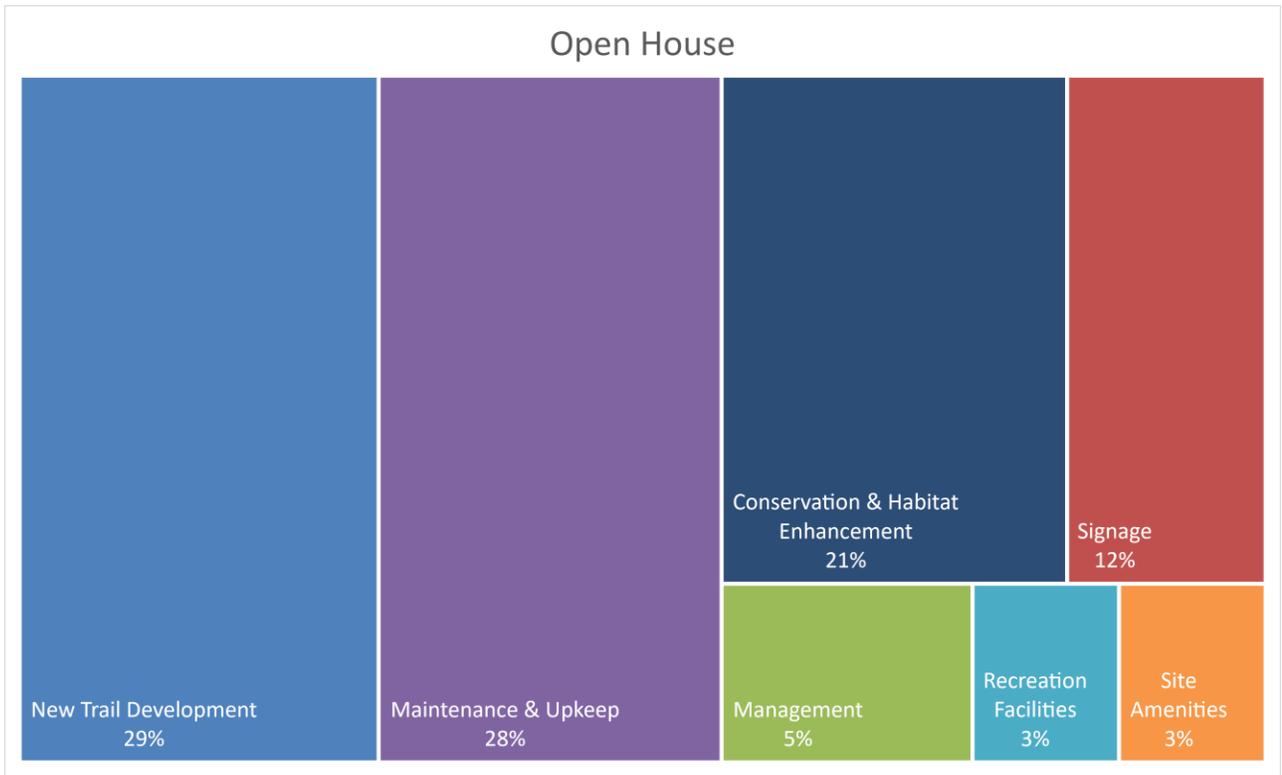
Survey respondents and open house attendees brought up the following additional events multiple times:

- Gear demos
- Races series (trail running and mountain biking)
- Volunteer maintenance days
- Haunted forest
- Food and outdoor festivals

Many survey respondents were in favor of few or no new or large events. The full list of responses is included in Appendix B.

## **Dollar Exercise**

Survey respondents and open house attendees were asked to complete the following exercise: given \$100 to allocate among various forest expense categories, how would you spend it? The following charts show how each group allocated their money.



Both open house attendees and survey respondents felt that maintenance and upkeep and trail development were the most important expense categories. Survey respondents allocated slightly more money towards maintenance and upkeep, and open house attendees allocated slightly more to new

trail development but both groups allocated about 30% of funds to each and 60% overall between the two categories. The next three most important categories were management, signage, and conservation and habitat enhancement, although the degree of allocation varied. Neither group felt it was important to allocate significant funds to recreation facilities or site amenities.

### **Additional Comments**

Respondents were asked to share any additional comments they had. The following major themes emerged:

- Saxon Hill as fantastic place for beginner and intermediate mountain biking
- Look to expand the trail system
- Avoid fees as possible
- Need for additional investment (maybe from fees or additional town investment)
- Keep it natural
- Look for opportunities to disperse users
- The Fellowship of the Wheel does great work maintaining the trails. They should not have to pay additional fees.
- Great community asset that supports the town economy
- Good the way it is
- Add signage and better maps
- Opposed to leash laws

For a full list of responses, see Appendix C.

## APPENDIX A

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### EXISTING EXPERIENCE

Survey responses to existing experience question in survey:

- Mountain biking
- Needs better parking but bike trails are some of the best
- Mountain biking
- Amazingly fun. Love the trails
- Fun
- Awesome introduction to mountain biking
- mountain biking
- Great multi-use trails
- Fun
- Fun and varied mountain bike trails great for all levels of experience
- Accessible mountain biking!
- Mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- Busy/Technical
- Pleasurable
- Great
- 23 years of biking, hiking, enjoying the outdoors and friends
- peaceful, fun
- Mountain biking
- Fun quick ride
- Great trail riding
- Awesome
- Flowy
- Mountain Biking
- mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- go to location for mtn biking
- Community bike
- Great mix of mountain bike terrain
- Mountain biking
- Green space to develop MTB skills close to home
- Mountain Biking
- fun but dated
- Glad I finally found it after living near it for 12 years
- Recreation/stress management in the form of mountain biking
- Great Mtn Biking spot!
- exciting
- Convenient
- Grew up in the neighborhood
- Mountain biking
- Regular visitor for great mountain biking
- Crowded
- Mountain biking
- I love riding my mountain bike in the woods around Saxon Hill.
- Fantastic mountain biking
- Great
- Well maintained
- Mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- Biking
- great mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- excellent mtn biking
- Closest, most convenient riding.
- Thrilled to discover such a beautiful place to run and bike, right in my town.
- Mountain Biking

- Treasured Mountain Biking Area With Untapped Potential
- mountain biking
- Good mountain biking trails
- Easy going
- Very good trail system
- None existent
- no experience
- minimal
- Limited
- great biking
- Mountain bike fun
- trail walking and biking
- Town folding to bikers and developers
- Mountain biking
- Adequate
- Fatbike place
- Recreation
- Running
- Excellent
- great walk
- Thrilling injury.
- Outdoor fun
- Mountain biking Mecca, good bow hunting.
- A significant reason why I love Essex
- Enjoyment
- nature outdoor recreation with no development
- Never been there
- Mountain biking, winter fatbiking, hiking and snowshoeing
- never been there
- Peaceful enjoyment of the quiet woods
- excellent
- Should be zero development town should have bought and preserved it

from the beginning just pure creed on there part. To late now it's all gone

- Apathetic
- confused
- 15yrs mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- None
- Minimal
- It does nothing for me.
- Relaxing and enjoyed.
- Happy
- Local who enjoys the area.
- Snowmobiling
- mountain biking
- Unused
- Safe Haven for people to get outdoors
- I go about once a week
- occasional use for walking
- Great hunting!
- Biking trails
- Nice, but a little whopped because of the high volume of traffic
- Welcoming
- peace and nature
- fun, lost
- Hidden treasure
- Thoroughly enjoyable
- Saddened by all of the recent development on the property
- Short, easy fun
- Crowded
- Biking
- amazing with more potential
- Amazing mountain biking
- Accessible
- Fun mountain biking

- Would be an amazing place for a safe indoor firing range
- Peaceful
- Uneasy concerning access
- Frequent and pleasant
- Walking
- Mountain Biking
- trails
- Available
- Bringing community together!!
- Local singletrack
- Pleasant
- My favorite local mountain bike system
- Mountain Biking
- fun
- excellent
- Amazing multi use trail system.
- Great place I can mountain bike with my friends and family
- flowy
- Casual
- Puts a smile on my face
- Awesome
- mountain bike club
- A reliable, nearby; and aesthetically attractive trail system that's well maintained and offers high quality walking, biking and running.
- Satisfied
- Convenient
- Community
- Great mountain biking venue and one of the only green spaces in Essex
- Year round mountain biking
- Been riding there since 2004? I've seen everything between then and now and how it's changed.
- Fun!
- lucky to have great bike trails nearby
- mountain biking
- Precarious recreation
- great
- great family bike riding
- Mtn Biking
- Busy, crowded, loud, dangerous in MTB season. Relatively quiet in winter. Dog toilet...
- flow
- Fun and convenient
- Family Friendly
- awesome
- frequent
- Fantastic resource. Commercial development has impinged on the trail system.
- Convenient, variety, comprehensive
- awesome MTB
- Awesome!
- Excluded
- Fun and accessible
- Great Time on Trail and with people.
- Mountain biking accessibility for all levels of experience
- Recreation
- amazing
- Staple - easy to get to
- Healthy
- convenient
- rad & accessible
- intermediate, recovery rides, fatbiking
- Freedom
- Great place to progress mountain biking. It's wonderful to have a diverse network of trails that offer almost year round riding.
- Community

- Fun
- Mountain biking
- awesome
- Mountain biking
- Biking
- Always fun
- wicked fun!!!
- biking
- well used mountain biking trails
- Flow
- Fun Mountain Biking on existing trails
- Not living up to it's potential
- recreation - mountain biking
- Serene, calm
- impressed
- Biking
- Fun!
- Recreation
- Fun
- great trails
- tame, not challenging
- I love riding the trails at Saxon hill with my family.
- Construction site
- Easy trails, family oriented
- Mountain biking
- great mountain biking
- Great
- Bikes
- Love to ride there
- Too Small
- great community asset
- Mountain Biking
- Awesome singletrack
- Mountain Biker
- I love mountain biking at Saxon Hill
- fond memories
- outdoor recreation
- Good
- Great
- Great biking conveniently close to home/work.
- Mountain Biking!
- Fun but crowded
- Biking
- Biking
- Mountain biking
- Fun
- limited
- Fun
- Fun
- Scattered direction moving hopefully moving towards better designed recreation
- Awesome
- Enjoyable and a fun place to bring my family to experience a well balanced mountain bike experience
- great mountain bike trails
- Great fun bike trails
- accessible
- Great fun bike trails
- amazing trail flow
- Amazing and Confusing
- I've been mountain biking and running on the trails for 15 years
- fun
- Accessible for all
- good
- Sadness at loss of so may great hiking/mountain biking trails
- Fun
- local mtb destination
- Haven. Walking, biking, peaceful!
- fun biking

- accessible for biking
- Great intermediate level trails.
- Accessible
- Mountain Biker
- Biking
- mountain biking
- access
- enjoyable woods riding
- Great spot to hike and ride
- Special
- fun
- Enjoyable mountain biking, close to home
- Integral recreation
- Awesome
- Bikling
- Biking
- Invigorating
- invaluable
- relaxing
- exciting mountain biking
- Fun
- Amazing place I've known for 21 years
- Best flow MTB in the area
- Should go there sometime
- Mountain biking
- Fun, accessible and approachable mountain biking.
- Reliable
- reliable and consistent terrain/soil type for well-drained and well-maintained bike trails
- Great local place to mountain bike.
- Developing
- easy-access biking
- Mountain biking
- enjoyable
- Don't ride there much.
- Enjoyable but limiting
- Grateful
- busy
- Mountain biking
- Recreational enjoyment
- beginner, only 1 time there
- Year round trail use, on foot and mountain bike, multiple times per week.
- Dog walking & cycling
- Grateful
- A place to exercise and have quiet
- Great mountain Biking Trails!
- Mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- disjointed
- Natural habitat and outdoor recreation
- mountain biking
- Mountain and fat biking.
- Mountain biking
- Fun
- reliable
- One of my favorite places to be
- Enjoy Mountain Biking the trails
- excellent
- mountain biking
- Fun
- Not that familiar
- Mountain Biking
- Great
- Fun
- good mtb'ing
- Rubberside down
- Good MTB riding close to home
- Mountain biking
- Lost
- great fun in my backyard

- It a great place to go mountain biking
- beautiful
- Great to bike!
- non existent
- Fat biking in epic snow
- biking
- Go to mountain bike trails
- Locally Satisfying
- Accessible
- heavily used
- Fun
- Mountain biking trails that I can ride
- Fun
- Great rides with friends.
- fantastic
- Community trails
- Escape
- great mountain biking
- Mountain Biking
- Convenient fun
- Accessible Fun!
- mountain biking
- Fun, Accessible Mountain Biking
- pleasant and fun
- Great local mountain bike trails
- Very enjoyable, great local resource. Excellent trail maintenance and multi-use.
- The best mountain biking location in the inner Chittenden County area
- Mountain Biking
- fun flowy riding
- I have biked it a few times
- Great
- mountain biking
- Curious and enjoy recreation use
- really enjoyable
- Great mountain biking , trail running experience
- Biking
- After work exercise and fun on two wheels
- Great time!
- fun
- FUN!
- Mountain biking
- Good local mountain biking

## **DESIRED EXPERIENCE**

Survey responses to the desired experience question in survey:

- Continue mountain biking
- Keep the biking going
- Keep the trails great!
- I hope it stays the same and maybe more trails
- Biking
- More biking!
- mountain biking
- More please!
- More fun
- Continued growth of network of trails and a community of support to keep it thriving
- Continued accessible mountain biking!
- Expanded and groomed mountain bike trails
- More trails to spread out mt bike traffic/erosion, more challenging trails/features for mt biking, better

management of erosion (bridges, signage to walk bikes, etc)

- Technical
- Extensive
- Biking
- Open public multiple use with dogs allowed
- Do not over develop
- More mountain biking
- The same
- Even more great trail riding
- Biking
- More flow and dynamic trails
- Mountain Biking
- mountain biking
- Mountain biking
- hopefully the same!
- Expand and preserve bike/multi access trails
- More mountain biking
- More trails to develop skills while keeping the land as natural as possible
- More Mountain Biking
- fun progression
- Mountain biking for generations
- Same as previous answer
- Favorite mtn biking spot!
- the same
- Convenient
- Keep it a forest
- More mountain biking
- Regular visitor for even better mountain biking
- Limited
- Mountain biking
- More mountain bike trails
- Continued mountain biking and outdoor rec
- Awesome
- Fun for all abilities
- Mountain biking
- More mountain biking
- Mountain biking destination
- Expanded mountain biking trails
- more excellent mtn biking
- Best quality trails.
- Hopeful to keep it maintained for public use and outdoor recreation.
- Mountain Biking
- Bonafide, Cutting Edge Mountain Biking Area Embraced by the Community
- mountain biking
- Amazing mountain biking trails
- Smooth cruis'n
- Improved access/parking
- Casual user
- likely no future experience
- routine
- Mire
- great biking
- Year round multiple uses
- trail walking and biking

- Preserve natural areas. Limit bike trails.
- Mountain biking
- spiritual
- Flo MTB place
- Recreation
- Running
- Status quo
- interactive
- Flying ace.
- Town shooting range, bike trails & hunting area.
- Mountain bike and hiking/running trails - maybe a few more
- To keep private and not developed
- nature outdoor recreation with no development
- It would be nice to have a local place to hike where people actually leashed their dogs
- Build on the existing wilderness experience with more and improved trails
- an outside place where dog leash rules are strictly enforced so that there is someone in Vermont I could enjoy the outside.
- Want to keep it with as many woods as possible for recreation
- excellent
- Save what's left which isn't much now.
- Public use
- would like to go
- 15 more yrs mtn biking
- Mountain biking
- Unsure
- Routine
- Inclusive of sports other than biking
- Trail expansion
- Expanded
- Safe local, indoor/outdoor shooting range
- Snowmobiling
- mountain biking
- Shooting range
- Trail systems that are for all to use!
- Continue to go once a week
- comfortable mixed use
- Still great hunting!
- More biking trails, maintained trails
- more downhill lines with jumps.
- Multi-use area
- Safety re. firearms
- fun with better signage!
- Controlled
- Keep it local, or go big pump track
- Hopeful that a more community centered approach will prevail
- Varied difficulties for various experiences
- Expanded
- Biking
- slight improvements
- Please keep the amazing mountain biking

- Unchanged
- More fun trails
- Zero use as if now but an indoor firing range would help
- Peaceful
- Open access
- Same- frequent, pleasant, also quiet
- Shooting range indoor and outdoor
- Mountain Biking
- more trails
- Sustainable
- Maintain access for all walks of life!!
- Continued existence of local singletrack
- Pleasant
- More trails!
- Mountain Biking
- more fun
- protection
- Continued multi use of the entire property with appropriate marking for right of way, like USFS trail systems.
- Sustain the existing community/experience
- flowy, and accessible for all levels of rider
- Friendly
- Continued fun
- Awesome
- mountain bike club
- Uninterrupted access to a superb trail system, unmarred by future development. Continued opportunities to

enjoy the native wildflowers, many endangered and lost during previous land clearing for development.

- Excited
- A must-visit destination
- Preserve
- Expand mountain biking and trail system. Limit development
- Year round mountain biking
- Mountain bike, especially for when I want to ride with friends in Essex or if I have kids.
- More trails
- maintain and expand bike trails
- more mountain biking
- Stable and balanced recreation and conservation
- great family bike riding
- More Mtn Biking
- Serene and uncongested
- maintain
- Expansive single track exploration
- Accessible
- il be back
- undeveloped
- Keep commercial development to a minimum and negotiate allowances for Trails to pass through commercial properties.
- Accessible and extensive
- awesome MTB
- More
- Included

- More variety
- Expand the network to offer more trails to me and my son.
- See above :)
- Preservation
- status quo
- Less routine
- Recreation
- awesome
- remains accessible & rad
- better drainage up higher
- Undeveloped
- I would love to see the network continue to grow with more options for shorter/varied loops. Also more hard options for advanced riders similar to the drop in lo flo
- Accessible
- More Fun
- More Mountain biking please!
- more awesome
- More mountain biking
- Better/ more bike trails
- Please keep it open
- continued fun!
- biking
- more trails
- More flow
- Expanded MTB trails
- A robust & modern outdoor experience
- Planning for continued access for mountain biking

- Flowy, pumpy
- continued access
- Biking
- More Fun!
- Access
- Forever
- greater trails
- harder, more technical
- Expanded trail use, easy access.
- Natural
- more natural trails
- Mountain biking
- more great mountain biking
- More Trails
- More bikes
- Increase riding options
- More Jumps
- great community asset
- Mountain Biking
- more singletrack
- More Mountain Biking
- I would love to be able to continue exploring Saxon on a bike
- preservation
- outdoor recreation
- Good
- Amazing
- Incredible biking, maybe dirt biking if it doesn't disturb biking/hiking (isn't too loud).
- Mountain Biking!

- Less Crowded
- MTB
- More Biking
- Continued mtb access
- More fun
- get to know it better
- Fun
- more fun
- Recreational Community open to all experiences
- Epic
- Continue to grow the mountain bike experience at Saxon hill and invest in more trails
- exceptional mountain bike trails
- Continued bike access and trail development
- accessible
- Continued bike access and trail development
- expand the trail system
- Expansion of Recreational Trails
- continued access via bike and walking
- challenging
- Accessible for all
- more mountain bike trails, especially intermediate
- Mixed use and a future vision
- New
- continued mtb destination
- Valuable resource!
- more biking
- accessible for biking
- A bit more advanced level riding
- Easy to navigate
- Mountain Biker
- Biking
- continued mountain biking
- continued access
- hope it stays that way
- Great spot to hike and ride
- Same, but maintained to an equal or better degree
- more fun
- Expanded mountain biking!
- personally, it is perfect.
- Awesome
- Biking
- Invigorating
- growth
- relaxing
- Even more exciting mountain biking
- Expansive
- Continued local treasured forest
- More of the same!
- It should be a hiking, biking and xc skiing center
- Mountain biking
- Fun, accessible and approachable mountain biking.
- Challenge
- continuation of peaceful activity in Chittenden County

- More mountain bike trails and paved parking.
- Community
- easy-access biking
- No more commercial development
- less politics
- More difficult trails.
- Expansion
- Bigger
- more
- More mountain biking
- Recreational enjoyment
- lots more of it.
- Expanded trail network for multiple users of all ages.
- Same as current use
- I am satisfied
- Space to play and experience nature
- Expanded mountain bike & running trails
- Mountain biking
- Continuing to share trails with all non-motorized users.
- cooperative
- Public access to nature for outdoor activities
- multi-use, non-motorized trails
- Continued/expanded mountain and fat biking
- Mountain biking
- Fun
- oasis
- Keep as is with no more development (ie warehouses, etc)
- Improved multi-use trails for walking/Mtn biking/trail running/dog walking/snowshoeing/winter biking/birding for all levels
- more of what it is
- mountain biking
- More
- local destination
- Mountain Biking
- Amazing
- Increased fun
- don't get rid of mtb'ing
- Keep Rolling
- Expanded MTB trail network
- Mountain biking
- More trail signs
- great fun in my backyard
- It is a great place to go mountain biking or trail running
- oasis in the suburbs
- More trails
- hopeful
- Quiet, peaceful and natural
- LOTS MORE BIKING
- Even better mountain bike trails
- Locally exciting
- Preservation
- appropriate place to bring beginner mountain bikers.
- More trail options

- Accessible mountain riding opportunities
- Continued
- More trails for better times with friends.
- mountain biking
- Mtb park
- Protected
- great mountain biking
- Expanded recreation
- Unchanged
- Inclusive Recreation
- mountain biking
- More Fun, Accessible Mountain Biking
- same
- More trails! More access
- To keep it open and available as a wonderful green space.
- Additional trails and continued upkeep of the current system
- Flowy Mountain Biking
- keep up the great work!
- I think it's great!
- great
- mountain biking
- Desired harmony with business park, rec use, and residents in Sandhill/ Route 15 neighborhoods
- less crowded
- Shared use for all interested in an outdoor experience . Biking , hiking , running .
- more biking
- More miles
- Even better!
- all season fun
- More fun!
- Mountain biking
- Continued access to mountain bike

## **APPENDIX B**

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### **ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES**

- Disc golf I guess. But keep biking, hiking/running, xc skiing
- Great the way it is.
- Many were already covered
- My needs are really well met at Saxon (biking and fat biking). I'd love for more people to be able to enjoy that space, so I'll defer to those folks who don't already feel welcome there-- How do we get more people enjoying that space?
- More mountain bike trails. There are multiple other venues for everything else. Very few local mountain bike trails.
- Disc golf
- More trails
- I'd like it to be a resource but without heavy facilities other than parking and perhaps toilet facilities. Thus it's great if it can be an after school destination for any range of activity from biology to sport, ditto for community or adult Ed kind of activities but I don't think there

needs to be a clubhouse maybe something more like what is at Oakledge Park in Burlington

- I think it's good as it is.
- n/a
- Nothing new in terms of facilities other than expanded hiking/biking trails.
- I would like to see more trails built, possibly a pump track.
- Trail expansion
- Mountain bike center and accommodations and expanded trail network
- Bike trials area. A working bathroom. Of note, members of the Fellowship of the Wheel, do pay to use Saxon Hill with our yearly dues. Day rates for non members is an idea
- More bike demos
- Just bathrooms, no additional facilities
- none. too many already.
- More bike trails
- Formal groomed fatbike trails
- A pump track would be great and more technical progression features
- Swimming hole
- A pump track would be great, as well as more mountain bike jump lines and mountain bike trails in general.
- Water bottle filling station.
- Facilities -- Increased parking and signage for parking, trail use etiquette and wayfinding. Bathrooms -- at the

least 2-3 clean port-a-potties. A changing station. A picnic area or shady spot to meet friends before or after using the trails. Activities -- Pump Track and more bike park features including jumps and small drops.

- Currently it's too small to have increased foot traffic. If it were to expand, it would be nice to have small events like races, food trucks, and bathrooms. Given its current size it's already becoming too busy around 5:00 and the trails feel congested. Increased events and activities would discourage me from coming given its current size.
- parking
- Nature trail for younger kids
- like it the way it is
- Drainage and more machine-built Flo trails!
- Bike repair
- Restrooms, map of trails and significant features
- Downhill mountain bike trails with flow sections, berms and jumps.
- Town shooting range
- Local events
- Ice skating
- NONE! Do not develop it. It works great just as it is now - KEEP it this way and do not ruin it!
- Legal climbing option for mojo, either bringing the existing trail under FOTW care or building a replacement. Warming hut, bathrooms and lighting for

the new main parking lot. More advanced/expert trail options in the undeveloped area between the outer dh trail and flow. Bringing the old Skunk Hollow trails online with legal status to expand the network.

- Indoor and outdoor shooting range
- Keep it wild
- Public outdoor and indoor shooting range to allow Essex residents a safe place to shoot
- Indoor and/or outdoor firearm shooting range. 3D archery range
- Leave as is, just grow the trail system.
- Shooting range
- Let it be wild. Indian Brook management has been a spectacular failure.
- Shooting range, we are in dire need of one in Essex.
- More flow trails and jumps
- Where is hunting included? Are you singling out this activity for exclusion? Hunters have been using the property long before anyone else.
- nope, keep it low key, but more mountain biking trails
- Better signage - I feel like I end up going in loops all the time.
- bathrooms
- Obstacles and fitness equipment. With the closure of Shale Hill in Benson there is no obstacle course in the state and with Fit2Excel bordering the property this could be an amazing partnership! There are local and regional people who

would pay a monthly fee to access this and help to keep it maintained.

- Restrooms and parking lot lights.
- Indoor firing range
- I think that it is very nice as it is but it is getting more and more crowded
- Indoor outdoor shooting range
- Welcome board on the end of Thompson Dr. Permanent construction restroom and water fountain. Rugged running/hiking trails separate from MTB trails and ADA multi-use loop
- I would love to see a pump track - skills building area.
- Restroom, shower, bike wash and repair station
- More mountain biking trails
- More directional downhill Mountain Bike trails
- I really think leaving it as is is best. Unless the local community wants to find ways to make it income producing, otherwise I think adding more would make it that much more used. Adding bathrooms seems like a good thing, but that means it has to be maintained and someone has to manage it - which increases costs. Again, adding this makes it more of a destination' and less of a quick place to ride/run during a busy schedule.
- Bathrooms at parking lot. Even if they are just portable bathrooms.
- Better trail signage for existing assets. Especially for mountain biking, to put trail names on signs would make this a

more approachable network, as well as signage for advanced features or go-arounds.

- Expanded mountain biking. Would look into purchasing additional land from adjacent owner or getting permission for trails on their land, perhaps with a fee if that were to happen, to expand the trail system. These trails could also be used for running, xcountry skiing etc.
- More mountain bike trails
- Disc golf and nordic skiing
- Quiet time, no bikes or groups allowed at certain times like early mornings and later evenings. Tight restrictions during critical times for wildlife like birthing times, winter, nighttime.
- n/a
- Pump track for beginner / intermediate, but not necessary for advanced riders since the existing trails provide plenty of challenge.
- Nothing new, just more trails!
- The existing bike trails are not accessible, because bridges are too narrow. Off-road handcycling is a growing sport for disabled athletes, and these handcycles require 36" wide bridges, MINIMUM (48" better.)
- Expansion of different levels of abilities and some infrastructure that could be multi use. This zone could be a flat area maybe with a gazebo access to water and power. This could be used for classes, camps, events, and area users.
- Pump track on level ground would continue to add to the location as a

great site for beginner-level mountain bikers helping to develop skills and engage more people with the sport and the outdoors

- Nothing new really needed - let Saxons continue as a natural area without making it an urban park.
- swimming hole, more trails, camping along reservoir
- picnic area sounds nice. skills park for little riders.
- Bike fix station
- Bike wash and changing facilities/permanent bathroom.
- A pump track or other dedicated mountain bike skills course with progressive features. Also an expansion to the existing jump lines. Saxon is a great place for people to learn how to mountain bike and expanding offerings than can help beginners and also be enjoyed by advanced riders would be great!
- I'm fine with the status quo! I realize things will always change, but I don't necessarily need or want those changes.
- more trails, picnic area,
- Cross country skiing in winter, pump track/bike park, picnic tables
- More MTB Trails
- A little station to make bike adjustments? A map from the parking areas to the trail networks.
- Port-a-Potties are helpful

- A covered area, possibly with picnic tables and bathrooms with potable water.
- A better toilet facility
- Continue to add to bridges that help protect sensitive or wet parts of the trail.
- Trash cans for dog poop (like at Indian brook)
- Restrooms
- ecologically friendly bathroom
- More mountain bike trails
- more trails
- More awesome mtb trails!
- Additional trails
- Bike wash.
- Just interested in continued mountain biking access
- I like Saxon the way it is, maybe some more trails for biking/running. Fellowship of the Wheel does a great job maintaining the trails and I don't see a necessity to add more. Although, maybe some bathrooms, picnic tables or grills would be nice.
- Dirt biking would be great, but only if it doesn't interfere with other activities and the noise can be managed. It would be great if it could fit, but it's great to hear the wildlife while mountain biking.
- I mostly into MTB
- Camping
- Saxon Hill is unique in that there are extensive woods and trails already there, and it is centrally located within the heart of Chittenden County. At the same time, it is fairly compact. I would like to see more of a welcome center type thing as well as maybe a pavilion/picnic/bbq area. Perhaps the pavilion could be reserved and rented to generate some income for the park.
- A walled off changing area and a picnic table would be a great asset to the net parking lot.
- Bathroom
- improve mountain bike trails
- A couple of picnic tables somewhere would be nice.
- Swimming
- Disc Golf
- better parking. Parking in neighborhood seems stressful for neighbors, especially with off-leash dogs
- More mountain bike trails, particularly beginner and intermediate. Bridges should be 36" wide.
- Disc golf
- Bathrooms? Trash / Recycling collection?
- Kingdom trails of Essex!
- Pump track/dirt jumps
- More trail maps would be great, especially at intersections.
- Pump Track
- Expansion of the mountain bike trails, along with a pump track and jump course.

- ample parking, artful trail markers
- A composting toilet would be fantastic!
- Trailhead or parking area bike tool stand. Restrooms with composting toilets.
- more trails
- Picnic tables
- None - keeping things as natural as possible is a priority
- More trails of varied levels
- Larger parking area with bathrooms.
- The new parking is helpful
- A bathroom/changing facility would be great for trail runners and cyclist so they would not have to change in the parking lot. If dog walking is frequent a waste kiosk with poop bags would be great.
- Nothing needs to be added.
- More mountain bike trails
- picnic area, walk only trails in the ravines
- More trails for mountain biking. Developing the upper trails ie mojo would be great.
- Please do not add programs, events or infrastructure that will mandate the initiation of fees. The whole point of nature is to have free activities available.....
- I just want to hold on to the current trail system.
- N/A
- Better signage
- I would like to see the area be a low impact use area with limited to no facilities.
- More intermediate bike trails on the southern portion. Picnic area(s) would be nice, disc golf could be fun if it did not interfere with biking and trail running/hiking. Groomed cross country ski trails would help with year-round use.
- Amenities
- n/a
- additional parking & improved trail signage
- Disc Gold or Adventure Course.
- I'd like to see an expansion of trails for both mountain biking, downhill biking, and walking.
- n/a
- Food truck
- more single track
- Expanded MTB trails, update and/or reroute sections which are compacted, worn or washed out.
- Parking, porta potties
- Hiking trails
- None, I just want to see the bike/running trails maintained and not reduced in length.
- More signage for trails.
- more mountain bike and trail-running trails

- I like the new parking lot with added space, and appreciate the more rustic feel of the trails. I would be disappointed if it became an over-used destination.
- more details in town about the trails. Kingdom trails has signs all over the place and I think many local residents have no idea that it is there
- Ropes course
- None are necessary. I enjoy all forms of trail use at Saxon.
- Nothing needed really. I'm a mountain biker so we don't need much. Just trails and dirt!
- I just don't want to see anymore land or trails lost to development.
- Expanded bike network and tours on sustainability and trail etiquette.
- Picnic table and shelter. Bathroom - portapotty
- Pump track, new advanced mountain bike trails
- Compost toilets. Educational sign posts
- More trails in the woods...away from the roads
- General fitness and kids programs that educate and maintain light recreational use -- limited to no motorized. Don't need swimming w/Indian Brook resource in community
- warming hut for winter
- I am not a hunter nor am I aware as to whether they have access to the forest during open and / or bow hunting season . Is this a consideration ?
- Changing rooms at the parking lot (simple wooden structure to provide privacy). Possibly drinking water fountain/spigot. Bike wash/rack and bike tool station.

- N/A

## **PROGRAMS**

- More xc trails
- Same as above-- I don't need new programs, but it'd be great to get more kids/families/etc out there.
- Mountain bike trails
- Educational
- How about some non commercial sponsorship to help support multiple use and maintenance? I'd rather see this than access fees. I think it should be free to any one who wants it
- Additional education programs of various sorts to help provide better familiarity between the community and saxon would be great.
- Outdoor programming for all
- MTB clinics, educational programs, foraging, sustainability classes, XC races.
- Bidding and nature
- Mountain bike clinics for adults open to all genders
- Camps and clinics

- Mountain bike camps (like Catamount has)
- Bike demos.
- Kids mountain biking camps.
- More trails that would evenly distribute increased traffic
- Environmental, ecology, nature based education for students and community.
- New shooter clinics at the town shooting range
- Cross country skiing, nature walks
- Weekly group rides. Summer mtb camps.
- Firearms safety and training, Hunter safety classes
- Hunters education. Firearm and archery instruction
- A shooting range
- I won't support any programs unless hunting is included.
- none - maybe a race series for mountain biking.
- regular running series a la the one at maple street or catamount outdoor center
- Skills clinics, workshops for children and adults would be awesome
- If there were an ADA loop it could be great to have it be an informational trail with details of the natural resources of the forest. The trail should connect and intersect with existing trail network but do it's best only build upon and not replacement existing MTB trails.
- Afterschool biking programs
- Kids mountain bike clinics and camps
- Mountain bike camps for kids would be a good addition. Races or trail runs would add diversity
- None - I like that it is underdeveloped and simple.
- Kids camp programs would be nice
- Access for disabled
- More teaching classes about nature, trail advocacy and sport (Snow shoes, XC, Biking, etc) classes.
- Would love for camps (mountain biking and trail running) to continue and expand use to bring younger kids outside
- Summer camps for kiddos (Little Bellas)
- Mountain bike skills clinics are great
- I'm fine with the status quo! I realize things will always change, but I don't necessarily need or want those changes.
- None necessary. Many non-profits currently provide many programs I enjoy.
- Outdoor education classes, walks, etc
- Open to anything that allows people of various interests to enjoy the area.
- Information on local flora and fauna.
- I think there is probably enough at the moment. If theres room/money for new trails those are always appreciated
- MTB Skills

- Just interested in continued mountain biking access
- If there is a desire among the users for any of the proposed uses, they should be considered.
- Can't think of any.
- MTB camp
- Outdoor education
- Rather than spending time and money on developing programs, take advantage of the biking and running communities that are already thriving, promote and support them by allowing access for events, without charging them to bring people, that wouldn't have come otherwise, to our town.
- More mountain bike trails
- it'd be great to make the area available to school groups and camps. I would NOT like to see races & other large events at Saxon hill. These large events can have an adverse impact on trails as there is additional pressure to use trails with large group under sub-optimal conditions (wet trails, for example).
- Clearer boundary markings so it's easily understandable as to what areas are within bounds and which are out of bounds
- Mountain bike lessons for beginner/intermediate riders. The existing terrain is well suited for newer riders.
- Kids Programs
- Anything that unites different user groups. The forest should be used and

appeal to various groups of people and not be exclusive to only one group. I am primarily a mountain biker but love walking, running and exploring the woods so there should be room for everyone.

- Mountain biking weekly clinics
- More clinics and beginner workshops
- I don't need any.
- Nothing needs to be added.
- Mountain bike clinic
- Natural resource education for kids and adults
- Mountain biking group rides
- Please do not add programs, events or infrastructure that will mandate the initiation of fees. The whole point of nature is to have free activities available.....
- As a plantation forest, more active timber management, whether for education, income, or both.
- Kids camps
- Bike Camp or Wilderness Education
- regular mountain biking races
- tread lightly just keep it as a non motorized trail system
- More trail signs
- make the trails easier to access
- More support of trails and fat biking. A little would go a long way so to start slowly.

- Children's mountain bike learning course
- None are necessary but potentially wildlife education programs geared towards kids.
- I would like to see Fellowship of the Wheel maintain trail maintenance and build more trails. The ravine is a very important part of the trail system.
- Ecology and nature walks. Geocaching
- None - it's great as is.
- Foraging classes
- Disc Golf Fitness obstacle Education classes
- expand xc skiing awareness/support
- Clinics and camps as already mentioned.
- MTB skills / lessons with features to take that learning to "real life."
- Regular women's specific mountain bike programming.

## EVENTS

Bike and ski demos

Mtb clinics, lessons, demo days

Mountain biking

Group mountain bike, demos

Enduro racing/fatbike expansion

XC races, advanced MTB clinics/camps, more trails.

Community biking & trail running

Bike demos. Group rides.

An intro to Enduro series

Adaptive trails

Weekly race series (summer/winter) - running and mountain biking.

A week night local bike race series

None.

More mountain bike events like group rides, bike demos and kids/skills camps/clinics.

"Food trucks and bikes" self explanatory

Programs targeted to get people out to appreciate the many resources available

Enduro mountain bike races

Marksmanship Matches at the Town Shooting Range

Running group

NONE!

Local race series

Firearms safety and training, Hunter safety classes

Keep it wild no more development

A Halloween haunted forest walk.

Shooting range with competitions

More trail building days for mountain biking

Mountain bike race series.

haunted forest

Obstacle course race, not a Spartan style race which brings thousands of people but a small one which could bring a hundred or two

hundred people out - would be paying a fee, staying in area lodging, eating at restaurants.

A race series would be cool

I think the use of Saxon Hill as a place for local businesses to engage with their customer base via Demo events the best use of the Town Forest as an event space.

Local races like at Catamount

running and biking races

Nothing

None.

MTB races or trail runs would be nice.

Perhaps an organized trail running event or mtb event. But not a regular series.

Wildlife tours

Local races and community based events to build the community

Group trail rides are already excellent. Lots of options for ADA outdoor recreation in some areas of the forest

It seems like we have enough events there (group rides). We are good.

I would honestly limit large events because there are already a lot of people out on the trails. Group rides and bike demos are nice

I'm fine with the status quo! I realize things will always change, but I don't necessarily need or want those changes.

Theater in the woods

possibly one or two race/riding events per year

Environmental programs

MTB Group Rides and events

It's hard to see new events taking place with the current size as is and the knowledge that some of the land could be developed. It would be great to see a topo map from above to get a better idea of what the land boundaries are, and where changes could be made. As is, I feel like a busy day there is pretty full with the trails the way they are. Adding much more would get overwhelming, but if there was room to add more land to use, that would open up many options.

Open to anything that allows people of various interests to enjoy the area.

Guided nature/birding walks/tours.

Community trail maintenance days in spring and summer.

Just interested in continued mountain biking access

Social group bike nights with food/drinks

Quiet!

Can't think of any.

Trail maintenance volunteer days

MTB Racing

Bike clinics

outdoor theater?

Allow for more group rides and running meet up groups. These are family friendly and the more time people spend in Essex the more money they will bring to the town.

Maybe the occasional technique-specific mountain bike workshop (focusing on things like bridges, technical climbs, cornering, descents, etc)

mountain bike classes for kids such as Little Bellas but for all kids. Also for adults. Maybe some group rides.

no new events

Mountain biking camp for lower income riders/children

Please NO private events

Beginner oriented events

Community mountain bike rides

MTB demos

It would be nice if more users participated in trail maintenance. It seems that a lot of multi-use trail networks rely heavily on the mountain biking community to maintain trails despite the fact that walkers and runners do a large amount of damage in wet times because they don't think the rules apply to foot traffic

Nothing needs to be added.

Mountain bike clinic, dirt jumps and pump track

Mountain bike skills clinics, demos and races

Please do not add programs, events or infrastructure that will mandate the initiation of fees. The whole point of nature is to have free activities available.....

Trail building

Nothing that would attract large groups on a regular basis.

trail running races

Bike and Brews

more biking events!

Keep any events available to the public

Could have dog day, bike day, run day. So that those folks can enjoy the trails w/o other folks bothering them on their day.

could do races or competitions that raised funds to up keep these areas

Local VT races that don't compete with catamount but rather compliment the biking environment of Vermont.

More demos and learning opportunities for children

None.

Biking and running events.

Outdoor festivals? Demos and bbq..maybe mtb/x-country races?

None - it's great as is.

Group mountain bike rides

Haunted Forest and maybe some other community events.

Believe plenty of local event venues and Maple Street handles these well. Would prefer events aligned to "essex experience" area

none come to mind

I actually like it the way it is . However , very much open to many of the options already mentioned .

## **APPENDIX C**

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Not sure about improvements to indicate on the map

Great management, trail design and maintenance has resulted in an incredible resource where a diverse group of users all share the trails with little conflict and lots of smiles. Keep it going and thank you to all who volunteer to make Saxon what it is. Planned expansions welcome!

More mountain bike trails

This is a fabulous resource let's not screw it up!

Keep it simple. Walk, hike, bike winter and summer. Open to Class 1 e-bikes. Class 1 eBike A Class 1 eBike, or low-speed pedal-assisted electric bicycles, is equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that stops providing assistance when the bicycle reaches 20 mph.

Mountain biking is a great community activity that brings people together in healthy ways. Saxon has excellent terrain for providing much needed beginner and intermediate opportunities to new riders.

Saxon hill deserves to be kept as a mountain biking area. It's a beginner friendly place that is an appropriate venue for new riders and children to learn. For those trail users who already pay for a VMBA membership, it's a bit annoying to pay for trail access but I could understand with a place this popular. Of all the areas open for riding, I think MTN bikers do the worst job of being good stewards at this particular trail site. Illegal parking, off leash dogs during busy hours, and riding on closed trails are all commonplace. I love riding these trails for the convenience and their high quality.

Mountain biking is exploding in Vermont right now and you have a great thing going. Expand upon your current trail system !! People would pay to ride there!

Fellowship members already pay for use. Charge a daily rate at the lot for non members. Making it a destination may not be good for sustainability. Don't turn it into a parking lot, it a beautiful and amazing locale within city limits. And since they have "dumbed down" Sunny Hollow, it's the closest place to have Decent biking.

It would be helpful to know who the management team and how new members can help or volunteer

Fellowship of the wheel and local volunteers has carried the burden and made Saxon amazing. You need to seriously respect them and value their input. Fellowship paid trail crew and board and volunteers has made saxon awesome, and served the community well. don't mess it up please. Saxon is great early and late season biking because it drains so well. Winter fat biking is phenomenal there also.

Site map function doesn't work well on mobile.

I would be willing to pay a fee if the trails were more fun, or if there were more of them. The current trails do not justify a fee. I would also pay a fee to support grooming for fat bikes in the winter.

New, professionally built mountain bike trails would be great.

Saxon is such an amazing resource for trail lovers, including mountain bikers, hikers, runners and dog walkers. I just wish it was more embraced by the town and received the financial support it deserves.

The Fellowship of the Wheel has invested tens of thousands of dollars of donated money into the forest over the years with very little municipal support or guarantee of ROI. In the past 2 years it has also become a regional destination for fat biking due to the quality of the trails and their conducive layout for winter fat biking. Saxon Hill undoubtedly brings massive amounts of revenue into the Essex area in the form of gas, food and beverage sales and tourism. Mountain biking should be embraced there, encouraged by the town, and recognized for bringing healthy, talented families into the area as both residents and visitors. There is so much more potential for Saxon Hill!

A real set of bathrooms and water refill stations would be amazing. And more trails would be incredible.

These trails are great and very thankful for the people that are working hard to keep them in such great shape. As more people access them it would be great to keep the cost down or non-existent and find other ways to fund these trails if it is needed. The trails are visited frequently and as the numbers increase it would be nice to find a way to have visitors evenly distributed throughout the Forest and not create a "bottle neck" at the entrances or exits. I really enjoy the bridge features and would love more technical down hills and at the same time another option for a "flow" downhill. Saxon is really one of the best places close to the Burlington area and I would love to continue being able to say that. Thank you so much!!

Be happy to pay an annual fee to assist with maintenance and trail development.

It is CRITICAL to have separate trails for bikers. I love hiking, snowshoeing, skiing too, but if you include these activities, they should be on SEPARATE marked trails. It is way too dangerous for mountain bikers to come up fast on walkers, strollers, dogs, especially in areas where foliage makes it hard to see. PLEASE do not encourage these activities on bike trails because it is a bad accident waiting to happen. Also Motorized vehicles should never share trails with bikers or pedestrians. The speed difference is too great, and accident potential is high. And in my opinion it would really ruin the Saxon hill experience if there were motorized ATVs or snowmobiles sharing the area.

Saxons Hill is a great recreation resource for the town. The town should look to preserve as much of the land as possible for recreational use. That said recreational use should be balanced with preserving wildlife habitat. This should not turn into another Sand Hill or Maple Street type park instead it should stay more primitive I'm keeping with a natural area.

Saxon Hill is a relatively small wooded area surrounded by mostly commercial development. Although there is a "hill", it is unremarkable at best and in comparison to the major outdoor destinations in close proximity to the area (such as Mt. Mansfield, etc.), Saxon is unlikely to be anything other than what it is now: which is primarily a MTB system with a long history in Chittenden County and secondarily, off-season exercise-based hiking, snowshoeing, etc. Saxon is never going to replicate the interest it has now as a hiking, wildlife, nature preserve, educational etc. destination. To that end, should any proposed changes meaningfully compromise Saxon's core appeal as a MTB trail system, Saxon's overall appeal is likely to wane significantly. Perhaps that is the goal, but it would be a shame if so. The MTB community in Vermont is vibrant, growing, and a major attraction for locals and tourists alike. It would be an incredible self-own for Essex not to embrace it. Put simply, I think if you hurt MTB at Saxon, you kill Saxon. Given the property ownership landscape in the area, the most likely outcome is

that interest will wane and it will be commercially developed. In sum, Saxon Hill is primarily a MTB trail system and it should remain as such. The primary challenge historically was parking. With the addition of the new parking lot, that is now dialed in. What we have currently is a vibrant, popular, healthy MTB trail system. Saxon would have been an industrial park long ago if not for the long standing MTB lineage. Keep or expand that tradition. Get rid of it at Saxon's peril. Cheers!

Set another walk for the public that is not during summer vacation.

Keep Saxon Hill wild and low key. We have enough high volume, high expense parks already. Our tax burden is already too high.

Thank you for your attention to section Hill – although I am not happy about industrial activity in the area, it has been well-maintained by the town. Please maintain all existing trails. The outdoor opportunities for the community should be protected. New trails would be a great bonus. Thank you! I am an Essex junction resident. - nick stanton, 9 summit st.

Leave it alone. It is working now. If we strive to "improve it" we will likely "ruin it"!

I feel like much of Vermont is inaccessible to people who don't like dogs. Leash rules when they exist are rarely enforced which means they are ignored. I will never go to Indian brook because it is an area where dogs are allowed off leash, which is great for dog owners. I would like a place in this community where I could enjoy the outdoors where a leash rule is actually enforced.

Stop development NOW

I didn't add to the map, as I have never been. I live ridiculously close to these trails, but haven't been because I'm afraid of getting lost with my kids - or that the trail is too long. I would love a defined trail map that shows how long these trails are, how to access them and how vigorous they are. Thank you!

A nice public shooting range would be just the thing.

Invest resources in Chittenden County wide children focused urban facilities -a cohesive district with really well designed attractive urban parks.

The area has now mainly been used for mountain bike trails, there are many other places in VT to do all the other activities, that were suggested in this survey, it would be nice if Saxon stayed focused on mountain bike trails. Its a great asset to a community, just look at East Burke and Kingdom Trails.

People in the town complain about shooting but have no desire to have a range in Essex. There are tons of people who shoot for sport and need a local safe place to go and this would be ideal. There is no reason not to have one here, there is no reason to turn this into Indian brook, leave a piece of this for safe shooting.

Essex should take a lesson from Richmond on how to manage a new forest. The Andrew's Forest management plan is a great example of managing to meet all the resident's needs. Can't Essex do at least as well?

Overall, the vibe at Saxon is great. Not too much going on besides biking trails. This is ideal because too many non-bikers using the trails can lead to issues. I would like to see improved maintenance of the existing trails and the addition of more advanced downhill trails for biking and more features.

If trails need to be maintained there should be a fee for bikers.

Keep it local, charge out towers.

Significant damage to the area has already been done. I will freely admit that it was hardly virgin forest to begin with but the reality is that once roads of the size and scope of the ones that have gone in the last two years are added to an area it's very hard to continue seeing it as a "town forest." Keep Saxon Hill as a viable alternative for those that participate in the "silent sports" (hiking, running, biking, xc skiing). It is what keeps a lot of us in Vermont.

Obstacles, obstacles, obstacles!!!!

More signage to alert users about trail etiquette would be good.

Please keep the mountain biking! :-)

I've always enjoyed mountain biking at Saxon, where I learned and still come for recreation. The new lot is really convenient and worry free. The introduction of fat biking is also great to get out on the trails during the winter months!

I'd like to see the area kept as pristine as possible.

Saxon Hill has become an indispensable resource to the Mountain Biking Community of Essex, and Chittenden County as a whole. That community vision should remain as the town decides how to move forward. However, with the extra land and the eagerness of the community of mountain bike riders we could greatly expand the network and spread out the volume of trail uses across all modes of use. Especially if the growth of the network focuses on trails that can be accessed by walkers, runners, riders, xc skiers and Americans with Disabilities.

I really don't have any specific recommendations, but I would like to say that Saxon has been such a huge part of my family's life. It has allowed my children develop a love of biking and we have spent countless family hours in the woods together and I really can not express how important Saxon has been to our life here in Vermont

Saxon is my favorite trail system in Chittenden County. I would love some basic improvements like restrooms etc and definitely would like more biking trails.

Saxon Hill is an amazing resource. The mountain bike trails are the best in Chittenden County for entry level riders and those learning the sport. The community of trail users is polite and friendly. I've been riding here for many years and always have a pleasant experience speaking with hikers, dog walkers and others on the trail.

Saxon Hill has been the best mountain bike area for our diverse middle-school MTB Club for the past 8 years. Its combination of smooth single-track and more challenging routes, along with the naturally

good drainage, has made it a perennial favorite in our Fall and Spring sessions. Recent changes have impacted the continuity of the trails, but we still enjoy bringing the group. Thanks very much.

Saxon Hill is a key area for local mountain biking. There are trails for kids and beginners, which is key to getting people involved in health exercise. Trails can be used in winter for skiing and snowshoeing. Would look to expand the trail network, either through purchase or land use agreements.

I'm a member of FotW and pay annual dues, part of which go toward trail building and maintenance of existing trails at Saxon Hill. If day-use fees are implemented, I would like to see FotW members exempted from the fees. This is already a heavily-used area, I would prefer to see the trail system expanded before adding more amenities that will attract additional usage.

Thanks for asking for feedback!

Saxon hill is one of the last large parcels in the area that is 'relatively' undeveloped and available to wildlife as a home and travel corridor. Use has skyrocketed over the last 3 to 5 years making it loud, busy, dirty and less desirable for wildlife habitat. Further development will relegate it to 'city park' status and drive away many of the creatures that are less tolerant of human and dog activity. I believe that it should be protected and its use more limited rather than developed for more human access. Charge use fees, limit parking, add some rules and enforcement, put large areas off limits and let some of it go back to nature. If we need a bike park, how about doing something at the Fairgrounds?

I believe Saxon Hill should not be forested, except where necessary for the health of the land, and it should also not be further developed for residential or business use.

Keep it simple and rustic. I'm not excited by the prospect of Saxon Hill being developed and losing its no frills appeal.

Saxon hill is great as it is. Why the need for change?

Saxon hill is a great place! People are very kind and my interactions are always good. I use it for trail running, mountain biking, and XC skiing. I like to bring my dog off leash and I appreciate the fact that I can do that. More trails would be nice but there is limited space. Growth is ok to some degree but I would like to keep the smaller neighborhood feel. Thank you for all the hard work of FOTW and the town management - this is a big reason I live where I do

Thank you for putting out this survey and collecting information on this great area!

Marking on map wouldn't work on phone

with so much rider traffic, it gets pretty beat up and wide. More armoring of trails and more drainage up high...

Don't over develop! An opportunity for a trail designated non-biking will go a long way in sharing the park. Dogs are constantly a problem. People violate leash laws and poop on the trail takes away from my experience. Keep pushing healthy recreation opportunities!

Maps we're user friendly on mobile, sorry.

I think Saxon hill is an invaluable resource for mountain bikers. There are few truly beginner friendly riding areas in Vermont and Saxon is one of the best. On top if that, the jumpline and advanced trails provide a fantastic place for progression of skills. Saxon should be managed to enhance what it already does well, cater to beginner riders and allow for skills progression.

The trails at Saxon Hill are great fun, however they are approaching over use. It would be good to expand the trail network to take the pressure off the existing trail network. Adding signage, increased maintenance and oversight would help limit impacts of so many bikers using the area.

Looking forward to a trail day here!

I have been extremely impressed with the quality and scope of improvements to the mt. biking trail network (my only use of the area) over the past few years.

It would be great to solidify Saxon as a premium mountain biking destination, while maintaining and enhancing the ecology of the area.

I love Saxon Hills for the year round biking. It is a place that I use to get people into mountain biking and change their perception of what New England mountain biking is. Keep it fun and flowy.

it was so nice to live so close to saxon hill and be able to just hop in the trails whenever I wanted to, saxon is a great park for summer and winter riding, although the recent development there has altered some of the existing trails which is concerning .. we need to conserve the land here! it's important to keep this area alive for walkers and runners and mtn bikers

Please sever ties with VMBA (vermont mountain bike association). Tremendous inefficiencies there without any meaningful lobbying wins. Keep machine built trails away - NO EXCAVATORS EVER.

I'd love to see more mountain biking trails added here. Saxon Hill is a great place for young people to learn to ride and for adults to refine and maintain their skills.

Thanks for the survey!

Regarding a fee to use Saxon Hill-most mountain bikers pay an annual membership fee to Vermont Mountain Biking Association and Fellowship of the Wheel to use area trails

Bikes!

New parking lot is great. I don't think a fee is necessary, but I understand that trail building and maintenance is not free. If a fee is considered, perhaps a waiver for VMBA members who select FOTW as their chapter?

The primary use of Saxon Hill is outdoor recreation (mostly mountain biking) and has been that way for a long time. I think Saxon Hill is fine as.

All the trails are wonderful and the variety makes them even better. More trails would be great, otherwise I think it's good the way it is.

The Saxon Hill trails are such a valuable asset to the local community. Many thanks to the Fellowship of the Wheel for their hard work in maintaining the network. I bike here regularly and am so grateful for the ability to enjoy this special place.

This is a great resource and a very nice place to bike. It would be great if the trails were a bit more developed and signage needs to be improved (Perry Hill and Cady Hill both do much better with signs and have another level up in quality for flow trails)

Saxon Hill is a great community resource! The mountain biking, snow biking, hiking and trail running are excellent and local. I almost always buy something in the Essex area whenever I ride Saxon. In fact, going to Saxon was how I discovered the Jericho Tavern and Cafe.

Keep this trail system going and try not to develop too much. Keep it natural, Thank you.

I live in Essex and love that I have the ability to mountain bike and trail run within 5 minutes of my house. These free amenities keep me close to home, doing my grocery shopping here vs in places like Richmond (where I would run and ride otherwise). I love seeing all of the families out on bikes and the children being so excited. I think it's extremely important to keep this resource open to the public and to expand the network to allow for more miles and more abilities and progress.

Keep improving and building

trail improvements should focus on wet spots/drainage to allow for earlier seasonal use, less down time after storms and less damage caused by people walking/riding around wet spots. thank you.

Maybe have a bike shop be able to setup a shop next to the parking lot at saxon hill.

Saxon is a fantastic resource close to the center of Essex and close to Burlington. Primary uses should be those that serve the local community as it's accessible for after school / work, even in the spring and fall with shorter days.

Trails off back side that wrap around to flow loop

Saxon is a great resource not only for Essex, but for the mountain biking community as a whole. An economic study would likely show that Saxon brings significant revenue to the town. In other towns with mountain biking there are vendors that capture dollars from visiting riders. Saxon does not have that same set-up and perhaps allowing food trucks on certain week nights and on weekends would generate some revenue. Saxon stays open during deer season and that is rare in Vermont so it becomes heavily used. It also is typically open much more than other locations. A fee structure would generate some \$ but policing it would be a challenge. Partnering with the Fellowship and VMBA might allow for some revenue capture similar to how WATA works with Little River State Park. However, a fee structure will only put up barriers to those who are interested in learning or to families...lots to think about!!!! Thank you for creating this survey and for considering public input!

I love this place and want it maintained to remain the same or better

The forest is a great resource to promote healthy, active lifestyles. I commend this thoughtful planning approach to keep this terrific spot for riding open for current and future mountain bikers!

THANK you so much for asking for input!!!! Towns like Boulder and Park City (UT) have understood that an independent, expansive trail and (safe = physically separated from car/road ) bike network can be a community's most valuable asset. Generally outcompeting comparable towns that don't invest, in all areas of wellness.

Trying to strike the balance between offering a place for mountain bikers AND preserving the land and being respectful to wildlife and habitat seems like the key to me.

Keep it simple and affordable.

Keep it up and much kudos to FOTW for their stewardship and advocacy.

Relocate some of the existing trails or add more bridges over areas that are showing heavy tree roots.

It's perfect the way it is: free, dogs allowed, not busy if you go at the right time of day

More mountain bike trails

Well behaved dogs should be permitted to be off leash. This allows mountain bikers and dogs to recreate together. A leash rule would exclude mountain bikers from bringing dogs because it isn't safe to have a dog leashed to a bike.

Parking is already overburdened at times. Would like to see speed limits posted and kept low.

This is the first time that I have seen trails of the lower section on the map. It's great to see that this section will continue to exist.

Great recreational resource for our community, left mostly natural.

My biggest interest is keep this area wild and natural. As Essex junction continues to be developed unplanned natural spaces will be ever more important.

Protect sensitive, important natural resources. Let recreational trails be developed in other areas. Take advantage of the forest's history as a plantation forest to teach forest management and do limited timber harvesting when and where appropriate.

It is an invaluable resource. Especially important to get new folks to Mtn biking/families

build more trails/buy more land!

Just keep it as a multi use trail with minimal impact on the eco system

Love the area and hope it won't get developed out of existence.

Current trails are maintained primarily by volunteer efforts and the funds raised by Fellowship/VMBA. There are no other groups that have put any comparable time or energy into the maintenance and development of recreational activities in the forest. Is there some reason activities and management of the forest need to change other than conserving it for public use.

Please keep the mountain bike trails and don't try to over haul everything. The Fellowship is doing a great job. Let them continue doing what they know how to do.

Love the area. Great mix of forest types. Interesting to see the old trash that has been dumped in here over the years.

I will be moving to this area of Essex soon and am looking forward to explore more. Hoping there are some nice, natural trails for biking, hiking, running. I'm sure dog owners would love that too.

I appreciate the updates on the process through Front Porch Forum. Thank you!

entry level ideas and family riding is a great gateway to get more people on the trails more often.

Maintaining the status quo and conserving the property are the things that are most important to myself.

I completely support Saxon Hill being used as a recreational area much like Indian Brook Reservoir except with a focus on Mountain Biking, running, and walking dogs off leash.

Hunting and atv use is not safe in this area. Primarily this area is for trail based sports mainly mtb. Horses are too destructive and dangerous to other users

Making sure the trails are protected and maintained is very important. This is one of the most popular trail networks in Chittenden County and gets a lot of use.

It's not so much about making Saxon better, as ensuring that we don't lose what we already have. The status quo is always fragile when faced with commercial development.

I do not use it often, but suggest keeping it simple, as woodsy as possible, for various uses.

Trying to do to much with a natural area can create stress and hardship on the area. Saxons hill area is not large enough to turn it into the next Kingdom trails or anything like that. Part of its charm is it's smallness and easy local access. Yes it would be nice to have education markers, and I do think if anything new was to be done that a way would be created to make at least parts of it ADA accessible.

Saxon hill is great! Don't screw up saxon hill with leash laws. Plenty of places to go walk for people who don't like dogs, don't Ruin Saxon Hill!

I just think this land is so beautiful and that more trails would be great especially in the higher up locations where the views are best and the land is more private!

The commercial development occurring here is a shame given all the other areas this could occur. The noise created by that takes away from a wilderness experience. But I am glad to see there is effort to maintain forest and public use land here.

please keep trail riding free for as long as possible

Saxon hill is a high use town forest close to the Burlington area. It would be nice to see further trails developed but maintenance to the existing network is important.