

# Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

## Introduction

Boyce Hill Town Forest is a 93-acre tract of land at the top of Boyce Road in North Fayston that was given to the Town in December 2019. A conservation easement on the property held by the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) ensures long-term public access and natural resource conservation. The Fayston Conservation Commission's Boyce Hill Town Forest Steering Committee is developing a Management Plan for the property and is seeking public input to guide its decision making.

The property is primarily open land with a 1¼ acre pond, dominated by a hilltop that offers expansive views of the valley below, Burnt Rock and the Green Mountains, the rolling hills of Fayston and the Northfield Mountain Range. The land was cleared and farmed in the mid-1800s and has been in varying stages of regrowth since. The hillside property was approved for subdivision in the 1970s and, in preparation, the developer built a road to the top, installed channels to direct runoff, dug a pond, and began mowing the hillsides again. While the land was not further developed, most of the property has been intensively mowed for the last 40 years. For decades, landowners welcomed their neighbors on the property, and many Fayston residents have enjoyed the recreational opportunities and views that it offers.

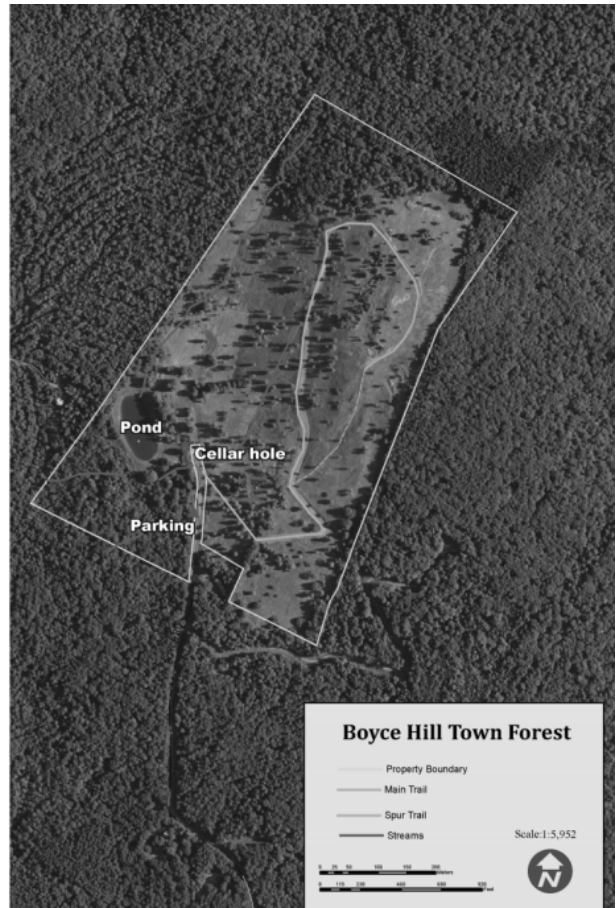
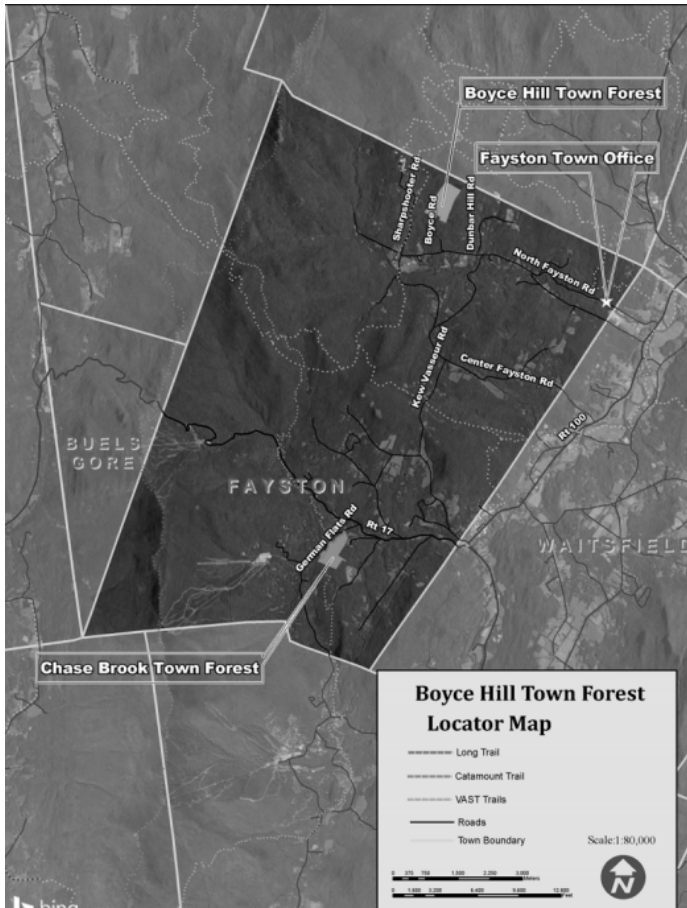
This survey is about understanding YOUR values and vision for the Boyce Hill Town Forest. We understand that people's experience with the property varies. At this point in the planning process, we want to encourage you to think beyond how you currently experience the property. This is a time to get everything on the table – please share your vision of what you love about Boyce Hill now and what you would love it to become.

The conservation easement guides us to conserve natural resources and the ecological values that sustain them and to provide for non-motorized, non-commercial recreational, educational, and other community uses. To ensure a common baseline of understanding, we first offer a brief summary of the information we've learned over the last year about how people value Boyce Hill and about the state of its natural resources for your consideration. We encourage you to take the time to read through this introductory material before answering the questions.

Combining professional assessments with your feedback and additional community ideas gathered at public input and education forums, the Steering Committee will weigh what is possible on the site and how to blend scenic, recreational, and ecological values into a suite of management practices that support both long-term environmental sustainability and enjoyment of the property today.

Please plan to spend about 20 minutes on the survey. After some background information, you'll find sections on Vision, Management Values, Natural Resources, Activities and Programs, and Management of Open Land Areas. **Thanks for sharing your perspective!**

# Boyce Hill Parcel and Locator Maps



## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### Background

**What People Love (that we have heard about so far)** - Boyce Hill is a special place for those who have discovered it. The panoramic views of distant mountain ridges, the closer views of the pond and the valley, and all the open scenery in between have drawn people to this place again and again. Others have appreciated the relatively easy ascent that is equally accessible to someone out for a Saturday stroll as it is to an avid hiker, biker, or horseback rider. Others relish the feel of the lower fields that hearken back to the area's hill farming past with tree-lined stone walls and cellar holes. Kids and grandparents, and all those between have loved breaking the summer heat with a swim in the pond. Skiers and sledders have taken to the open slopes, often finding just the right spot for that day's conditions. Others have found secluded, more natural corners of the property to share quiet moments alone or with friends.

**Past Management** - While Boyce Hill might feel to some like a naturally open and healthy meadow, much of what people have grown to love about the property has resulted from its intensive management. Land clearing, pasturing, road building, and repeated brush hogging have altered the landforms, channelized the water, and prevented about 2/3 of the property from retaining healthy soils and providing wildlife habitat. Boyce Hill has two perennial streams, one drainage channel, several wetland areas, a handful of seeps, and at least two vernal pools. The vegetation surrounding these features has been intensively cut, reducing water quality, flood resilience, and wildlife habitat.

**An Opportunity for Balance** - Because of its long history of human intervention, Boyce Hill offers us an opportunity to both restore some of its degraded natural resource values and enhance the recreational and scenic values it offers. The property is on the edge of a Highest Priority Interior Forest Block, according to Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. While total forest cover in Vermont has increased in recent decades, forests are more fragmented with less interior and more edges. Edge habitat forces animals to modify their natural behavior, is prone to invasive species, and risks greater mortality and diminished reproduction. Boyce has long been "edge habitat." If forests were allowed to regrow on some portions of the property, habitat for a diversity of wildlife species and overall ecosystem health would be improved.

For portions of the property that are selected to remain open, there is also an opportunity here to restore habitat and soil quality. Because it was usually brush hogged each year, about 1/2 of Boyce Hill (42 acres) is dominated by agricultural species like orchard grass, timothy, and clover. If the fields were cut less often, they would support native shrubland plants like goldenrod, milkweed and berries that will help build healthier soils and also improve wildlife habitat. Native shrublands offer people similar views, an "open feel," and reduced mowing expenses, though they would be more difficult to walk or ski through.

**Recreational Considerations** - With thoughtful planning, Boyce Hill could be managed to support a variety of non-motorized recreational activities. Too much use, though, could degrade the land, and allowing too many different types of uses could result in conflicts between users. The Boyce Hill property offers some recreational attributes not readily found on other public parcels in the Mad River Valley, while other potential recreational activities are available elsewhere. The Steering Committee is looking to professionals and this community to help us understand how much use is appropriate for this parcel, which uses work well together, and what experiences aren't available elsewhere.

## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### Vision

**Before we ask you about your specific recommendations for Boyce Hill, we would just like to get a general sense about how you feel about the property.**

1. How familiar are you with the Boyce Hill Town Forest property?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely familiar | <input type="radio"/> Not so familiar     |
| <input type="radio"/> Very familiar      | <input type="radio"/> Not at all familiar |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat familiar  |   |

2. How often do you visit Boyce Hill?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Almost every day!     | <input type="radio"/> A few times a year    |
| <input type="radio"/> At least once a week  | <input type="radio"/> Rarely                |
| <input type="radio"/> At least once a month | <input type="radio"/> I've never been there |

3. Imagine your most recent visit to Boyce Hill. Please share a few words or thoughts that describe your experience.

4. Now imagine a visitor to Boyce Hill 30 years from now. What do you hope they will see and experience?

## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### Management Values

5. Boyce Hill can be managed to support a wide range of resources, activities, and values. Four common areas of focus are: 1) Natural Resources Conservation (managing to restore ecological values such as wildlife habitat, healthy soil and forests, clean water, etc.); 2) Recreation (skiing, hiking, biking, etc.); 3) Education (school classes, public workshops); 4) and Timber and Forest Products (extracting revenue-producing resources from the land). While Boyce Hill might be able to provide benefits in all of these areas, a balance is needed, especially as this is a relatively small property. How important to you are each of the following areas of focus in guiding management decisions that shape the property's future?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	More Important	Very Important
Natural Resource, Habitat Restoration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timber, Forest Products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

## Natural Resources

6. How important is it to you that the following natural resource and ecological values guide management decisions?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Wildlife habitat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy ecosystems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timber value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agricultural product value (maple sugaring, apple orchard, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biodiversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clean water & healthy wetlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soil health and prevention of runoff and erosion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carbon storage for combating climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

7. How important is it to you that clean water resources be protected at Boyce Hill by allowing vegetated buffers to grow and distancing trails from these features?

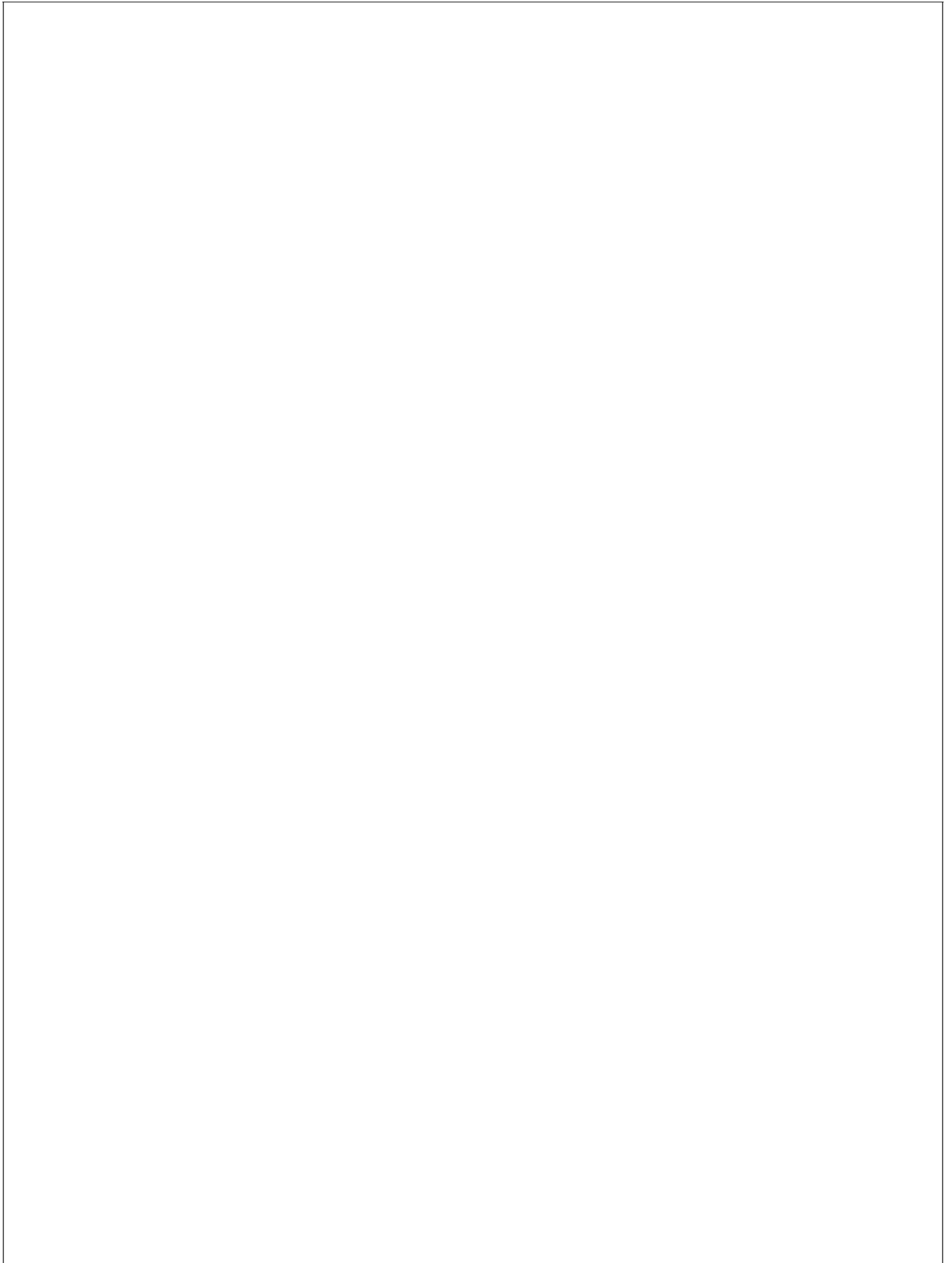
Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	More Important	Very Important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How important is it to you that wildlife and ecosystem values be improved at Boyce Hill?

Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	More Important	Very Important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. In the areas of the property that will be kept open, how important is it to you that wildlife habitat and soil health be considered in how the land is kept open?

Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	More Important	Very Important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### Activities and Programs

10. What types of activities would you like to see at Boyce Hill? Please indicate how strongly you would like to see each activity supported. [Note that motorized recreational activities are not compatible with easement restrictions.]

	Don't Allow (Opposed)	Don't Care (Indifferent)	Nice to Have	Hope to Have	Must Have
Bird Watching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Camping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campfires	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog Walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing the feel of an old hill farm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fishing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foraging (apples, berries, mushrooms)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geocaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiking/Running/Walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horseback Riding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hunting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ice Skating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mountain Biking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stargazing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnicking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glade Skiing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open Slope Skiing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sledding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snowshoeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Swimming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildlife Viewing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Views from the top	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Views from along the road	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	Don't Allow (Opposed)	Don't Care (Indifferent)	Nice to Have	Hope to Have	Must Have
Winter Fat Tire Biking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

11. What types of programs would you like to see supported at Boyce Hill?

	Don't Allow (Opposed)	Don't Care (Indifferent)	Nice to Have	Hope to Have	Must Have
School Programs / Outdoor Classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth or Adult Education Programs (Farm history, wildflower ID, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Events (performing arts, charitable functions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private Events (weddings, reunions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercial Use (yoga classes, ski tours, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

12. For any specific recreational uses or other activities you DON'T want to see at Boyce Hill, please describe and share your reasoning.

13. If it were possible to enable people with limited mobility to enjoy views from the property or to access the pond, what priority should those accommodations receive?

Not a Priority	Low Priority	Moderate Priority	High Priority
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment:

## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### Maintaining Open Land Areas

14. What is your opinion about how much of Boyce Hill should be kept as open land as part of a balanced management plan?

- Let Boyce Hill fully return to its natural forested state
- Let large areas of Boyce Hill return to their natural forested state while keeping remaining areas open through late season cutting or mowing as needed
- Keep a moderate portion of Boyce Hill open through late season cutting and mowing as needed
- Keep a large portion of Boyce Hill open through late season cutting and mowing as needed
- Other:

15. What values, interests or priorities led you to respond to question 14 the way you did?

## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### About You

16. In what town is your primary residence?

- Fayston  Waitsfield  
 Duxbury  Warren  
 Moretown  
 Other (please specify)

17. What is your age?

- 17 or younger  45 to 54  
 18 to 24  55 to 64  
 25 to 34  65 to 74  
 35 to 44  75 or older

18. How many adults over 18 are in your household?

- 1  
 2  
 3  
 4+

19. How many children under age 19 are in your household?

- None  3  
 1  4+  
 2

20. Do you have an affiliation with an interest group (trail organization, sporting club, natural history or conservation group etc.), or partnering organization (land trust, library, school district, etc.)? Please list if yes.

- No  
 If yes, please specify:

## Boyce Hill Town Forest Community Survey

### Wrap Up

21. Are there any other thoughts, concerns, or comments you would like to share about Boyce Hill?

Thank you for filling out the survey!

We look forward to your continued engagement in this management planning process. To review the Interim Management Plan, Natural Resources Inventory and other Boyce Hill documents, visit <https://faystonvt.com/departments-documents/conservation-commission/>.

To be added to our email list to receive future updates, please visit [https://bit.ly/BHTE\\_List](https://bit.ly/BHTE_List).

Finally, please feel free to email us with any questions or further thoughts at [faystonconservation@madriver.com](mailto:faystonconservation@madriver.com).