Economic Benefits of the proposed
Barre Town Forest, Barre Town, Vermont

A former quarry property in Barre Town, Vermont—already a regional destination for mountain biking and cross-country skiing—is in line to become a new, 370-acre town-owned forest. The Trust for Public Land is working with the Town of Barre, the nonprofit Millstone Trails Association (MTA), and local community members to permanently protect this property as the Barre Town Forest. A town forest for Barre would help connect local citizens to the natural landscape by expanding recreational opportunities, conserve a variety of natural and historical features, and strengthen the local economy in one of Vermont’s most economically challenged areas.

An analysis conducted by the Gund Institute at the University of Vermont concludes that creating the Barre Town Forest would yield positive economic returns to the town and central Vermont region.

Barre Town Forest will sustain outdoor recreation opportunities

Conserving the land for Barre Town Forest would sustain and enhance existing outdoor recreational features.

- The property contains 20 miles of Millstone Trails, a 70-mile trail network, which travels across rolling forested hills. In 2009, the Boston Globe ranked the Millstone Trails as one of the top ten mountain biking destinations in New England.

- In winter, the trails are groomed for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The trail network connects to the Cross-Vermont Trail, a multi-use path that will ultimately span the width of Vermont.

- The trail network also connects to the Barre School Forest and adjacent Barre Town Middle & Elementary School, providing recreational opportunities to more than 900 students.

An estimated 7,150 visitors from outside the local community visited the Millstone Trail Network (and
future Barre Town Forest) in 2011. Non-local visitation is conservatively estimated to grow 10 percent annually (compared to nearby Kingdom Trails in East Burke, Vermont with an annual growth rate of 18 percent since 2004), or to increase to 10,500 visitors by 2015.

**Barre Town Forest would grow the local economy**
Tourists visiting Barre Town Forest and the Millstone Trail Network to bike or ski, spend money on local goods and services (e.g., food and lodging). According to a recent study by the Gund Institute at University of Vermont, approximately $481,000 is currently spent by mountain bike and winter use visitors to the Millstone Trail Network. With a conservative annual growth rate of 10 percent in the number of visitors and the protection and maintenance of the trail system, visitor spending could reach $640,000 by 2015.

**Barre Town Forest would create jobs**
Nearly 74 percent of visitor spending would be captured in the local economy, creating local jobs. Visitor spending is projected to bring $269,000 as labor income, and generate 20 jobs by 2015 through an increase in visitation of 10 percent. The restaurant and lodging sectors alone are expected to gain 13 additional jobs.

**Barre Town Forest would generate timber revenue**
Barre Town Forest has medium-to-high value timber and sustainable timber management would generate a steady flow of revenues for the Town. The current timber value is $143,000. A full time job can be created as a result of sustainable timber management.

**Barre Town Forest would curb local tax expenditures**
Protecting open space saves local governments money. Residential development imposes costs on communities in the form of increased demand for schools, roads, and other community services—costs that usually exceed related tax revenue. The national median across 151 communities over 25 years is that for every $1 paid in local taxes, working lands and open space require $0.35 in services compared to $1.16 in services for the average home.¹ In nearby Cambridge, Vermont a 2006 study found that for every $1 in revenues residential development required $1.25 in municipal services, while town-owned land (like a town forest) required $0.92 in municipal services.²

---

¹ American Farmland Trust. 2010. Cost of Community Services Fact Sheet. Farmland Information Center, Northampton, Massachusetts


---

For additional information contact Kate Wanner
The Trust for Public Land,
3 Shipman Place
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-223-1373
kate.wanner@tpl.org