



Photo: Jerry Monkman/EcoPhotography.com

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

EVERY \$1 INVESTED BY BARRE TOWN WILL RETURN \$22 BY 2015



Courtesy of Vermont Granite Museum

Barre Town will contribute \$100,000, and the State invested \$310,000 through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board towards the acquisition cost of \$1.2million to create the Town Forest. The proposed town forest was going to be sold on the open market, thus threatening the entire trail network, causing a loss of the current 7,000 annual visitors and their spending of \$480,000. With the creation of the Barre Town Forest visitorship is expected to increase to 10,500, and their spending to \$640,000, by 2015. From 2012 to 2015, 36,500 visitors are expected to spend \$2.23 million in the local community, returning \$22 for every \$1 invested by Barre Town.

Source: Posner, Steve, and Marta Ceroni. Potential Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation in the Barre Town Forest, Vermont. Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, University of Vermont. Burlington, Vermont. Prepared for The Trust for Public Land. February 2012.

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

² Town of Cambridge Planning Commission. *Cost of Community Services Study For Cambridge, Vermont*. Prepared by Lamoille County Planning Commission. March, 2006

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