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**Forest Management at the Hinesburg Town Forest**

Timber harvesting on the Hinesburg Town Forest (HTF) will commence this winter. The timber harvest will be administered by Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper, with Hinesburg logger Tim Brown cutting timber marked by Tapper over the next two winters, shipping much of it to local markets.

This harvesting will be in accordance with the HTF's Forest Management Plan, written by Harris Roen of Long Meadow Resource Management in 2017 and adopted by the Hinesburg Select Board in 2018. This Forest Management Plan was adopted as an addendum to the HTF's 2012 Management Plan, providing specific forest management guidance to support the 2012 Management Plan's goals and objectives.

The main forest management goals of this winter's harvesting are to increase species and structural diversity in the forest, improve wildlife habitat, capture value in mature and declining trees, encourage the growth and development of a healthy forest, demonstrate responsible forest stewardship and to highlight Vermont's working landscape. This harvest will also seek to promote the resiliency of the HTF to climate change, natural disturbances, and the invasion of exotic pests, such as the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

A major goal for this harvest will also be to showcase the production of local, renewable resources from this public forest, to promote the harvest in an open and transparent way, and to give the public ample opportunities to interact with this important component of Vermont's working landscape. Public walks will be held throughout the process, with the next one from 1:00 – 3:00 PM on Sunday, December 16 at the HTF's trailhead at the end of Economou Road.

Income generated from the harvest will be used to promote stewardship projects on Hinesburg's two Town Forests, the HTF and the 301-acre LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest, including trail maintenance and invasive species control.

The HTF is a true multi-use forest, with forest management, hunting and recreation coexisting on the property. Since the 1980's a multi-use trail network has been developed in the HTF, and more recently this network has been enhanced and maintained by the Fellowship of the Wheel (FOTW), a local mountain biking organization, in partnership with Hinesburg's Town Forest Committee and Trails Committee. FOTW will partner with the Town of Hinesburg to ensure that its members are educated and informed about the harvest and that trails in the HTF are protected or enhanced by this work. Representatives from FOTW will also be at the 12/16 walk to discuss the impact of the harvest on the HTF's trail network.

The HTF is an 864.5-acre forested parcel owned by the town of Hinesburg and with trailheads located on Economou Road, Hayden Hill Road East and Hayden Hill Road West. Comprised of abandoned and tax-derelect old hill farms aggregated by the Town from the 1920's-1950's, the HTF has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is one of Vermont's oldest and most storied municipal forests. The property features extensive cultural artifacts and resources, in addition to upland forests featuring a wide array of habitat opportunities for wildlife. Timber harvesting has been a part of the HTF's management for at least the last 50 years, with a "Roadside Firewood" program in effect for many years.

The 2012 Management Plan for the HTF, with the 2017 Forest Management Plan attached, can be found on the Hinesburg Town Forest Committee's page of the Town of Hinesburg's website at <http://www.hinesburg.org/townforestcomm.html>