

# AUSTIN FOREST



## Vision Statement

*We as a community in Warren, collectively and individually, rely on the forested landscape in our town for our health, wellbeing, economy, and sense of place. As a town-owned forest, we value the Austin Forest as a public place where we can come together to enjoy, learn about, and care for the forest and its inhabitants for many generations to come.*

*The Austin Forest exemplifies a "working forest." The forested areas have been managed and harvested in the past; there is an established road network; and it is capable of yielding multiple benefits including wood products, recreation, wildlife, and clean water. The Austin Forest offers a typical range of management challenges and opportunities, and as such it represents an ideal vehicle for demonstrating careful and considerate stewardship as a model for other landowners. With due consideration for sensitive areas including riparian and deer wintering zones, we want the Austin Forest to remain productive while also offering opportunities to walk, hike, ski, hunt, and find space for quiet contemplation. Management of this property should also serve to reinforce the community's commitment to strengthening connections between people and products from the land, for current and future generations.*

*We recognize that a portion of the Austin Forest currently serves very utilitarian uses: gravel storage and fire pond water storage. We expect these uses to continue for the foreseeable future but accept that subsequent revisions to this plan may address other uses for these areas.*

## Key Features

- The 74-acre Austin Forest is located south of West Hill Road and west of Route 100. It is mostly forested except for a 10-acre gravel pit that is located in the eastern half of the parcel.
- The Town of Warren purchased the Austin parcel in 1986 and operated a municipal gravel pit on the property until 2006, when the Act 250 permit for gravel extraction expired. Since then, the Town has used the area for gravel and fire-pond water storage.
- A deed restriction limits the use of the Austin parcel to non-motorized recreation, forestry, agriculture, and as a municipal water supply. No permanent structures are allowed unless they support the above uses.
- A Forest Stewardship Plan for this parcel was prepared in 2007 by Matt Leonard, Vermont state lands forester. The plan recognizes little short-term opportunity for generating income from forest management, but there is moderate long-term potential.
- The parcel is also used for hunting. Plans to improve and develop the trail network and recreational opportunities were developed in 2006.

## Property Description

### Access

- Access to Austin Forest is good via an established network of trails and logging roads.

### Topography & Soils

- The Austin Forest encompasses the lower, northeast-facing slope of Sugarloaf Mountain. Slopes are moderate to steep, generally ranging from 0-35%. All the soils in the Austin forest are considered to be "highly erodable" and have an average rating for forest productivity.

### Streams and Wetlands

- Bradley Brook runs easterly along the northern boundary of the property.
- A sloping seepage forest and six other small seeps have been identified in the forest.

### Vegetation

- The parcel is dominated by northern hardwoods and hemlock.
- A small patch of a "red pine forest/woodland" natural community is located on the parcel. Although this patch is not large enough to be of state-wide significance, it is locally rare.

### Wildlife Habitat

- Bradley Brook provides an important riparian zone that may act as wildlife corridor linking forest blocks west and east of Route 100.
- Semi-open patches of old fields provide important habitat for a diversity of birds and other wildlife.
- Much of Austin Forest is mapped as a deer wintering area.
- Austin Forest is within the Battell Forest Bird Hot Block.



# Austin Forest



## Notes:



# RIVERSIDE PARK



## Vision Statement

*We as a community in Warren, collectively and individually, rely on the Mad River, its tributaries, and the ecosystems adjacent to it for our health, wellbeing, and sense of place. We envision Riverside Park as a public place where we can come together to play in, learn about, and care for the Mad River and its adjacent land for many generations to come.*

*We want Riverside Park to be a place where people can walk, swim, fish, socialize, play, and find space for quiet contemplation in and along the Mad River. We want all of Warren's residents to continue to have the opportunity to personally experience and identify with this important feature and resource in the town so that future generations will continue to have personal ties to the Mad River.*

*We recognize that the Mad River and land at Riverside Park are natural and dynamic systems that will change over time. For the health of the river, land, and all the organisms that rely on these resources – including ourselves – we want to allow these natural processes, such as flooding, natural migration of the river channel,*

*and forest succession, to occur as much as possible. We also recognize that our individual and collective actions in the past and present have and continue to impact these natural processes. We would like to take opportunities whenever possible to restore the river and land at Riverside Park to a balanced and healthy state.*

*We recognize that our understanding of the river and land, and our relationship to these resources are still evolving. We want to continue to learn about these systems and how to live sustainably within them. We see Riverside Park as a place where we can learn about the river and its connected ecosystems, monitor changes over time, and continue to build, use, and share our collective knowledge.*

## Key Features

- Riverside Park is a 6-acre park along Route 100 in Warren. The Park was created following the flood of 1998, which destroyed two houses on the site. Federal disaster assistance money was used to purchase the land. The Park must remain in public ownership and undeveloped in perpetuity.
- A recent assessment of the river corridor along the park suggests that the river channel is likely to adjust in future flooding. For this reason, investments in permanent structures or other infrastructure are unwise.

## Property Description

### Topography & Soils

- Riverside Park is a flat piece of land located between the Mad River and Route 100 upstream from where Clay Brook flows into the river. Bedrock outcrops that rise steeply from the shore hem in the eastern side of the River at the Park. The Park is located entirely within the River's floodway.
- The soils at Riverside Park are Rumney soils – fertile, but frequently flooded soils formed by sediment deposition during floods.

### Streams and Wetlands

- The Mad River is the defining natural feature at Riverside Park.
- A geomorphic assessment of the river channel indicated that the River channel currently is not in a state of equilibrium and is still adjusting its depth, width, length, and shape.

### Vegetation

- All of Riverside Park is mapped as sugar maple-ostrich fern riverine floodplain forest, which is a locally rare and ecologically significant natural community.
- Japanese knotweed is a non-native, invasive plant species that is present in dense thickets along the riverbank at Riverside Park. Japanese knotweed reduces native plant species diversity and impedes the regeneration of riparian and floodplain forests. It is also very difficult to remove.



## Wildlife Habitat

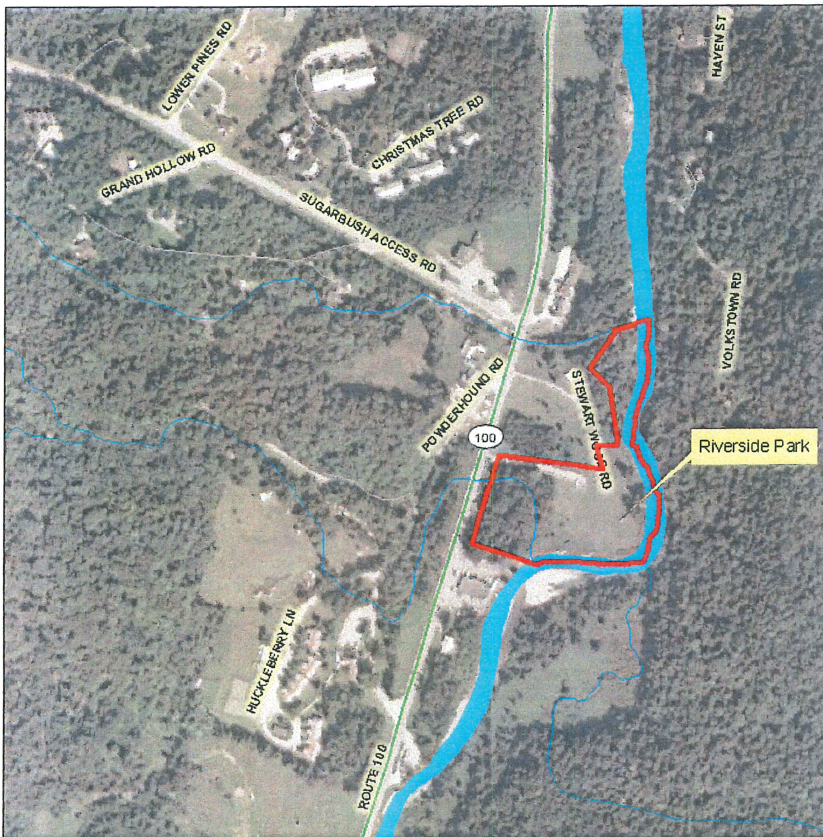
- Currently, the aquatic and terrestrial habitat at Riverside Park is not as diverse as it could be, in part, due the lack of a riparian forest along the western side of the River.

## Recreation

- Due to its location directly off of Route 100, Riverside Park is easily accessible to a large number of residents and visitors for recreation and has been used for walking, swimming, running dogs, fishing, picnicking, and general relaxation since its creation in 1998.
- Public access to the Mad River for swimming, fishing, boating, and general enjoyment of the River is important to residents throughout the Mad River watershed. Riverside Park was created in part to provide such a public access.

## Community/Education

- As a public space, the Town of Warren and organizations such as the Friends of the Mad River have been using Riverside Park for educational purposes since its creation. The Park may also be an ideal location for school groups to work on projects that require access to the River and/or forest.



## Notes



# EATON FOREST

REA



## Vision Statement (abridged)

*We appreciate that the Eaton Forest is a unique public space that is easily accessible by many residents due to its proximity to the Village and school. We want the Eaton Forest to be a place where people can walk, hike, ski, hunt, and find space for quiet contemplation.*

*We recognize that the Eaton Forest is home to a diversity of wildlife species, some of whom are reclusive and need space away from human development. We would like to maintain the secluded and undisturbed attributes of the more remote parts of the forest for this reason.*

*We want the Eaton Forest to demonstrate forest stewardship through low-impact management for forest products to be used for the benefit of our community, education and study related to forest management practices. The Eaton Forest should be a place where the community can gather to continue to celebrate and learn about Warren's economic, social, and ecological ties to the forested landscape.*

*We recognize that a limited portion of the Eaton Forest along the existing road frontage may be suitable as a site for affordable housing, of which we have a pressing shortage in Warren. Although there are no plans to develop this portion of the forest at this time, we would like to leave open the possibility of building housing for low-income families here until we have more information on this option.*

## Key Features

- 114-acre mostly forested parcel located northeast of Warren Elementary School. Comprises the lower, west-facing slope of Warren Pinnacle.
- Warren residents made decision to purchase parcel at 1983 Town Meeting to protect area from potential condominium development.
- Since purchase, there has been little official management or record of activities on parcel.
- A management plan proposes a conservation easement on the bulk of the property, excepting areas along the road that might be developed for the benefit of town residents (Areas 1 and 2 on the map below)

## Property Description

### Topography & Soils

- Mostly rugged terrain rising steeply from valley to about 1500 feet. Parcel defined by prominent north-south ridge/cliff.
- Due to steepness and shallowness, soils in most areas are highly susceptible to erosion

### Streams and Wetlands

- There are no permanent streams on the parcel; however, intermittent streams, seeps, and a vernal pool exist.

### Vegetation

- Mostly a hemlock – northern hardwood site. Locally rare natural communities include: mesic red oak NHF, northern hardwood talus woodland, temperate acidic cliff, vernal pool, sloping seepage forest and seep.
- A forest stewardship plan was developed by the County Forester in 2007. The plan recognizes little short-term opportunity for generating income from forest management.

### Wildlife Habitat

- Nearly the entire parcel is mapped as deer wintering area. Cliffs, ledges and talus slopes provide important habitat for many species including bear, fisher, bobcat and coyotes. Vernal pools provide necessary habitat for amphibians.

### Access

- Steep slopes and bedrock outcrops severely limit access to majority of parcel for logging.

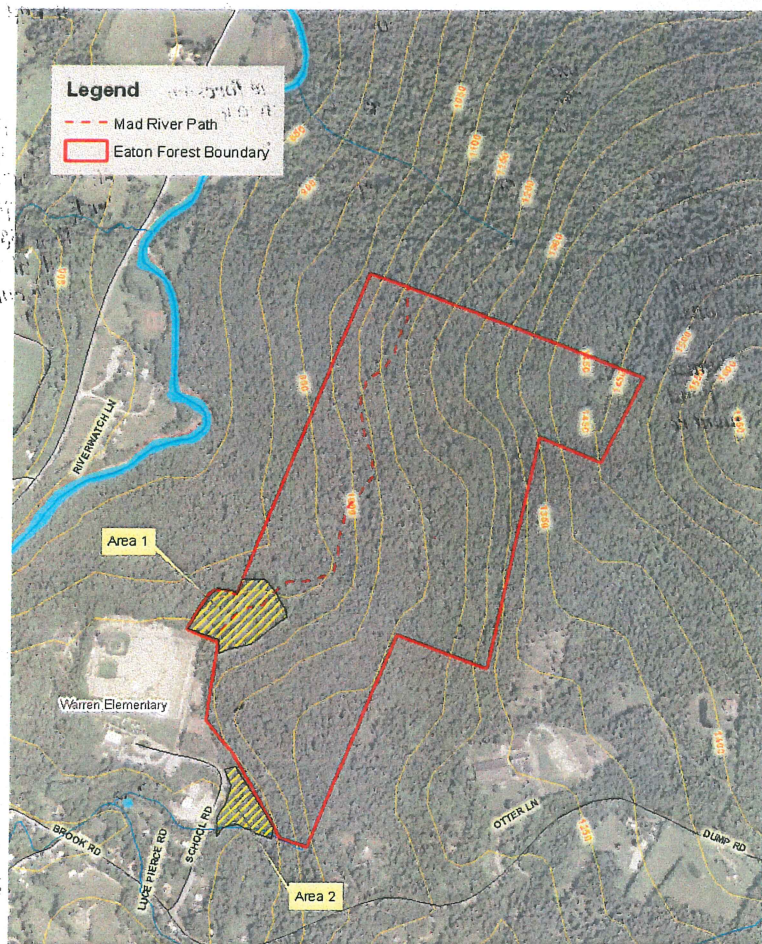
### Recreation

- Parcel is used informally for walking and hiking especially along a section of the Mad River Path located on the parcel.
- In 2006, plans were created for improving and expanding the trail network at Eaton Forest. Plans for an interpretative and vista trail were proposed, but have yet to be implemented.
- The Eaton Forest is popular with deer hunters.



## Education

- Students and teachers at Warren Elementary School and Warren Summer Camp use the Eaton Forest for a variety of educational and recreational activities including science units, writing activities, and hiking. Teachers have identified numerous other school activities that could make use of the forest.



Notes: