

**Prospect Farm General Stewardship Plan
Jackson Conservation Commission**

December 2021

Approved by the Conservation Commission 7-0-0,
Selectmen 3-0-0, and voted in the Affirmative as
Article 14 at the March 10, 2022 Town Meeting

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

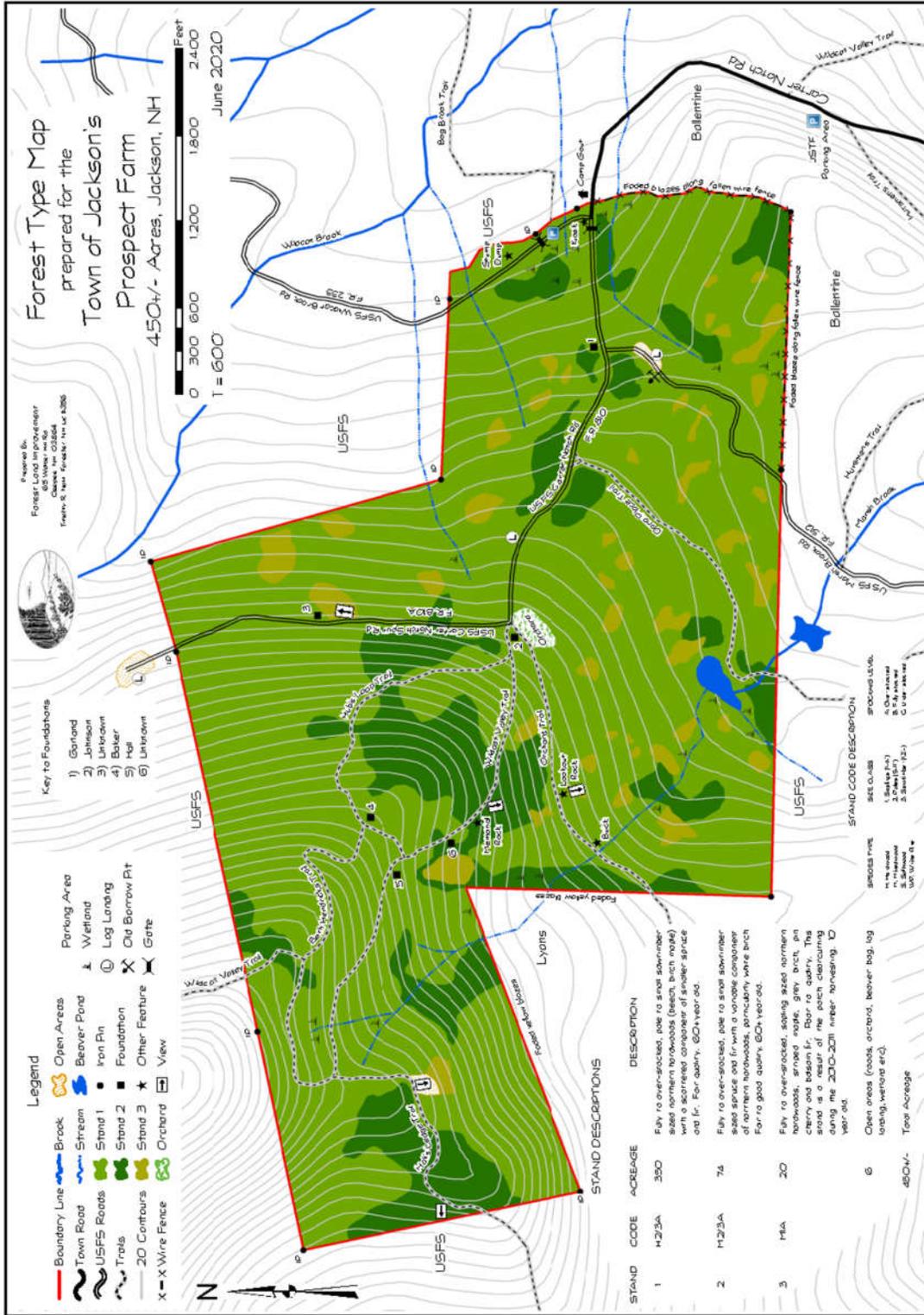
A. Purpose and Goals of the General Stewardship Plan: The purpose of the Prospect Farm General Stewardship Plan is to provide guidance and policy on the general management of Prospect Farm, based on the intent for which Edith Baker donated this property to the Town of Jackson as a public park, and which the Town voted to accept as a ‘*recreation ground*’. The Goals of the Prospect Farm General Stewardship Plan are to:

- (1) describe and meet the intent of the donor and acceptance of the Property by the Town for Prospect Farm to be managed as a ‘public park/recreation ground’;
- (2) describe relevant past and current Town management of Prospect Farm including ordinances, Town passed Articles, and agreements with the White Mountain National Forest and Jackson Ski Touring Foundation, and relevant sections of the Town’s Master Plan; and
- (3) update recreational use regulations, policies, and management recommendations.

The General Stewardship Plan’s goal is to provide recreational opportunities without overly promoting or developing Prospect Farm, to integrate its recreational uses in a harmonious way with its abutters, educate about Prospect Farm’s history, and to protect its natural resources. Prospect Farm has limited acreage, parking and user capacity.

Wildlife habitat management and forestry when done correctly can enhance the aesthetics, infrastructure and enjoyment of recreational users. By reference a separate Town funded Prospect Farm Forest Management Plan of 2003 and updated in 2020 provides information on the general ecology, soils, forest composition and management, brief history, and a map (Fig. 1) of the property. The forestry management report is available online at the Jackson Conservation Commission’s web portal on the Town website.

Figure 1. Prospect Farm Map



B. Donor Intent of Prospect Farm: In 1911 the Baker family acquired the original Prospect Farm properties except for a single abutting 100-acre lot (Tax Map R07-09). Mr. Charles M. Baker and Mrs. Edith C. Baker were well to do, lived in Brookline, MA, and vacationed at their ‘Camp Wildcat’ also known as Prospect Farm¹. Charles M. Baker died at age 61 in 1918, and Edith C. Baker died at age 81 in 1942. In memory of her husband, Edith Baker placed a memorial tablet on a rock on the property that states “*Wildcat reservation – These 500 acres of forest and farm are given to the Town of Jackson in memory of Charles Morrill Baker 1857-1918. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.*”

Edith Baker’s Will: The Will of Edith Baker states: “*I give my property in the Town of Jackson, in the State of New Hampshire, known as “Camp Wildcat”, together with all the land belonging thereto, some 500 acres more or less, to my son Ezra R. Baker, for life and from and after the decease of said Ezra R. Baker I give said Camp Wildcat and said land in Jackson, New Hampshire, to the Inhabitants of the Town of Jackson, New Hampshire, to be forever held and used by it for a Public Park² as part of the Forest Reserve so-called and as a memorial to my husband, Charles Morrill Baker, I have already placed upon said Camp Wildcat a memorial tablet. During the life of my said son, he shall pay all said taxes on said Camp Wildcat property, and no wood shall be cut therefrom for sale but only such wood cutting shall be done thereon as good forestry may demand from time to time³.*” There is no other reference in her will to this property.

Of importance, Mrs. Baker’s Will states that Prospect Farm is to be “...*a Public Park as part of the Forest Reserve so-called and as a memorial to my husband, Charles Morrill Baker...*”. The reference to a ‘Forest Reserve’ logically refers to the White Mountain National Forest, which is open to the general public. The Weeks Act of 1911 created the US National Forest System, its lands then known as ‘Forest Reserves’. The purchase of private properties under the auspices of the National Forest Reservation Commission began shortly after the passage of the Weeks Act. By 1918, the same year Charles Baker died, the various original purchased units by the US Forest Service were merged to form what was to become the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). Some of the originally purchased WMNF parcels abut Prospect Farm. One of the defined multiple uses of the National Forest Reserve System was to “*protect the beauty of forestlands for people who use them for recreation and other leisure pursuits*”, how Mr. and

¹ There is not clarity on where the name Prospect Farm came from.

² The legal definitions of a “public park” can vary but most approximate the following:

A “*public park*” means an area or portion of an area dedicated or designated by any federal, state, or local agency primarily for public recreational use, *whether or not such use is limited to certain times or days, including any land leased, reserved, or held open to the public because of that use.* (The term “public” is not commonly interpreted to be synonymous with “residents only”.) The Town of Jackson accepted the property as a “recreation ground”.

³ This sentence in Baker’s Will is subject to interpretation. Her will clearly limits the ‘good forestry’ condition on her son. Since she explicitly granted the land to the Town as a public park, an interpretation that Prospect Farm was granted as a town forest primarily for revenue generating purposes would be subject to reasonable legal challenge, particularly since the Town voted in 1938 to accept the property as a “recreation ground”. Based on the stated objectives of the grantor (Mrs. Baker), and as accepted by the grantee (Town), it is this reports interpretation that “good forestry” is permitted but limited to being a management tool for a “town park/recreation ground”.

Mrs. Charles and Edith Baker used their Prospect Farm property. Mrs. Baker signaled her intention to donate Prospect Farm to the Town of Jackson as “...a *Public Park as part of the Forest Reserve...*” in memory of her husband in 1919, a year after his death.

In summary the evidence is that Edith Baker’s intention was for Prospect Farm’s use and management under the Town’s ownership to be available to the broader public as a “public park”, and done in harmony with the purposes and principles of the abutting White Mountain National Forest. Neither Edith Baker nor her son were Jackson residents and there is no language in Edith Baker’s gifting or will, or the Town vote indicating she meant to restrict Prospect Farm’s recreational uses to just the residents of Jackson, contrary to what has been expressed by some in past Town meetings. The Town has never restricted this property’s use to just Town residents and has cooperatively agreed to a WMNF trailhead parking lot on Prospect Farm property.

Town Votes: Edith Baker following the death of her husband approached the Town in 1919 on donating her Prospect Farm property as a “*public park*”, upon her and her son’s death. Feeling the acceptance by the Town was insufficient, Mrs. Baker asked Mr. Gale to bring the matter before the townspeople again as Article 19 in the Town Warrant of March 8, 1938, “*To see if the Town will vote to accept from Mrs. Charles M. Baker upon her death and death of her son Ezra, land known as Prospect Farm (estimated as 500 acres) with buildings thereon to be held forever as a recreation ground in memory of Charles M. Baker.*” The Town voted in the affirmative, i.e. Record of vote taken as follows: “*Voted to accept the property of Mrs. Charles M. Baker upon her death and the death of her son Ezra, land known as Prospect Farm (estimated as 500 acres) with buildings thereon to be held forever as a recreation ground in memory of Charles M. Baker.*”

In 1944, Article 22 on the Town of Jackson’s March 14, 1944 Town Warrant “*To see what action the voters will take in regard to the Baker Place relative to the vote taken in 1938*” was voted as follows: “*After considerable discussion motion made and carried to pass over this article.*” This Town vote was interpreted to be unnecessary considering the vote taken in 1938. Following the death of Edith’s son Ezra, the Town of Jackson took ownership of Prospect Farm on December 31, 1955 after paying \$1 to the Ezra Baker’s Estate.

C. Past and Current Town Management of Prospect Farm: The Town of Jackson through its Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen are responsible for the long-term management of the town owned 450± acre property known as ‘Prospect Farm’. Its stewardship by the Town of Jackson since it took ownership of the property in 1955 has varied from a questionable clear-cutting of much of the property in the 1960s for revenue purposes, to permitting a stump dump (Fig. 1), to more purposefully meeting the intent of this gifted property starting in the 1970s. The Town voted to create a Conservation Commission on petition by Betty Whitney in 1969⁴. The Conservation Commission and a Citizens Committee in 1972 submitted

⁴ The purpose of the Conservation Commission is to protect the town's natural resources and maintain and improve environmental quality. By statute, the Commission is responsible for the conservation of natural resources in the Town of Jackson. The Commission's duties include keeping an index of all open areas, including wetlands, and conducting research into the possible use or proposed use of open spaces.

Article 54 on the management of Prospect Farm, which was voted by the Town in the affirmative.

To date four Articles relative to Prospect Farm have been passed by the Town. They are:

1. Town voted on Article 19 (1938) to accept the gift of Prospect Farm from Mrs. Baker as a “recreation ground”
2. Town voted on Article 54 (1972) to accept the recommendations of the Conservation Commission/Citizen Committee which included:
 - a. That roadside brush and erosion to be controlled
 - b. That undesirable tree species be removed, and vistas be maintained
 - c. That ski trails be established using existing logging roads
 - d. That hiking and ski trails be established to be linked with logging roads
 - e. If WMNF abutting lands open to snowmobiling, then consider developing connecting trails, and such connections to be separate from ski trails for safety
 - f. Summer camping and picnicking to be discouraged
 - g. To protect plant life, subsoil and terrain that motorized vehicles and trailbikes be prohibited (motorized vehicle exception for work projects, firefighting, etc.)
 - h. That Board of Selectmen or Conservation Commission to employ persons to achieve actions
 - i. That signs be posted on permitted uses for all constructed trails
3. Town voted on Article 47 (1980) to rescind snowmobile use
4. By petition the Town voted on Article 41 (1992) to permit snowmobiling (this Article agrees with the 1972 Article; however the restrictions on snowmobiling in the 1972 Article were not rescinded).

In the Town’s most recent ‘*Master Plan Vision, Goals, and Future Direction (2016)*’ there are three Goals relevant to the stewardship of Prospect Farm. They are:

1) NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL: Protect and conserve Jackson’s natural resource areas including hills, woodlands, scenic vistas, valuable wildlife habitat, streams, wetlands, floodplains, aquifer recharge areas, sensitive riparian areas, and the night sky.

Policy: Conservation of lands important to Jackson’s character shall be encouraged.

Objective: Explore town, state, federal, and grant funding for conservation and preservation.

2) ECONOMY GOAL: Support the present tourist-based economy while encouraging diversification to maintain economic health through the development of low-impact, small-scale businesses.

Policy: Diversification of the economy in a manner compatible with Jackson's identification as both a resort community and a traditional New Hampshire village shall be encouraged.

Objective: Strengthen resource-based enterprises (e.g., farming, forestry, and skiing) through both protecting the resource base, and fostering the ability to properly market products and services.

3) MUNICIPAL SERVICES GOAL: The town of Jackson shall provide the necessary municipal services to ensure the health and safety of Jackson residents and visitors.

Policy: In all appropriate instances, the town of Jackson shall work in a cooperative fashion with surrounding towns and the White Mountain National Forest to ensure maximum benefit for all the towns and the region.

Currently there are five approved Town of Jackson Ordinances directly relevant to Prospect Farm. They are:

- 1) Regulation of Noise Ordinance (2020) – Unnecessary noise is not permitted, with certain exceptions.
- 2) Litter Regulation (1984) – Littering is not permitted.
- 3) Fireworks Regulation (2021) - It shall be unlawful to display, ignite or discharge, fireworks within the boundaries of the Town of Jackson New Hampshire by any person not licensed, by permit of the Town of Jackson, to do so.
- 4) Camping Ordinance (2020) - Camping is not permitted at Prospect Farm except by written permission from the selectmen.
- 5) Town of Jackson Class VI Road restrictions (2020) – Permits abutting landowners to a Class VI road vehicular access to their property, work by or permitted by the Town, and hunters to retrieve game. The only Class VI road in Prospect Farm extends from the last house on Carter Notch Road to Halls Ledge, and the only legal abutter on this Class VI road in Prospect Farm is the White Mountain National Forest. Public vehicle access past the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation's (JSTF) Ballentine Parking Lot during the winter road ban is not permitted⁵.

⁵ The abutting and 'landlocked' 100-acre parcel (Tax Map R07-09) does not have legal frontage on the Class VI Road. By NH State law the owner can request Rights-of-Way for Removal of Lumber (RSA 231:40-42) from his/her

There are several Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and agreements pertaining to Prospect Farm with other parties. A renewable collaborative agreement exists between the Town and the non-profit Jackson Ski Touring Foundation for the winter use of Prospect Farm; JSTF also has a Special Use Permit for the Boggy Brook, Quail and Wildcat Valley x-c ski Trails on the abutting White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) (Fig. 2). The US Forest Service also has MOUs with the Town for road access to accommodate their timber management, and for the summer hiking trail parking lot on Prospect Farm property to access trails on WMNF lands.

The Conservation Commission and Selectmen hired a forestry consultant to develop a General Forest Stewardship Plan in 2003, and to update it in 2020. Some forest harvesting as recommended by the 2003 Forest Management Plan followed. Income derived from forest harvesting appropriately has gone into the Baker Prospect Trust Fund (Fund # 0023) that was created in 1960 for the property's management. Both Forest Stewardship Plans only secondarily touch on managing the property's recreational uses, the primary purpose for which this land was donated to and accepted by the Town of Jackson.

The selectmen designated a stump dump site on the WMNF Bog Brook Road (Fig. 1), which currently sees minimal use. Whether a stump dump meets the intent of the grantor of this property (as a Public Park) and the Town's vote to accept this parcel as a 'recreation land' has been controversial. It has become the source of imported off-site soils containing invasive species (Japanese Knotweed) that is requiring ongoing control treatment by the Town, which has yet to be successfully eradicated. The professional forester in the 2020 Forest Management Plan appropriately recommends closing this stump dump to prevent further introductions of invasive species. The abutting White Mountain National Forest also has strong limitations on imported soils and materials and requires equipment inspection to control and prevent invasive species from gaining a foothold on its properties. Being high in the designated National Wild and Scenic Wildcat River watershed and with proximate drainage ditches along the forest roads, the threat of uncontrolled expansion by knotweed or other invasive species from this stump dump is high.

D. Abutting Landowners: Prospect Farm is currently abutted by three different landowners; Ballentine, Lyons and the White Mountain National Forest (Figure 1). All three landowners currently permit overlapping non-motorized recreational use with Prospect Farm, with some restrictions. Because recreational users of Prospect Farm are not always clear when they cross the different landownership boundaries, it is more functional to have similar recreation policies whenever possible. The abutting WMNF lands encompass three Management Areas (MA) Fig. 2); MA 2.1, 6.2 and 8.6.

property across another property owner's land in such cases. The Town of Jackson in the past has granted conditional ROW to access timber from this private parcel via what is now known as the Orchard Trail on the Prospect Farm property.

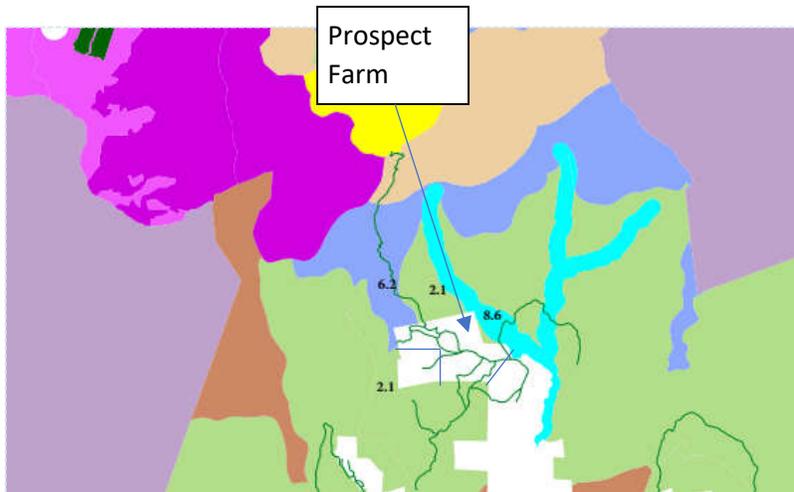


Fig 2. WMNF lands are the colored properties, and their abutting Prospect Farm Management Areas are numbered.

Relevant recreation objectives of these three National Forest MAs are:

MA 2.1 General Forest Management - The abutting portion of this MA 2.1 unit has no WMNF approved motorized recreational (ATV or snowmobile) trails, including on its Forest roads, has a Special Use Permit with the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation, and focusses on low-impact human powered activities (e.g. hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, nature watching, hunting, fishing, etc. and bicycles on its forest road system); wildlife habitat and forestry.

MA 6.2 Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation

S-1 Motorized trails are prohibited.

G-1 A semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity is the dominant objective.

Note: The Jackson Ski Touring Foundation has a Special Use Permit for the backcountry ski trail (Wildcat Valley Trail) from the summit of Wildcat Mountain Ski Area.

MA 8.6 Wildcat River Wild and Scenic

Hiking and Cross-Country Ski Trails

S-1 Hiking trails will be constructed and maintained to standards described in FSH 2309.18.

Visitor and Use Management

S-1 Management of the river area on the National Forest will strive to provide a recreation experience consistent with the semi-primitive nonmotorized ROS Objective.

S-2 Existing traditional recreational uses consistent with protecting river values and the semi-primitive non-motorized ROS Objective will be maintained.

The abutting private lands are:

Ballantine – This property borders ca. 0.7 km of the Class VI Road that provides access to Prospect Farm. It is posted as a wildlife refuge with no trespassing (excluding trails), hunting, or motorized

recreation. The Jackson Ski Touring Foundation has a long-term lease for a winter parking lot, and groomed x-c ski trails (Marsh Brook and Wildcat Valley Trails) on this property. The trails (wood roads) are posted as only permitting non-motorized recreation (hiking and biking) during the non-winter period.

Lyons – This ‘landlocked’ ca. 100-acre property currently is not posted, and has been logged in recent times. The only established trail on this property is the end terminus (ca. 0.2 km) of the Orchard x-c ski Trail on a former logging access road. JSTF has landowner permission to use this trail segment for x-c skiing.

E. Recreation Uses and Trends: Since the first Forest Stewardship Plan (2003), year-round recreational usage at Prospect Farm has increased dramatically. A trend experienced at other Town of Jackson properties (e.g. Jackson Falls), in the greater White Mountain Valley area, and across the whole region. Both the Selectmen and Conservation Commission in 2020 determined the need for a more comprehensive General Stewardship Plan for Prospect Farm, based on the intention of the donor and terms of acceptance of the property by the Town, with the Forest Stewardship Plan being a supplemental component. In December 2020, the Conservation Commission sent out a questionnaire (Appendix 1) to resident, non-resident taxpayers, and other users of Prospect Farm on their understanding of Prospect Farm’s boundaries, management, and their recommended input in a Management Plan. There were 223 respondents (~70% respondents were Jackson residents and non-resident taxpayers). The responses were similar between all three groups with minimal differences between them, except for visitor’s lesser understanding of Prospect Farm and WMNF boundaries, and they tended to use this area more in the winter than summer. All groups primarily combined their recreational use on Prospect Farm with the abutting White Mountain National Forest and/or abutting private lands concurrently without differentiating between the underlying land ownership(s). In the open question section a desire for loop trails where possible was expressed.

Parking availability differs by season. During the non-snow period a small (ca. 6 cars) cooperative Town of Jackson-WMNF trailhead parking lot on the Bog Brook Trail (WMNF Forest Road 233) is frequently filled to over capacity by runners/joggers, families biking the roads, hikers accessing Prospect Farm and White Mountain National Forest hiking trails/gated roads, dog walkers, fisherman, and nature observers. This parking lot is on Prospect Farm property and not plowed or vehicle accessible in the winter.

During the snow-covered period, parking exists at (1) a 29-car private parking lot on the Ballentine’s property, and (2) a smaller parking lot on Jackson Ski Touring Foundation’s (JSTF) property ¼ mile south on Carter Notch Road – JSTF’s Holcombe Parking Lot. The Ballentine parking lot exists through a long-term agreement between the Ballentine’s and the JSTF. The JSTF paid for this lot’s construction, and pays for its and the Class VI Road access snow plowing and sanding. JSTF also pays for the plowing of its Holcombe parking lot, which also serves both summer and winter recreationalists accessing Prospect Farm, and also frequently is at capacity in the winter by cross-country skiers and snowshoers.

JSTF’s Wildcat Valley Trail from the Wildcat Ski area summit, one of the best-known back-country skis, crosses part of Prospect Farm. On WMNF lands, this trail has a Special Use permit with the WMNF. During low snow years, a much greater occurrence with today’s warming climate, the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation’s Prospect Farm/White Mountain National Forest

integrated groomed trail system (Fig. 3) with its higher elevation and favorable aspect has the reputation of providing some of the most dependable snow for groomed trail cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in New England, as well as early and late season x-c skiing.

Activities such as hunting, though not providing the highest quality habitat for this recreational pursuit, has been a long-time recreational pursuit on this and the abutting Lyon's properties. Bird and wildlife watching, and nature photography also occur on the property. During the non-winter months dog walking, walking, running, hiking and biking now occur frequently, with the highest use on the Bog Brook Forest Service Road. The small non-winter hiker parking lot for 6 cars is frequently filled to overflow capacity, with some users also parking in the JSTF parking lot on the Ballentine property. With the exception of hikers and x-c skiers seeking the vista from Hall's Ledge, most non-winter and winter recreational users rarely limit their use to just within Prospect Farm's boundary. Rather they use Prospect Farm as a gateway and in combination with the abutting White Mountain National Forest, integrated usage as envisioned by Mrs. Baker in her Will.

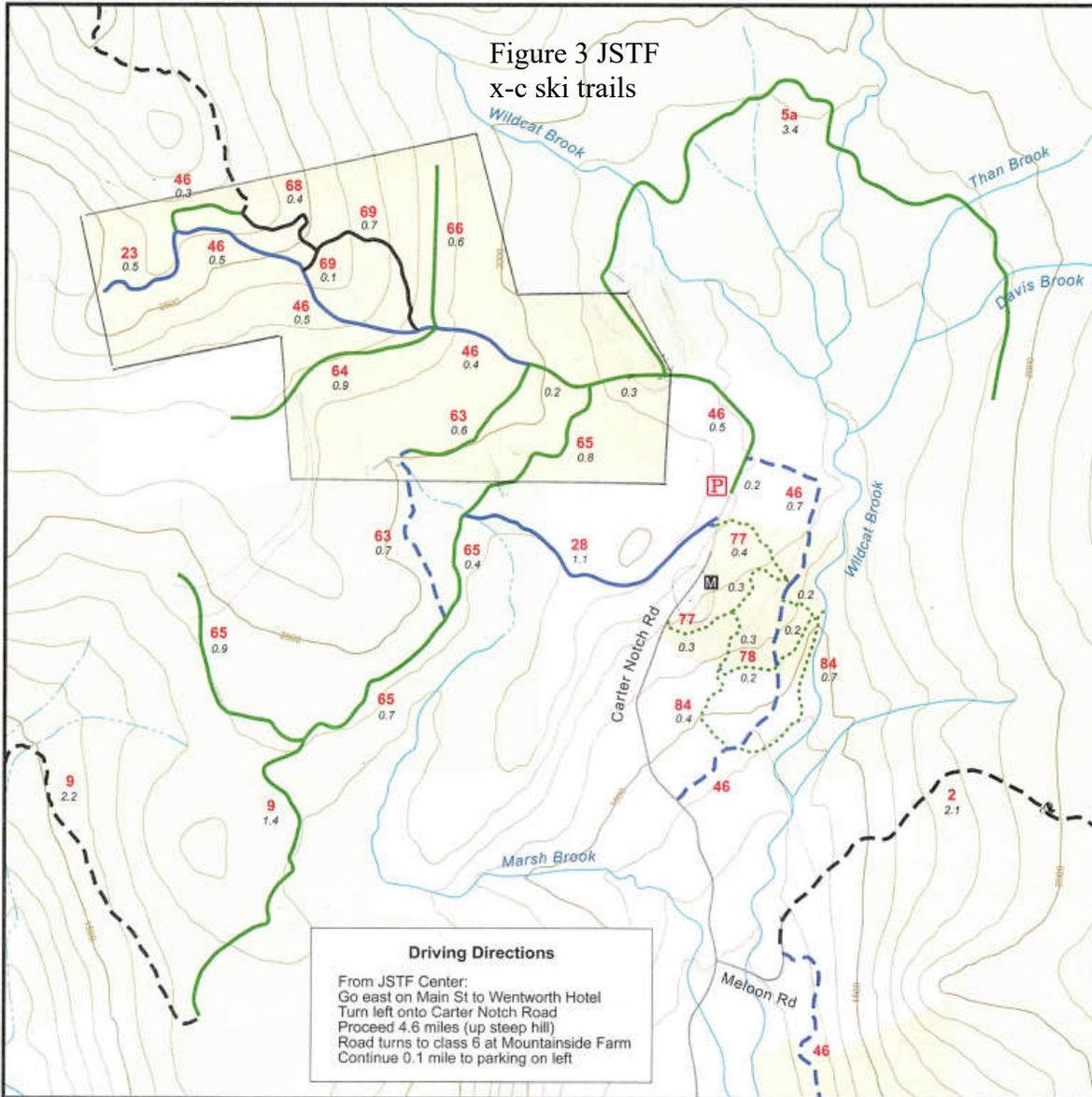
F. Historic Features

In 1774, NH Governor Benning Wentworth granted 8,740 acres to Rogers, Wentworth and Treadwell, including the area that became Prospect Farm. The area became known as Rogers, Wentworth and Treadwell Location. At some point in the late 1700s or early 1800s, the grant was divided, with R.A. Mason getting the western division and J.B. Mason acquiring the eastern division.

In 1830, a partnership of David Pingree and Ebenezer Coe purchased the western division for the timber. The eastern division was sectioned into lots, with lots 14 & 15 making up the bulk of what is now Prospect Farm. The Hall lot was added to these, making up the 500+/- acre Prospect Farm. In 1831, William Johnson was the first settler with town records showing 100 acres of land (lot 15). The Johnson foundation can be found just uphill of the apple orchard. The Hall, Baker, Johnson and Garland families settled portions of Prospect Farm and the foundations of their homesites dot the landscape. Tracking land ownership has been a challenge as these records have been found in Grafton, Coos and Carroll Counties. A major void in the records is a result of a fire in the Coos County Courthouse in Lancaster.

The various lots changed hands several times until 1911, at which time the Baker family had acquired all of the original Prospect Farm except for a single 100-acre lot. In 1938, the Town of Jackson voted to accept the property as a 'recreation ground' in memory of Charles Baker upon the death of Edith Baker and her son. In 1942 at the time of her death, Edith Baker's will grants the Prospect Farm lands known as "Camp Wildcat" to the Town of Jackson, with her son Ezra Baker having life tenancy until his death at which time title to the land would pass to the Town of Jackson. In 1955 the Town took ownership of the property. Further background on the land use history of, ownerships and cellar holes on Prospect Farm can be found in the Tin Mountain Conservation Center's 1989 publication '**Outdoor Explorations in Mt. Washington Valley**' by Ned Beecher, the Jackson Historical Society's 2015 publication, the '**History of Jackson, New Hampshire 1771-1940**' by Alice Pepper, and a 1968 report by Margaret Brown Garland located in the Town's library, office, website and Jackson Historic Society. The cellar holes are identified in Figure 1.

Figure 3 JSTF
x-c ski trails



Driving Directions
 From JSTF Center:
 Go east on Main St to Wentworth Hotel
 Turn left onto Carter Notch Road
 Proceed 4.6 miles (up steep hill)
 Road turns to class 6 at Mountainside Farm
 Continue 0.1 mile to parking on left



**Jackson
Ski Touring
Foundation**

603-383-9355
jacksonxc.org

Legend

- Easier, groomable
- More Difficult, groomable
- - - More Difficult, ungroomed
- Most Difficult, groomable
- - - Most Difficult, ungroomed
- · - · - Snowshoe Trail

17 Trail Key
 0.3 Trail distance (km)

White Mountain National Forest
 Other Conservation Land

Scale 1:20000

0 mile 1/4 1/2
 0 km 1/4

- TRAIL KEY**
- 2. ◆ Black Mountain Cabin, 3.6 km
 - 5a. ● Boggy Brook Trail, 3.4 km
 - 9. ◆ Dana Place Trail, 3.6 km
 - 23. ■ Hall's Ledge Overlook, 0.5 km
 - 28. ■ Marsh Brook Trail, 1.2 km
 - 46. ◆ Wildcat Valley Trail, 14.7 km
 - 63. ■ Beaver Bog Trail, 1.3 km
 - 64. ● Orchard Trail, 0.9 km
 - 65. ● Quail Trail, 2.8 km
 - 66. ● Carter Notch Spur, 0.6 km
 - 68. ◆ Beth Hendrick Trail, 0.4 km
 - 69. ◆ Hubs Loop, 0.7 km
 - 77. ◆ Ruth's Woods Trail, 1.0 km
 - 78. ◆ Waldo Way, 1.0 km
 - 84. ◆ Brookside Path, 1.1 km

SECTION 2 - RECREATION AND STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Forestry

Regulation: Forestry shall be a secondary and subordinate purpose of Prospect Farm per the wishes and intend of the donor Mrs. Baker and the reasons the property was accepted by Town vote as a ‘recreation ground’. All forestry shall be done and timed to minimize its impact on recreational uses, particularly winter recreational use. Forestry shall be done following the guidance provided in the Town’s 2020 ‘*Prospect Farm Forest Management Plan*’ (or its updated version), and the State of NH’s ‘*Good Forestry in the Granite State: Recommended Voluntary Forest Management Practices for New Hampshire*’. All monies derived from forestry operations shall be put into the Baker Trust Fund for the future stewardship of this property.

Recommendations:

- The layout of any new forest roads and skid trails should take into consideration both the protection of Prospect Farm’s natural resources, and their integration into the existing current hiking, x-c ski and snowshoe trail networks.
- Viewshed openings and clearing around historical cellar holes as outlined in the Forest Management Plan will be maintained.
- Forestry operations on the abutting private inholding, and White Mountain National Forest accessed by roads on Prospect Farm, will be coordinated such that they minimize their impact on recreational use, particularly winter recreational x-c skiing in Prospect Farm.
- The Prospect Farm Forest Management Plan should be updated approximately every two decades by a professional forester.
- The town should adopt policies to control and prevent the future spread of invasive species in Prospect Farm.

B. Natural Ecosystems and Wildlife

Recommendation: Nature watching is a popular recreation use. There is a precursory inventory of the wildlife and natural resources on Prospect Farm in the 2020 ‘*Prospect Farm Forest Management Plan*’, relative to their protection and management. It is recommended that the Town hire a professional ecologist to conduct a natural resources inventory on Prospect Farm and to make stewardship recommendations.

C. Stump Dump

Regulation: The current Prospect Farm stump dump shall be closed. It is a use not envisioned in the donors gifting of Prospect Farm, or the Town’s acceptance of this property as a recreation ground. As recommended by a professional forester in the 2020 ‘*Prospect Farm Forest Management Plan*’ the stump dump on Prospect Farm should be closed due to its history of introducing, and the continued risk of introducing additional invasive non-native plants into the headwaters of the Wildcat River ecosystem. This regulation aligns with the abutting White Mountain National Forest’s policy and strategies to prevent the introduction of invasive species on its properties. The current introduction of the invasive knotweed at the Stump Dump is

starting to come back after a past chemical treatment and shall continue to be treated and monitored until it is fully eradicated.

Recommendation: The Town in consultation with the Conservation Commission should locate a more appropriate site for a stump dump on other lands outside of Prospect Farm if the Town is to continue providing this service.

D. Signage

Recommendation: The Jackson Conservation Commission using funds from the Baker Prospect Farm Trust Fund shall update the current Prospect Farm kiosk with use regulations, a brief history of Prospect Farm, and a map showing the locations of parking, trails, viewpoints and historic cellar holes. Messaging should also include Prospect Farms regulations, relevant Leave No Trace practices, and how to reduce trail erosion by bikers and hikers.

E. Roads, Motorized Vehicle and Parking Access:

Regulation: The Town of Jackson shall continue the Carter Notch Class VI Road Restriction Ordinance and Town voted Article 54 (1972) that only permits abutting landowners to this Class VI road motorized vehicle access past the current gates to their property, work by or permitted by the Town, emergencies, and hunters to retrieve game^{6,7}. General vehicle use would result in severe rutting and erosion due to the roads steepness and wet soils. Current gates shall be maintained, and their seasonal winter openings for x-c ski grooming is allowed. Public vehicle access past the JSTF's Ballentine Parking Lot during the winter road ban is prohibited. Public motorized vehicle access during the non-winter period is only permitted to the WMNF Bog Brook Forest Road parking lot.

Recommendations:

- The small (6 car) non-winter parking lot on the WMNF Bog Brook Forest Road is currently operating at capacity on many days. It is recommended that the current stump dump be converted to an additional non-winter parking lot for ca. 6 – 8 cars and to request the WMNF to move its forest road gate ca. two hundred yards out to the true Prospect Farm/WMNF boundary⁸ on this road.
- 'No Parking' signs(s) should be placed at the intersection of the Halls Ledge and Bog Brook Roads.
- The Town should continue its general and cooperative Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with the White Mountain National Forest relative to access roads and summer parking lots.

⁶ The only Class VI road in Prospect Farm extends from the last house on Carter Notch Road to Halls Ledge, and the only legal abutter on this Class VI road in Prospect Farm is the White Mountain National Forest. It is used for forestry, emergency and otherwise as a trail.

⁷ RSA 41:11 Regulation of Use of Highways, Etc. – Unless regulated by the commissioner of the department of transportation as provided in RSA 236:1, the selectmen may regulate the use of all public highways, sidewalks, and commons in their respective towns and for this purpose may exercise all the powers conferred on city councils by RSA 47:17, VII, VIII, and XVIII, and by any other provisions of the laws upon the subject.

⁸ This gate's current location is on Prospect Farm property to prevent unauthorized use of the stump dump on Town land.

F. Motorized Recreation Use

Regulation: Motorized recreational vehicles (ATV's, snowmobiles, etc.) shall continue to be prohibited, with the exception of Class 1 and 2 (pedal/hand assist) ebikes⁹. Because of the limited size of Prospect Farm (ca. 450 acres), steep topography and wet soils, limited parking, combined with their prohibition on the abutting Ballentine and WMNF lands, snowmobiling, off road motorcycles, ATVs and other motorized recreation vehicles shall be prohibited due to the absence of legal winter parking, limited summer parking, incompatibility with x-c ski trail grooming, and speed safety issues with the high winter x-c skiing and summer hiking usage with dogs.

G. Biking

Regulation: Class 1 and 2 ebikes are not by state law designated as motorized vehicles¹⁰. During the non-snow season human powered bikes and Class 1 and 2 ebikes are permitted on the Class VI road and designated access road systems with non-natural surfaces¹¹. Biking off of designated road and trail systems is not permitted. Bikes are not permitted on groomed x-c ski trails during the winter months.

Policy: Separate single track mountain bike trails may be approved by the Selectmen, based on environmental review and in consultation with Conservation Commission, and subject to an organization's commitment to appropriately maintain them.

H. Overnight Use and Camping

Regulation: The Town of Jackson Ordinance (2020) prohibiting camping and fires, except by special permission by the Selectmen (e.g. a school camping overnight trip) shall remain in place

⁹ A "class 1 electric bicycle," or "low-speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle," is a bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

¹⁰ NH RSA 265:144-a Electric Bicycles. – I. Except as otherwise provided in this section, electric bicycles and operators of electric bicycles shall be afforded all the rights and privileges, and shall be subject to all of the duties, of a bicycle or the operator of a bicycle. An electric bicycle is a vehicle to the same extent as a bicycle.

NH RSA 259:27-a Electric Bicycle. –

"Electric bicycle" shall mean a pedaled vehicle equipped with an electric motor of less than 750 watts that falls within one of the following 3 classes:

I. "Class 1 electric bicycle" shall mean a pedaled vehicle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 mph.

II. "Class 2 electric bicycle" shall mean a pedaled vehicle equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 mph.

III. "Class 3 electric bicycle" shall mean a pedaled vehicle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 mph.

¹¹ State and federal law

- Class 1 or 2 e-bikes may be used on bike paths or multi-use paths where bicycles are permitted. However, facility management may ban their usage.
- Class 3 e-bikes shall not be ridden on a bicycle or multi-use path unless within or adjacent to a highway or roadway, or authorized by the facility management.
- Above provisions do not apply to a trail designated as non-motorized if such trail has a natural surface with no added surfacing materials. Facility management may regulate the use of e-bikes on such a trail.

I. Hunting

Regulation: Hunting on Prospect Farm is permitted following State of NH hunting rules and regulations. Following WMNF policy for its abutting lands, shooting from or across a trail or road on Prospect Farm is prohibited. Target practicing is prohibited. Bear baiting is prohibited.

Recommendations:

- Hunters should know the boundaries and respect that the abutting Ballentine property is posted as “No Hunting”.
- Hikers and hunters during legal hunting seasons are encouraged to wear blaze orange.

J. Hiking, Walking, Snowshoeing and Pets

Regulations: Hiking, walking, and running are permitted when the roads and trails are not groomed for x-c skiing. When the trails and roads are groomed for x-c skiing then hiking, walking, and running on the groomed trails are not permitted to prevent dangerous post holing for x-c skiers. Snowshoes are permitted adjacent to the groomed x-c ski groomed tracks. Dogs under control of the owner or on a leash are permitted, including on dog designated trails groomed for x-c skiing in the winter, with the exception of some special events (e.g. an x-c ski race) when safety concerns are involved.

K. X-C Skiing

Regulation: X-C skiing on designated groomed trails shall be allowed and continued through a use agreement between the Town and the non-profit Jackson Ski Touring Foundation (JSTF). JSTF shall provide winter parking, general trail maintenance, grooming and ski patrol. JSTF passes are required on the Prospect Farm groomed trails, or by users of the JSTF Ballentine Landing and JSTF Parking Lots (Holcombe) during the snow season. Jackson residents x-c skiing or snowshoeing on just Prospect Farm lands may get a free pass from JSTF; this pass limits use to just the groomed trail network on Prospect Farm. Otherwise a JSTF pass is required to access groomed x-c ski trails on the private properties and WMNF^{12,13}. Skiing with a dog is permitted on dog designated trails.

L. Noise, Litter and Fireworks

Regulation: Town Ordinances for noise, fireworks and littering shall be abided by.

M. Commercial Use

Regulation: Any commercial use of Prospect Farm must have appropriate insurance and professional qualifications as appropriate, meet the general purposes of Prospect Farm, and have a prior written agreement with Town of Jackson through the Selectmen of Jackson. Examples of commercial uses that may meet the general purposes of Prospect Farm, can also be permitted on the White Mountain National Forest, and can be conducted without interfering with the public’s use of Prospect Farm are guiding services, professional photography and/or filming.

¹² JSTF must pay for and has a Special Use Permit to maintain and use WMNF lands.

¹³ Note: The general public in the winter without JSTF tickets have free snowshoe/ski access on the FS road (portion of the JSTF groomed Boggy Brook Trail on WMNF property) to access the WMNF Wildcat Brook and/or Bog Brook Trails; this privilege does not necessarily extend to use of JSTF’s winter parking lots on private property.

SECTION 3 – ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

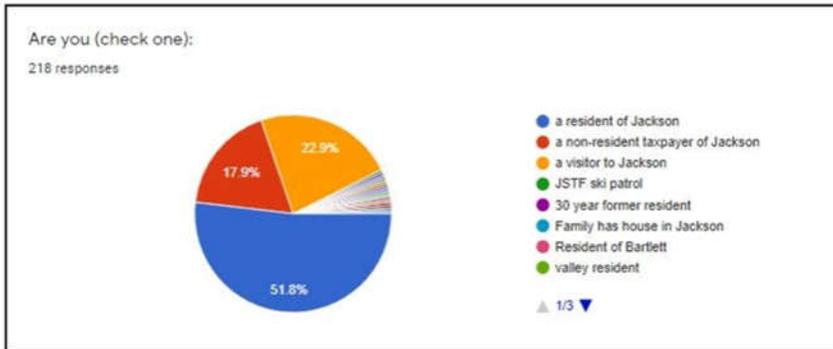
1. The Town should explore if the owner of the +/- 100- acre Lyon's property would be interested in selling this landlocked parcel to the Town of Jackson at an appraised fair market value as an addition to Prospect Farm. This property abuts Prospect Farm. The existing Conservation Fund held by the Jackson Conservation Commission (generated through current use withdrawal tax) exists for such land purchases. This addition to Prospect Farm would add the potential for and meet the demand for more loop trails for hiking, biking, snowshoeing and x-c skiing and protect future hunting, hiking, nature viewing and other rights.
2. The Town should consider negotiating a longer-term and broader arrangement (currently a renewable 5-year Agreement) with the non-profit Jackson Ski Touring Foundation that capitalizes on potential cost savings by both entities¹⁴.
3. The future management of Prospect Farm should take into consideration and manage for its adaptive role in climate change, including providing x-c skiing and snowshoeing recreation in low snow years. Trail and forest road construction and maintenance should be designed for more frequent and major storm events. Future forest management should take into consideration how a changing climate may shift tree species composition.

¹⁴ For example, the Town currently plows and sands almost to the JSTF parking lot. JSTF hires a private firm to complete this task. JSTF has trail crews to brush out and mow the existing ski trails. The Town currently hires private individual/company to mow the fields in Prospect Farm and to clear and maintain the views and cellar holes. Potentially the Town could plow and sand to and including the JSTF Prospect Farm winter parking lots; JSTF could mow the fields, clear the viewpoints and cellar holes and drainage on the trails with its trail crews.

Appendix - Prospect Farm 2020 Questionnaire Summary¹⁵ for all Responses

~220 Total Responses, nearly 70% resident/taxpayer

~113 residents, 39 non-resident taxpayers, 66 visitors responses were generally aligned and consistent across groups



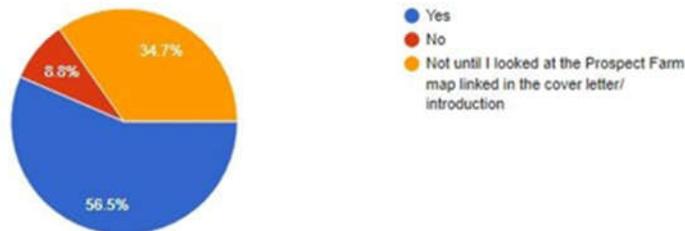
Do you use Prospect Farm and/or its abutting lands to recreate?

219 responses



When you recreate in the Prospect Farm area, are you aware of the boundaries between Town owned land, abutting private properties, and lands within the White Mountain National Forest? See map here: https://www.jackson-nh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif3296/f/uploads/prospect_farm_forest_type_map_2020.pdf

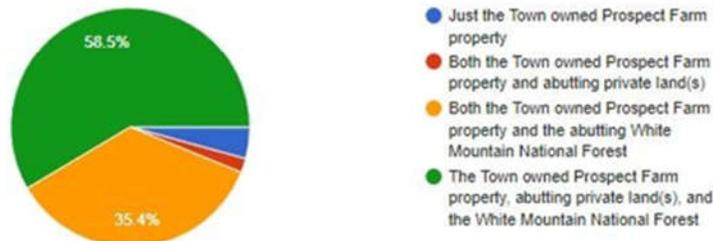
216 responses



¹⁵ The last questionnaire question was open ended “# 11. Though developing the Prospect Farm General Management Plan is just starting, what suggestions do you think the Conservation Commission should consider?”

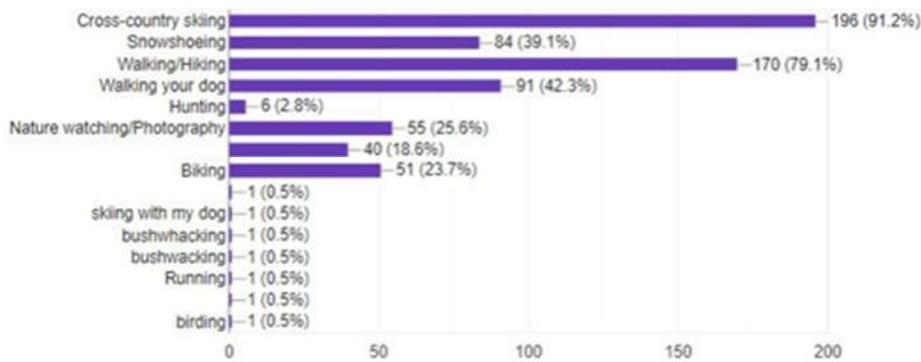
When you recreate in the Prospect Farm area, which of the following do you use? See map here: https://www.jackson-nh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif3296/ff/uploads/prospect_farm_forest_type_map_2020.pdf

212 responses



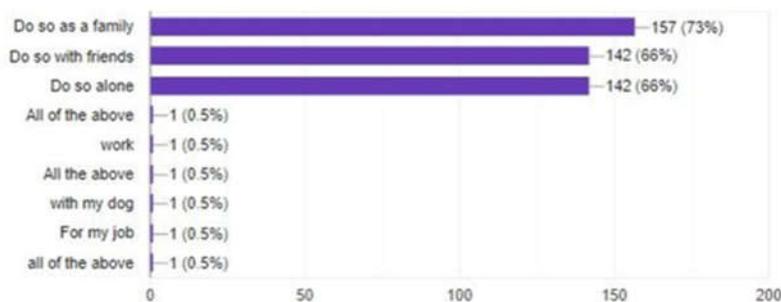
In what ways do you recreate at Prospect Farm, or its abutting lands? (Check all that apply)

215 responses



When recreating at Prospect Farm, do you: (Check all that apply)

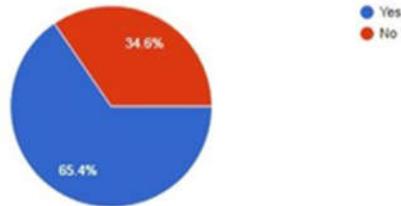
215 responses



Prospect Farm General Management Plan Questionnaire

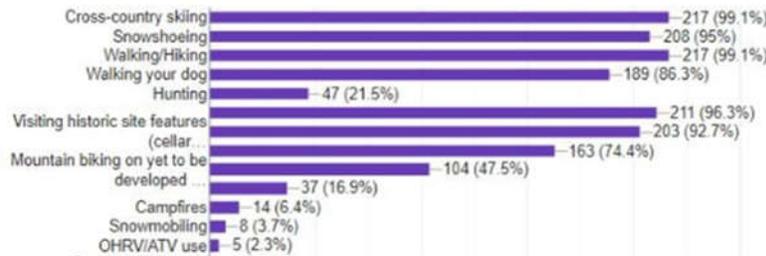
Were you aware that all winter parking at Prospect Farm is provided on lands gratis of a private landowner (upper lot) with a long-term lease with the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation, and the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation (lower lot) and all plowing and parking lot construction costs are paid for by the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation?

217 responses



What recreational activities do you think should be permitted on the Town owned Prospect Farm property? (Check all that apply)

219 responses



Do you think sustainable forestry on the Town owned Prospect Farm is appropriate to create wildlife habitat and to generate funds for the property's stewardship?

215 responses



Do you think recreational use of Prospect Farm has changed over the past 10 years, and how?

219 responses

