

Community Forests: A path to prosperity and connection

CATAMOUNT COMMUNITY FOREST

NOTABLE BENEFITS



RECREATION



TOURISM



EDUCATION

ACRES: 383

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2019

OWNERSHIP: Town of Williston, Vermont

MANAGEMENT: Catamount Outdoor Family Center

COMMUNITY SERVED: Town of Williston, Vermont

POPULATION: 9,870

TOTAL ACQUISITION COST: \$2,011,000

FUNDING BREAKDOWN:



■ Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

■ Cost Share

For a comprehensive review of the community and economic benefits provided by this forest and others, go to the full report at www.tpl.org/economic-benefits-community-forests

BRIAN MOHR/EMBER PHOTOGRAPHY



The Catamount Community Forest (CCF) is located on 383 acres of forest and meadows in Williston, Vermont. The property, now owned by the Town, is located less than 10 miles from Burlington, in a rapidly developing town. CCF generates numerous benefits for the local economy, from providing essential recreation, health, and education benefits to attracting tourists who support local businesses. This community forest provides a great example of how the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP) enables communities to think broadly about how forest protection can safeguard local economies, providing benefits beyond the traditional forest products industry.

Prior to becoming a community forest, CCF was owned by the McCullough Family and operated by the non-profit Catamount Outdoor Family Center (COFC), which still manages the recreation in the community forest. The property boasts an established network of over 20 miles of trails. Trails are used for mountain biking, hiking, trail running, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and sledding. CCF also hosts weekly running and mountain bike races, as well as mountain bike camps in the summer. Summer camp programming typically serves 400 campers.



Enabling recreation: CFC attracts 14,400 visitors from Williston and the larger region of Chittenden County annually. The Trust for Public Land estimates that the forest provides **\$210,000** for residents of Chittenden County, including \$30,000 per year for the residents of Williston, in recreational use cost savings.

Bolstering tourism: CCF draws visitors to the region with **7,400 visitors** coming from outside Chittenden County. These visitors support the local economy by spending money locally on items like gas, groceries, food in restaurants, and lodging. This visitor spending cycles through the economy as vendors purchase supplies and employees spend their paychecks. The Trust for Public Land estimates that the forest garners **\$518,000 in direct spending** each year, rippling to \$875,000 in total sales, which generates \$70,600 in sales and income tax for the state, and supports **14 jobs** in Chittenden County.

Enhancing education: The CCF also provides opportunities for students in K-12 education programs and the general public and the University of Vermont. For example, Williston Central School and Fairfax School use CCF as an outdoor classroom. During COVID-19 pandemic, COFC offered half-day

nature camps and outdoor after-school programs to complement remote learning or supplement homeschooling.

Managing timber: Most of the CCF property is mature forest, and sustainable forest management is expected to provide the community with revenue as timber production is pursued where it is compatible with the recreation and ecological values of the forest.

Protecting drinking water: The forestlands also filter rain and snow precipitation, helping to ensure the quality of water flowing in the Winooski River and Lake Champlain, the **drinking water source for 145,000** residents of Vermont, New York and Quebec.



This project was completed in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and would not have been possible without generous support from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

www.tpl.org

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