

**Annual Report and Plans
Spring 2015**

2015 IS VERMONT TOWN FORESTS CENTENNIAL YEAR

FFF's 2014 Accomplishments:

- 1) Installed way-finding signs at 22 trail intersections in the Fairlee Town Forest and William H. Lange Memorial Forest, collectively called Fairlee Forest.
- 2) Blazed or re-blazed most of the trails and more obscure forest roads. We used yellow as our blaze color based on park service recommendations for hiking trails not otherwise color-branded (like Cross Rivendell *blue* & Appalachian Trail *white*).
- 3) Published 1000 copies of a 2nd edition of *Fairlee Forest Trails Map* covering about 35 miles of public trails and including trail descriptions. Copies are available at Chapman's Store and the Town Hall as well as online at www.fairleeforest.org.
- 4) Organized professionally guided walking tours on forest birds and the Fairlee Wetland.
- 5) Consulted with members of the Fairlee Forest Board on aspects of the forest management plan.

Financial Accounts as of 12/31/14:

Expenses: \$793.96 (\$87.96 sign materials, \$606 map printing, \$100 UVTA membership)

Revenue: \$1,060 (\$200 LMPA gift, \$720 carried over from 2013, \$140 map sales)

Carried into 2015: \$266.04 less \$30 UVTA (fiscal sponsor) membership = \$236.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to the **Lake Morey Protective Association, Fogg's Hardware, Peter Lange, Simone Whitecloud, Ann Stevens, Peter Guest, Brian Guest, Bill Fitzhugh, Larissa Fitzhugh**, and our dear departed dogs Mikki and Sawyer for help with trail signs and blazing. Thanks to **Dana and Ann Low** and other Lake residents for maintaining Echo Mountain Trail, **Clem Powers** and other RTA volunteers for maintaining the Fairlee section of Cross Rivendell Trail, and **Glenn McKinley, Terry Lewis** and other VAST members for maintaining and grooming the Fairlee snowmobile trails so beautifully, and to **Jim O'Donnell** for his work on some of the eroded forest roads. A very special thanks to **Arlene Guest** for her time and hard work on map and website design, **Peter Guest** for the website's Geology page, and **Steve Hagenbuch** of Audubon Vermont and **Marcus Bradley** and **Ben Machin** of Redstart Forestry for fact-checking. Thanks also to County Forester **David Paganelli** and **Steve Hagenbuch** for guiding walking tours, and to **David Matthews** for his enlightened leadership of the Fairlee Forest Board.

FFF's 2015 Projects:

- 1) Continue working with Forest Board on intersecting projects:

- a. Construction of an information kiosk at the Bald Top Rd. parking entrance.
 - b. Planning and initiation of ***The Fairlee Forest Bird Monitoring Project***, a long-term study in Fairlee Forest on impacts of logging on migratory birds and other wildlife (in cooperation with Vermont Center for Ecostudies and Audubon Vermont).
 - c. Under consideration: Construction of a covered viewing platform on Bald Top.
- 2) Create the **Fairlee Forests and Trails** website and interactive blog as a window into our forest, (opens June 5, 2015, at www.fairleeforest.org). *Note: This is best opened from the link here as we have not yet registered it on various search engines. We hope you will have a look and send us your feedback, either on the related Facebook blog or in an email to the website contact address.*
 - 3) The ***Fairlee Forest Bird Monitoring Project***: Public Component. Any birder can contribute to the inventory of birds observed in Fairlee Forest by posting observations to a *Fairlee Forests* account on Vermont eBird, to be established by mid-June. Sightings posted to this account will be tabulated over 15 years and become a component of the Project. *We will send an email with instructions for registering and posting sightings when the account has been set up.*
 - 4) Trails: Signpost and re-blaze Sawyer Mt. and Palisades trails. Maintain Fairlee Forest trail signs (tighten fastening and refresh lettering where necessary). Continue work with RTA, LMPA, and interested individuals on maintenance of hiking trails, as needed.
 - 5) Possible programs: Guided tours and workshops on topics such as * wetlands & vernal pools, * recognizing bird songs and habitats, * tree identification, * wildflower & herbaceous plants, * managing woodlands for wildlife, * reading history in the forest, and * managing invasive plants.
 - 6) *We may also have a fun celebration of the **Vermont Town Forest Centennial** in late August. Stay tuned!*

Please let us know by return e-mail which of these programs would interest you. Ideas for other topics are welcome too!

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Blazing Sawyer Mountain and Palisades Trails (the latter after falcons have left)
- Maintaining trail signs and clearing sight-line obstacles to trail blazes
- Helping organize and publicize public programs

If interested, reply to ldfitzhugh@yahoo.com or hinkherrick@gmail.com.

You can also:

- Participate in the Fairlee Forest “travelling” bird inventory on eBird.
- Add forest photos, observations, and information to our website Facebook page
- Collect and carry out trash from forest roads and trails when you visit.

