



C/O Broadreach Planning & Design
PO Box 321
Charlotte, Vermont 05445

**The Vermont Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects,
The Vermont Planning Associations, and
The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program**

Present:

The 2016/2017 Vermont Public Places Awards

To recognize special public spaces, the corridors that connect them, or networks of public spaces which have been defined or enriched by planning or design, as well as regulations that promote positive, public uses and benefits.

ENTRY FORM

This form must be completed and submitted with the required entry fee per submission. Submissions should be sent by email to jdonovan@gmavt.net (subject: Public Space Awards) or by regular mail or delivery to VTASLA c/o Jim Donovan, Broadreach Planning & Design, PO Box 321, Charlotte, VT 05445 before **January 26, 2017**.

Hinesburg Town Forest National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Project name

Hinesburg, Vermont

Project location

Sarah Graulty, Robert McCullough, and Devin Colman

Project team members:

Town of Hinesburg

Owner

Devin Colman, State Architectural Historian

Submitter

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 1 National Life Drive, Floor 6, Montpelier, VT 05620

Address

802-828-3043, devin.colman@vermont.gov

Telephone number and email address

\$25.00

Fee amount enclosed

2016/2017 Vermont Public Places Awards Submission
American Society of Landscape Architects – Vermont

Hinesburg Town Forest Historic District
National Register of Historic Places Nomination
Listed on June 7, 2016

Synopsis

Established in 1936 and encompassing 837 acres of mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodlands, the Hinesburg Town Forest has been actively managed and maintained by the Hinesburg community over the past 81 years. In recognition of its historic significance, the National Park Service officially listed the Hinesburg Town Forest in the National Register of Historic Places on June 7, 2016. As such, it is the first town forest in the nation to be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places and recognized as a historic vernacular landscape with a strong tradition of forest stewardship and conservation.



Figure 1: Entrance to the Hinesburg Town Forest. Photograph by Sarah Gaulty.

Project Background

The Town of Hinesburg cares deeply about the Hinesburg Town Forest, as evidenced by its ongoing stewardship by the Town Forest Committee. This committee manages the forest for the benefit of the local community, and has developed a Landscape Inventory & Assessment (2006) and a Management Plan (2012). Both of these documents reference the cultural history of the forest, which is visible in the form of cellar holes, stone walls, and abandoned roads, and the need to properly document these resources.

Beyond these 19th century remnants, however, the history of town forest itself, from its establishment in 1936 to the present, also needed to be fully researched and documented. In 2007, Sarah Gaulty, a student in the UVM Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, with the guidance of UVM professor Robert McCullough, proposed nominating the Hinesburg Town Forest to the National Register of Historic Places. With the support of the Town Forest Committee, Ms. Gaulty and Professor McCullough began to research and write the National Register nomination.



*Figure 2: Conifer plantation on the left, and Red Maple-Northern Hardwood stand on the right.
Photograph by Sarah Gaulty.*

Research Results

The research and documentation developed by Ms. Gaulty and Professor McCullough shows that the Hinesburg Town Forest is a well preserved, well documented, and actively managed example of a municipal forest. It is significant for its contribution to the broad patterns of history relating to community-owned forests in New England – an unbroken continuum that spans four centuries and reveals strong traditions of forest stewardship and conservation throughout that history. It is also significant as a specific and clearly-defined historic vernacular landscape.

Within the vernacular landscape of the Hinesburg Town Forest, there are thirteen distinct cover types containing twenty-nine different stands. Within this framework, the forest was nominated as a historic district, in which each stand is documented as an individual resource. Collectively, they form a historic district in which the stands are united historically by plan and physical development.



Figure 3: The stone wall is evidence of a 19th century farmstead, with a conifer plantation on the right. Photograph by Sarah Gaulty.

National Register Listing Process

The completed National Register of Historic Places nomination form was submitted to the National Park Service for review in Fall 2015. It was a challenging nomination to evaluate because a town forest had never been individually nominated before. In addition, the history of New England's town forests, conceived as opportunities for cultivating timber, bear little or no similarity to the carefully managed timber plantations cropped by the timber industry elsewhere in the country. Following its review, the National Park Service returned the nomination on the basis that it lacked sufficient documentation to support designation as a designed landscape that shows manipulation of the land to suit the purposes of its use. In response, Professor McCullough explained that the establishment of a town forest from abandoned farm fields is a long-term proposition that requires sustained management and maintenance of the different stands. Evidence of this land use planning is clearly evident to anyone trained to read a forested landscape. With minor revisions, the nomination was resubmitted to the National Park Service for review, and on June 7, 2016, the Hinesburg Town Forest was formally listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



*Figure 4: Carefully planted rows in Stand #9, a conifer plantation.
Photograph by Sarah Gaulty.*

Summary

As a result of listing the Hinesburg Town Forest in the National Register of Historic Places, the town has gained a deeper appreciation of the forest as a historic resource, in addition to its importance as a recreational, natural, and aesthetic resource. At the federal level, the submission of this nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places provided an opportunity to educate National Register program staff about municipal forestry practices in New England and make a case for the historic significance of town forests. It is hoped that additional town forests will seek designation and further the documentation and appreciation of this aspect of our landscape heritage.

The final nomination can be viewed online here:

http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/VT_ChittendenCounty_Hinesburg_TownForest.pdf



Figure 5: An old stone wall demarcates an Early Northern Hardwood stand in the foreground and a conifer plantation in the background. Photograph by Sarah Gaulty.