

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018
(Expires Jan. 2005)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Hinesburg Town Forest

other names/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: _____ not for publication _____

city or town: Hinesburg vicinity: N/A

state: Vermont code: VT county: Chittenden code: 007 zip code: 05461

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ____ nationally ____ statewide ____ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official or other official and title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

____ See continuation sheet.
 ____ determined eligible for the National Register
 ____ See continuation sheet.
 ____ determined not eligible for the National Register
 ____ removed from the National Register
 ____ other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: (Check as many boxes as apply)

____ private
☒ public-local
 ____ public-state
 ____ public-Federal

Number of Resources Within Property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
buildings:	____	____
districts:	____	____
sites:	____	____
structures:	____	____
objects:	____	____
total:	____	____

Category of Property: (Check only one box)

____ building(s)
☒ district
 ____ site(s)
 ____ structure(s)
 ____ object(s)

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: (Enter categories and subcategories from instructions)

Category:	Subcategory:
LANDSCAPE	Forest

Current Functions: (Enter categories and subcategories from instructions)

Category:	Subcategory:
LANDSCAPE	Forest

7. Description

Architectural Classification: (Enter categories from instructions)

other: _____

Materials: (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: _____

roof: _____

walls: _____

other: _____

Narrative Description: (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria:

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations:

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
☐ B. Removed from its original location.
☐ C. A birthplace or a grave.
☐ D. A cemetery.
☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
☐ F. A commemorative property.
☐ G. Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance with the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance: (Enter categories from instructions) **Period of Significance:**

CONSERVATION

1936-1958

Significant Person: (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Significant Dates:

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect / Builder:

Narrative Statement of Significance:

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography:

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):

- ☐ Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ Previously listed in the National Register.
- ☐ Previously determined eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey No. _____
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record No. _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office.
- ☐ Other state agency: Vermont Agency of Transportation
- ☐ Federal agency.
- ☐ Local government.
- ☐ University.
- ☐ Other. Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: _____

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet). _____ See continuation sheet

Zone Easting Northing

Zone Easting Northing

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name / Title: Sarah LeVaun Gaulty

Organization: _____ Date: _____

Street & Number: 31 School Street Apt. 1 Telephone: 802-578-7030

City or Town: Burlington State: VT Zip Code: 05401

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

13. Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name / Title: _____

Organization: Town of Hinesburg, Vermont Date: _____

Street & Number: _____ Telephone: _____

City or Town: Hinesburg State: VT Zip Code: 05401

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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Hinesburg Town Forest

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Hinesburg, Chittenden County, Vermont

Narrative Description

The Hinesburg Town Forest covers 837 acres of mixed broadleaf and coniferous forested woodland to the east of the village of Hinesburg, Vermont in the foothills of the Northern Green Mountains. The forest abuts the town of Huntington to the east and is divided into two parcels on opposite sides of Hayden Hill Road. The main parcel shares only a corner boundary to the northwest with the second parcel, known as the Hollis parcel after former resident Henry Hollis, who farmed the land before reforestation. The forest is characterized by varied topography with elevations rising from 900 to 1600 feet above sea level. The most prominent topographical features include a concentric knoll near the center of the Hollis parcel and a sizeable U-shaped ridge that runs northeast to southwest and subsequently follows the southwestern edge of the property boundary in the main parcel. Economou Road, a Class 4 road, and several logging roads provide restricted vehicle access to the forest, and networks of hiking, mountain biking, horse, and all-terrain vehicle trails criss-cross through the landscape. Trailheads at three points on Hayden Hill East, Hayden Hill West, and Economou Road serve as the primary entrances to the forest, and adjacent compacted dirt lots offer visitor parking.

Historically, the forest site has sustained a number of uses. During the nineteenth century, landowners cleared the area to establish farms and used portions for a variety of activities including cultivating crops, mowing hay, grazing cows and sheep, sugaring, growing apples, and cutting firewood. Farming persisted on the site into the twentieth century, when the industry fell into a period of decline. Beginning in 1936, the hill farms on this site were slowly abandoned and the properties either possessed by Hinesburg for taxes or deeded to the town. The current town forest boundaries were established when the final parcel was acquired in 1958. As early as 1939, the town had begun planting the open land and actively reforesting the Hinesburg Town Forest. The first plantations were conifers such as white pine, red pine, and Norway spruce and today, the forest is home to twenty-nine individual tree stands and thirteen distinct cover types. Despite topographical variations, plantation and stand boundaries tend to follow the original lot lines that divided the agricultural land into the twentieth century. In addition, remnant cultural features from this legacy of farming are still visible throughout the site, including cellar holes and barn footings, stone walls, barbed wire fences, milk cans and agricultural equipment, rock piles, and vegetation typically associated with pastureland, such as apple trees. Today, the Hinesburg Town Forest remains intact and retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Early Conifer Plantations

In the 1940s, the early years of the Hinesburg Town Forest, coniferous plantations of Norway spruce, eastern white pine, and red pine were established in the forest by the town as part of a

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statewide soil conservation effort. As early as 1939, Stand 6 was planted with white and red pine. Stand 1, located near the southeast corner of the forest, is an even-aged white pine plantation planted in 1940. Stand 5 was established in 1941 with Norway spruce and red pine. In 1942, foresters established Stands 7A and 7D with white and red pine, and also planted Stand 3 with even-aged white pine with some Norway spruce. Stand 9, planted in 1943, is a Norway spruce, red pine, and white pine plantation. Evidence such as aerial photographs, smooth forest floors (indicating past plow activity) and scattered stone piles (left by farmers working their land) suggest that these plantations were installed in cultivated fields rather than pastures. Furthermore, cultivated fields would have been more attractive to foresters planting seedlings than rocky pastures. Today, these conifer plantations represent significant features within the forest. Seen from above, their dark, geometric shapes immediately stand out from the other stands and testify to the forest's evolution as a town forest.

Remnant Cultural Features

Historic cultural remnants are dispersed throughout the Hinesburg Town Forest. Rock piles amassed by farmers plowing their fields, for example, can be found in areas that were once cultivated, and relics such as milk cans, glass bottles, farm equipment, motors, sap buckets, and household items are scattered around the former homesteads. The most evident indicator of the forest's past incarnation as farmland, however, is found in the ten known cellar holes that exist on the property, built before 1869, when F. W. Beers published an atlas depicting the Hinesburg area. In 1869, according to the atlas, the following men occupied the farmsteads on the town forest: H. Hollis, H. O. Owen, J. Fraser, S. Atwood, J. Stevens, A. Place, T. Drinkwater, W. Taft, N. Alger, and J. Mann (Mahan). These are the names by which the separate parcels of land are known today. The remnant cellar holes, sunken cavities between two and six feet deep and lined with stone foundations, are often adjacent to accompanying barn footings. The footings were often built into a hill or slope and entail less excavation than cellar holes. The Thomas Drinkwater farmstead, located in the east-central region of the main parcel, offers an especially intact example of a cellar hole and barn footing in the town forest.

Historic demarcations between fields, pastures, and properties also wind through the Hinesburg Town Forest and serve as important indicators that farms once occupied the land. Early fencing prevented farm animals from entering crop fields, and later fences were used to contain the animals themselves. Originally, these would have been wood fences, but today only the stone piles that farmers left at fence bases when clearing their fields remain on site. Stonewalls throughout the forest are either piles of this type or carefully constructed walls closer to

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farmsteads. The majority of the walls in the forest run from north to south or east to west, often along original lot lines. Barbed wire fences attached to posts and stone walls were introduced in the late nineteenth century to replace wooden fences, and relics from this period forward can be found throughout the Hinesburg Town Forest. In addition, remnant boundary markers today frequently separate the tree plantations and stands that were created as farms were abandoned and the town assumed ownership of the land.

Remnant Agricultural Landscape Features

Historically, farmers on the Hinesburg Town Forest kept apple trees, and some farms included up to 100 trees in their orchards. Today, remnants and descendants of abandoned apple orchards are found throughout the forest, typically near cellar holes and barn footings. Many of the original trees are no longer on site and were likely overtaken by other trees as the area reforested.

Remnants of historic woodlots can also be detected in the Hinesburg Town Forest. Every farm on the town forest site would have kept a small woodlot to provide firewood for cooking and heating, and perhaps lumber for use or sale. The woodlots are unique in the forest because it is unlikely they were ever entirely cleared for grazing or agricultural cultivation, and thus their successional patterns differ from those of abandoned pasture or field. On the Andrew Place farm, for example, a line of old sugar maple stumps still demarcates the old boundary between woodlot and pasture. The Tenth U.S. Agricultural Census records reveal that in 1879, Place, who farmed in the northeast corner of the main parcel from 1865 to 1925, maintained 30 acres of his property as woodlot. Although the entire site, with the exception of the area immediately surrounding the cellar hole and barn footing, has returned to forest, subtle differences are noticeable on either side of this boundary line that suggest their past use. Paper birch, an early colonizer of abandoned fields, is abundant in the old pasture but absent from the historic woodlot. In addition, the old woodlot contains a greater number of larger, widely-dispersed trees, indicating that the stand has had a longer time to develop as forest than the adjacent pasture despite active cutting within the past thirty years.

Distinct Tree Cover Types¹

Today, the forested land itself is the definitive characteristic of the Hinesburg Town Forest. The forest consists of 29 individual stands of trees, several of which are broken into distinct subsections. As farms, fields, orchards, and woodlots were abandoned over time, a variety of plant communities established on the site through both managed planting and natural succession. As a result, the Hinesburg Town Forest is a patchwork of cover types of assorted ages and

¹ The information in this section is drawn primarily from a 2006 LIA consultant report entitled "Hinesburg Town Forest: Inventory, Assessment, and Management Considerations".

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species composition in different stages of development. The northern hardwood forest cover type, which dominates the forested Vermont landscape, makes up the majority of the Hinesburg Town Forest's current cover, but the forest is home to a number of diverse species in its canopy, subcanopy, and understory. The forest can be broken up into thirteen distinct cover types based on dominant tree species vegetation:

- a. Intermediate Northern Hardwood: Stands 4, 10A, 18B, 19A, 20A, 20B, 20D, 25, 27
- b. Early Northern Hardwood: Stands 2, 13B, 16, 17, 21
- c. Red Maple – Northern Hardwood: Stands 10C, 13A
- d. Sugar Maple – Northern Hardwood: Stands 19C, 20C, 20E, 26
- e. Dry Oak – Northern Hardwood: Stands 23, 24
- f. Alder Swamp: Stand 12
- g. Wet Northern Hardwood: Stand 10B
- h. Red Maple Swamp: Stand 28
- i. Red Spruce – Northern Hardwood Ridge: Stands 10D, 11, 13C, 18A, 19D
- j. Mixed Northern Hardwood Ridge: Stands 10E, 14, 22, 29
- k. Conifer Plantation: Stands 1, 3, 5, 6, 7A, 7B, 7D, 9, 15
- l. Gap Cut: Stand 7C
- m. Homestead: Stand 8

Intermediate Northern Hardwood

The intermediate hardwood stands comprise a diversity of species composition and are dominated by shade-tolerant species, and thus contain fewer early successional species. Sugar and red maple are dominant, and some stands contain large white ash and senescing paper birch. The understory includes Christmas fern, Lycopodium species, and wintergreen. Because these stands have not been disturbed in recent years, the trees are more mature and the soils are generally well-developed.

Early Northern Hardwood

These areas are similar to the intermediate northern hardwood stands, but exist at an earlier stage of succession due to more recent human or natural disturbances. Paper birch, which was an early colonizer of abandoned fields in the Hinesburg Town Forest, is a primary species in the canopy of the early hardwood stands. Aerial photography reveals that several of these stands were open in 1942, and are therefore less than 66 years old. The senescing of the sparsely occurring paper

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birch and aspen, both early successional species, in the understory suggests that the early hardwood stands are in a transitional stage from an early successional forest to mid-successional species. Sugar maple and beech proliferate in the subcanopy and understory, and red maple, black cherry, and striped maple can also be found in the subcanopy and seedling levels of these stands.

Red Maple – Northern Hardwood

Because of the canopy dominance by red maple, which composes a majority of the growing stock, these stands are classified as variants of the northern hardwood cover types. The stands also contain other species typical of the northern hardwood forest, including paper birch in the canopy and abundant striped maple and American beech in the understory. The Red Maple – Northern Hardwood areas are characterized by fairly large, vigorous trees and dense canopies, and both stands are distinguished by a northwest aspect. In 1942 aerial photographs, the stands were already heavily forested, suggesting abandonment long before that time. In addition, Stand 13A is marked by skid trails and stumps, indicating past logging activity.

Sugar Maple – Northern Hardwood

All four stands associated with this cover type are dominated by sugar maple and characterized by large, well-developed trees. The areas tend to be situated on north-facing aspects, and have site conditions favorable to sugar maple growth. For example, several stands are located at the base of slopes or depressions where organic matter and nutrients accumulate and enrich the site. In previous years, forest management activities have focused on releasing sugar maples, and have encouraged sugar maple reproductivity. Sugar maple in these stands can be found at all stages of growth from seedling to saw timber size.

Dry Oak – Northern Hardwood

The dry oak – northern hardwood cover type is rare in the Hinesburg Town Forest and occurs only in the Hollis parcel. The shallow, well-drained soils and southern aspects that characterize these stands do not coexist in other areas of the forest, thus encouraging unique vegetation patterns. Red oak dominates the canopy in these stands, but its prevalence varies with microsite characteristics. Hophornbeam proliferates in the dry oak – northern hardwood stands, and sugar maple is abundant in stands 23 and 24. In addition, little understory is present in these areas.

Alder Swamp

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The alder swamp stand, dominated by alder but also home to many willows, constitutes a unique wetland area in the Hinesburg Town Forest. The swamp is a dynamic ecosystem, marked by widespread wind throws due to shallowly rooted trees blown down from the hummocks. Groundwater, precipitation, and surface flow all likely contribute water to this area, and groundwater input also prevents the swamp from freezing entirely during the winter months.

Wet Northern Hardwood

The wet northern hardwood stand, which exists in the transitional zone between the alder swamp and the upland forest, is also unique in the Hinesburg Town Forest. This area is distinguished by shallow, wet soils resulting in abundant pit and mound topography. The agricultural field that once characterized the site was abandoned by 1930, and aerial photographs indicate that by 1942 trees had begun to colonize the open field. Wet conditions prevent deep rooting, and the stand displays many tip-ups. While red maple is the dominant species in the stand, the overall species composition is diverse, with a number of early successional species, such as paper birch and aspen, due to the frequency of disturbances. Additional species that thrive in wet soils, including serviceberry and musclewood, occur in this stand.

Red Maple Swamp

Stand 28, located on the Hollis parcel in a low valley between a ridge and a knoll, is a woodland swamp with a red maple canopy cover. Significant amounts of water, including runoff and groundwater input, tend to accumulate in this area, and the water table remains relatively high for much of the year. Red maple, some of which are mature and vigorous, dominate the stand, with the largest trees located on the drier edges and hummocks of the swamp. As is Stand 10B, water saturation does not permit trees to form deep roots, and tip-ups are common. Yellow birches, which thrive in these conditions, constitute a large portion of the stand, and waterfern species, water avens, and golden ragwort comprise the herbaceous layer.

Red Spruce – Northern Hardwood Ridge

The red spruce – northern hardwood ridge stands are located on the major ridge that runs through the Hinesburg Town Forest. Many of the red spruce, the dominant species, are large, mature trees, and the stands are distinguished by thin, well-drained soils above ledges of bedrock outcroppings. Yellow birch, paper birch, and red maple are also components of these stands, which tend to have a north-facing aspect and are exposed to high winds that cause wind throw on

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the shallow soils. Aerial photographs indicate that in 1942, these stands were mostly forested and thus were likely to have been among the earliest town forest lands to be abandoned as farming waned in the area. Today, little evidence of recent logging activity exists. In addition, the extended period without human disturbance has resulted in a more vertical and horizontal structure than other areas of the Hinesburg Town Forest.

Mixed Northern Hardwood Ridge

The mixed northern hardwood ridge type stand is similar to the red spruce – northern hardwood ridge type in location and the associated site conditions. Each has thin, droughty soils and is exposed to frequent to high winds. However, in these stands, red spruce is not a major component. Instead, the composition is diverse, with red oak, white ash, sugar maple, paper and yellow birch, red maple, and beech all contributing to the canopy. The distribution of these species differs depending on relative microsite characteristics. In addition, red pine, mature American beech, and large black cherry are present in these mixed northern hardwood ridge stands. Hophornbeam, American beech, and striped maple are common in the subcanopy, with American beech, striped maple, sugar maple, and birch seedlings, hobblebush, lycopodium species, and woodfern species prevalent in the understory. Many of the trees are broad in diameter but quite short in stature, likely as a result of the stresses accompanying growth on a ridgetop. In 1942 aerial photographs, these ridgetops were mostly forested, and today display little evidence of logging activity.

Conifer Plantation

Conifer plantations are an important component of the Hinesburg Town Forest and compose a significant portion of its vegetation. Norway spruce, white pine, and red pine, all fast-growing species growing productively on the former hill farms' abandoned agricultural soils, represent the primary components of these stands. Aerial photographs indicate that in 1942, most of the conifer plantations were still open fields, though planting had begun. Herbaceous site indicators such as blue cohosh and toothwort suggest that many of the plantations' soils were enriched. However, because of the dense canopy and abundant shade, the stands display sparse understories. In addition, many of the uppermost soil horizons record acidic pH levels, perhaps contributing to the reduced understory growth. Hardwood species in the conifer plantations, when present, are in the subcanopy.

Gap Cut

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Stand 7C is a unique component, as it is one of the few open areas in the Hinesburg Town Forest. The cut took place in August 2005 in a 1942 plantation as an effort to increase horizontal and vertical structure in the forest.

Homestead

Stand 8 represents the Gillett Farmstead, the largest of the homesteads that have been moved in recent years to release apple trees and preserve the cultural history of the site. Aerial photographs reveal that in 1942, the homestead was in the center of a large agricultural field which has since returned to forest. This stand has been managed for early successional species by repeated brush hogging, and apple trees have been released to foster maximum fruit production for wildlife. In addition, introduced species including Norway spruce and sedum are present.

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Hinesburg, Chittenden County, Vermont

Significance

The Hinesburg Town Forest is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with events that have made an important contribution to the history of Hinesburg, Vermont. The forest is an intact example of the robust community forestry movement that emerged in New England in the early twentieth century and emphasized the value of publicly-owned forest lands to local communities. In addition, the forest represents the effort among community planners to reclaim public lands from private ownership that characterized the town forest movement.

Town Forest Movement

The Hinesburg Town Forests exists within a long tradition of public forest lands. New England has enjoyed a history of community-based forest planning and management from the earliest period of Anglo-American settlement into the twenty-first century. Early common forests, which were based on traditional European models, sustained a variety of public purposes, including fuel wood, commercial timber production, water supply protection, and land reclamation. Community forests often supported local community institutions, such as schools, churches, and town poor farms. Vermont's earliest communal forested lands were school, minister, and glebe lots dating back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and poor-farm woodlots in the mid-nineteenth century. As the domestic and export wood market expanded over time, town administration developed more sophisticated techniques for controlling community forest land. Towns adopted regulations and taxes to control use of communal woodlots and discourage exploitation. Local authorities, often known as "tree wardens" assumed management authority over town and municipal forests and carried out a variety of activities including: timber auction organization and supervision; land rental agreements; and, by the end of the nineteenth century, initiating reforestation efforts.¹ Over time, however, much public land was sold into private hands.

New England's tradition of town and municipal forests entered a new phase in the late nineteenth century when community forestry began to solidify as an organized movement. Public concern about forest depletion, devastating fires on cutover forests, and the fate of abandoned agricultural lands intersected with the emerging science of forest management to create an atmosphere ripe for the development of the town forest movement. Bernard Fernow, the country's first professionally educated and trained forester and the head of the Department of Agriculture's forestry division, is credited with inaugurating the first serious attempt to introduce community

¹ Mark Baker and Jonathan Kusel, *Community Forestry in the United States* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003), 24.

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forestry in the United States. In 1890, Fernow, trained in Prussia and skilled in German management practices in all categories of forests, proposed the initiation of a movement to create community forests in the United States based on Germanic models of communal forest management.² In an editorial letter entitled "Communal Forests" published in the journal *Garden and Forest*, he drew on the Sihlwahl, Zurich's ancient city forest, as a model town forest capable of yielding both steady income and employment opportunities. In the letter, Fernow outlined the potential benefits of community forestry and wrote, "In Germany I know of communities where not only all taxes are paid by the revenue from the communal forests, but every citizen receives a dividend in addition."³ This passage was picked up by countless journals and publications through the first decades of the twentieth century and became a key argument for the establishment of town forests.⁴ Soon, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Maine emerged as the states with the most robust town forest movements.

Support for the town forestry grew through regional, state, and local support. A number of nonprofit organizations were fundamental in garnering financial and political support, including the Massachusetts Forestry Association, the Connecticut Forestry Association, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and the Forestry Association of Vermont. Literature supporting the creation of town forests soon proliferated. In Vermont, *Green Mountain State Forest News*, published beginning in 1925, addressed acquisition and planting activities throughout the state. In 1927, Kemp R. B. Flint, former president of the Vermont Forestry Association, extolled the virtues of municipal forestry in an article for *The Vermont Review*, citing both financial as well as social dividends, such as recreation. In particular, Flint noted that municipal forests could "point the way to a solution of one of Vermont's outstanding economic problems – the back farm of the 'hill town'."⁵ At this same time, the farms on the Hinesburg Town Forest were plagued by agricultural decline and struggling to stave off economic disaster. In fact, in a 1950 publication entitled "A Forestry Plan for Vermont", Vermont Forest Service cited Hinesburg as "a good example of what a town has done in purchasing lands for town forests and reforestation in a section of low economic value for agricultural purposes".⁶

² Baker and Kusel 24.

³ Robert McCullough, *The Landscape of Community* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995), 111.

⁴ McCullough 111.

⁵ K. R. B. Flint "Forestry as a Municipal Undertaking," *The Vermont Review* 3:2 (Jul-Aug 1927), 41-2.

⁶ *A Forestry Program for Vermont : as adopted at a conference at Montpelier, October 1, 1949, called by Vermont State Chamber of Commerce* (Montpelier, VT: Vermont Forest Service, 1950), 7.

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Vermont's town forest movement formally began in 1915 when enabling legislation was passed permitting towns to legally acquire, manage, and improve lands for wood and timber. The law authorized any municipality with forest area of forty acres or more to classify the land as a municipal forest. In the early years, a yearly allocation of up to 150,000 trees from the state nursery was endorsed by the state, but not at a reduced price.⁷ In a January 1926 article entitled "Vermont Association Offers Trees for Municipal Forests, the journal *Forest Worker* noted, "The Vermont Forestry Association is offering to supply and plant the first 5,000 trees for any town in the state that establishes a municipal forest of 100 acres or more."⁸ The following year, an amendment to Vermont's forest nursery law permitted the commissioner of forestry to sell seedlings to certain groups at a lowered cost. In addition, a 1933 legislative resolution offered surplus seedlings to municipalities at a reduced cost.⁹ Despite these features, the program was slow to gather momentum.

Vermont's municipal forestry program was first implemented before 1926 with planting on a handful of watershed lands protecting reservoirs for the cities of Barre, Bellows Falls, Essex Junction, Montpelier, and Rutland. Other pre-1930 town forests resulted from land donations, poor-farm woodlots, and municipal purchases. In 1926, Vermont's state forestry commissioner identified thirty-three town forests, but only forty-two on just fewer than nine thousand acres in 1930, or approximately half the number of neighboring Massachusetts and New Hampshire.¹⁰ In fact, Vermont's municipal forest movement did not truly reach the levels achieved by its neighbors until after World War II, but eventually succeeded in encouraging almost as many town forests as did the programs in these other states. Unlike Massachusetts, whose Forestry Association was actively committed to the town forest movement, Vermont lacked a central driving force to encourage municipal forestry. Until 1945, when enabling legislation was amended to require the state to reimburse towns for one half the purchase price of land acquired for town forests following state forester inspection and approval, the state's campaign lagged.¹¹ However, the carefully-managed municipal forestry program that emerged in Vermont succeeded in triumphing over its past lethargy. In 1951, the state passed a separate law requiring municipalities not owning a town forest to insert an article concerning municipal forests in warnings for their annual meetings. Vermont was divided into two districts, each with a full-time municipal forester. As a result, the number of town forests soon swelled, and interest in the movement was rekindled.

⁷ McCullough 157.

⁸ Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, "Vermont Association Offers Trees for Municipal Forests." *The Forest Worker* (Jan 1926), 10.

⁹ McCullough 157.

¹⁰ McCullough 155.

¹¹ McCullough 156.

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The Hinesburg Town Forest was founded in the lull between 1930 and 1945. In 1940, the town of Hinesburg contacted State Forester Perry H. Merrill and expressed interest in establishing a town forest and, by the end of the year, a municipal forest had been created. In a December 1940 letter to Merrill, the town reported that the forest officially comprised 12 acres and cited a desire to develop approximately 300 adjoining acres for the same purpose. As with other town forests, acquisition was immediately followed by a focus on forest plantation. The first plantations in the forest were installed in open agricultural land and included white pine, Norway spruce, and red pine. Woodland work records indicate that, in 1940, ten acres of town forest were planted. Progress continued steadily and in 1941, the town planted twelve additional acres, followed by thirteen more in 1943.¹²

The federal government played a role in the plantation of town forests throughout the country. During the 1930s and 1940s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt focused a national spotlight on conservation, and New Deal leaders cultivated innovative policies and programs in response to Depression era social and environmental problems. The United States Forest Service implemented a number of initiatives to provide jobs to large numbers of men otherwise unable to find work, including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created by the Emergency Conservation Act of 1933, and other employment generation programs initiated by the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, and the Works Relief Act of 1935. Programs subsidized a variety of activities such as reforestation, forest production and improvement, soil conservation, and recreational development. In Vermont, one of the main CCC projects was the improvement and management of state and municipal forests. Between 1933 and 1942, the 11,243 Vermonters given employment through the program planted 1,122,000 trees in reforestation efforts.¹³ The first plantations of Norway spruce, eastern white pine, and red pine in the Hinesburg Town Forest were established in the early 1940s as part of a statewide soil conservation effort.

Plantation was accompanied by a new focus on forest management. One of the defining principles of the town forest movement was sustained yield timber management, a fundamental standard of German forestry that dictates that cut shall not exceed growth. Sustained yield forestry was designed to curb the "cut out and get out" practices that historically characterized the private timber industry. Sustained yield was based around even-aged monocultural forest

¹² *Chittenden County Forester Records, Hinesburg Town Forest*, Essex Junction, Vermont.

¹³ Perry Henry Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army: a History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Montpelier, VT: Perry Merrill, 1981), 180-1.

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stands with carefully calculated sustained timber yields. Concerns over financial losses, overproduction, and forest depletion in the 1920s and 1930s prompted a move to the sustained management principle. In 1944, Congress passed the Sustained Yield Management Act, which authorized the creation of cooperative sustained yield units on public or private timberlands and guaranteed stable log flows for timber harvesting and processing firms. In addition, sustained yield objectives were tied to the belief that stable timber supplies would translate into community stability. As town forest stewards shifted their focus from acquisition to plantation and management, sustained yield principles grew to define the municipal forestry movement. Sustained yield guided the planting and management of timber plantations throughout New England, including the Hinesburg Town Forest.

The town forest movement exists within a broader national forest context that saw changing attitudes toward management principles and a renewed interest in conservation. While Gifford Pinchot, who became the first chief of the United States Forest Service in 1905, did not share Bernard Fernow's enthusiasm for community forestry, the focus on proper timber management he advocated certainly affected the town forest movement. Pinchot, whose primary concern was the implementation of scientific forest management on national forests, represents the nationwide establishment and implementation of an organized forestry science. Under Pinchot, Forest Service developed policy around the principles of sustained yield management, forestry science, public education, and utilitarian goals.¹⁴ His forestry science ideals were directly transferred to Vermont by state forester Perry Merrill, who devoted his career to making the Vermont woods a well-managed, "working" forest.¹⁵ A 1947 state report organized by Merrill noted, "The major problem confronting the practice of forestry is the fact that it has never been considered from a practical business standpoint. Forests have been considered as mines of wealth to be exploited at the whims of the owner; as an appendage to the farm to be ruined or saved according to personal desire or needs; or as a product to be removed from the land to make way, in many instances, for a dubious agriculture."¹⁶ During his 47 years working in Vermont's forests, Merrill strongly advocated Pinchot's management principles and helped implement a scientific forestry management program in the state.

Since its early years, the Hinesburg Town Forest has been managed by Vermont's county foresters and the Hinesburg Town Forest Committee primarily for timber, firewood, and wildlife habitat, but other factors have helped to shape the forest. The municipal forestry movement combined the desire within municipalities to benefit financially from timber resources with heightened interest in forest conservation. During the early twentieth century, the country experienced heightening interest in municipal forests for purposes other than commercial

¹⁴ McCullough 112.

¹⁵ Albers 296.

¹⁶ Albers 296.

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productivity. Since its inception, the Hinesburg Town Forest has continued to satisfy a number of important community interests, particularly conservation, recreation, and timber cultivation. The Hinesburg Town Forest has long been a site for varied activities, such as hiking and hunting, and still serves the town's recreation needs by allowing hiking, biking, riding, and hunting within its boundaries. Regular timber sales have financed internal improvements within the forest such as road repair and construction. A recent project epitomizes the ongoing relationship between the town and forest: in April 2007, ash trees grown in the town forest were sustainably harvested to replace the 106-year-old floor in the Hinesburg Town Hall.

The town forest movement represents the first organized campaign by New England communities to reclaim the considerable portions of common or public lands that had been sold into private ownership. The movement signifies a twentieth-century return to the community planning ideals that shaped earlier New England towns, namely an emphasis on the value of community-owned public land. Although the Hinesburg Town Forest is not located on land designated by early town planners for public use, the formation of the forest is an important example of the shift within community planning from private to public ownership embodied by the town forest movement.

Hinesburg History: Private Lands to Public Forests

The Hinesburg Town Forest sits on land that was privately held for much of the town's history. Until the mid-1700s, the area that would compose the State of Vermont was frontier land between the English colonies of New York and New Hampshire. Between 1749 and 1764, New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth parceled a significant portion of the territory into a grid of towns comprising smaller lot divisions. The majority of the land was turned over to wealthy, out-of-state proprietors for the means of speculation and profit. On June 24, 1762, Wentworth granted to 64 proprietors based in New Milford, Connecticut the six-mile square portion of land now known as Hinesburg (originally spelled Hinesburgh), Vermont. The town was named for Abel Hine, an original grantee who served as the clerk for the proprietors in New Milford, though he did not ever live in the town.¹⁷ Of the 64 proprietors, only one, Andrew Burritt, actually settled in Hinesburg. The original lot lines from the Wentworth grants are demarcated on an 1869 Beers atlas. The New Hampshire Grants established fifty-acre lots in the valley and village and larger 100-acre lots, known as the "second division", in the outlying hills. Today's Hinesburg Town Forest includes all of lots 138, 139, 140, 120, and 119, as well as

¹⁷ David Donath, *Pond Brook and the Development of Mechanicsville* (Hinesburg, VT: s.n., 1975), 7.

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portions of lots 101, 102, 121, and 141. By the mid-eighteenth century, private farms had been established on all of the town forest lots.

From settlement through the nineteenth century, Hinesburg remained highly self-sufficient and agricultural enterprises predominated, including corn and wheat farming and animal husbandry. The town's early industrial phase centered on services which were of high priority in an agricultural community seeking to establish itself on the frontier. In the ensuing years, Hinesburg moved from being essentially a subsistence-agricultural community to a commercial-agricultural community.¹⁸ The establishment of carding and cloth dressing mills encouraged a shift toward specialized sheep farming across the town because a large portion of the activities involved in processing home-spun cloth could be carried out at the mill. Over time, local industry fell into general decline. As northern New England lost its sheep, wheat, and small grain industries to Western competition in the second half of the nineteenth century, a new market for dairy products emerged, and agricultural decline was temporarily staved off by the dairy industry. Booming city populations in the late 1800s triggered a rise in urban demand for dairy products. A large scale shift from sheep to dairy farming took place following the Civil War and, by 1900, Vermont was the leading butter producer in the country, with 180 creameries around the state.¹⁹ Many of the farmers on the Hinesburg Town Forest enjoyed a successful period of dairying during the first half of the twentieth century, and little attention was paid in town planning to any notions of forest cultivation or conservation.

As the twentieth century wore on, depleted Vermont soils, rocky and steep terrain, and increased mechanization began to take their toll on hill farms throughout the state. Competition with growing valley farms became increasingly difficult, and new regulations within the dairy industry imposed added burdens on small dairy operations. After the Second World War, the government and public demanded higher standards of sanitation in the industry, and health concerns resulted in strict regulations. Among the most unpopular new rules was the requirement to replace wooden milking floors, which were found to harbor disease, with poured concrete. The majority of northern Vermont used wooden floors, and the installation of a new floor was an expensive undertaking for a small operation. The most damaging change, however, concerned the storage and transportation of liquid milk. Bulk tanks, large stainless steel, electrified cooling tanks capable of storing milk for several days before being collected by a tanker truck, supplanted the relatively inexpensive and portable milk cans. Although cooling tanks were not required by law until the mid-1950s, local creameries began to exclusively accept milk delivered by bulk truck years earlier. In order to shift to bulk tanks, a farm had to make a number of expensive updates to their facilities, and many hill farmers throughout the state were unable to

¹⁸ Donath 17.

¹⁹ Albers 211.

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sustain their dairy operations.²⁰ It was the decline of the dairy industry and the inability for subsistence farmers to succeed in a changing market that opened the door for land conservation and the broader town forest movement.

Economic hardship forced farmers off their land, and the hill farms on the Hinesburg Town Forest were vacated between 1936 and 1958. Private lands were gradually transferred into public ownership. In 1936, the 100-acre J. Mahan farm was granted to the town and, the following year, Hinesburg acquired the 100-acre Drinkwater farm, owned by Felix Martin, for \$450.00. In 1941, the adjacent 12-acre W. and M. Taft farm was deeded to the town by Clarence Blodgett for \$500.00 plus back taxes and the promise to remove all the buildings on the property within two years. It is notable that merely five or six decades prior, Mahan, Drinkwater, and Taft had been farming these same properties. Over the next two decades, ownership of the remaining properties slowly passed into the town's hands. The 50-acre A. Place farm was deeded to the Hinesburg for support in 1948 by Daisy and Marien Verboom. In 1954, Hinesburg purchased the 87-acre J. Stevens parcel from Herbert H. Germain. The Hinesburg Town Forest's current boundaries were established in 1958, when the Plant and Griffith Lumber Company sold a 125-acre area surrounding the J. Fraser farm to the town. The decline of the hill farms in Hinesburg and throughout New England coincided with the rise of interest in community forestry, and set the stage for the town forest movement. Community forestry provided a solution to the abandonment of formerly viable farms throughout Vermont's hill towns, including Hinesburg, and community planners embraced conservation as a civic priority.

²⁰ Albers 276.

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Boundary Description

Boundary Justification