



TOWN OF MILAN

Community Forest Committee

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PUBLIC USE POLICIES FOR THE MILAN COMMUNITY FOREST

Introduction

In keeping with the Milan Community Forest charter and the mandate given to the Milan Community Forest Committee (Committee) by the voters of Milan, NH, the Committee has developed the following policies to guide the access and use of the Community Forest by the public. The public, either as individuals or organizations, is encouraged to offer suggestions at any time to the Committee who will consider them carefully. A public hearing will be held prior to making any changes to this policy.

As noted below, the Community Forest is open to the public. Some restrictions may be necessary to ensure safety, protect the resource, and/or comply with legal requirements.

Use of the Community Forest lands is at the risk of the user. The Town of Milan and the Milan Community Forest Committee assume no liability in the event of loss, accident or injury.

It is recognized that these policies are best utilized as guidelines and that at certain times and under various conditions, prudent use of the forest may require deviation from these policies. The Committee reserves the right to do so when immediate action is necessary.

Recreational Uses

All lots making up the Community Forest are open to the public for recreation. However, not all forms of recreation are appropriate. Weather, seasonal, and site conditions will require that some uses be prohibited from time to time. For example, lots being harvested may be closed to ensure the safety of visitors and workers and to prevent disruption of efficient forestry operations. At all times, those recreating in the Community Forest shall be respectful of wildlife and the forest resource in general.

Some Community Forest lands are accessed by easements or rights of way granted by other land owners. This access may include restrictions and these policies do not apply to land not owned by the Town of Milan. Use of such lands is at the discretion and permission of the applicable land owner.

Hiking:

Some Community Forest parcels have established walking paths and/or woods roads and the public is welcome to utilize these for hiking. Hiking off established roads and trails is also allowed, though care should be exercised and safety kept in mind.

Private individuals and organizations are not allowed to create trails and paths on Town of Milan lands. Hikers and others using the Community Forest shall not leave flagging in the woods or “blaze” and/or “spot” trees.

Bicycling (non-motorized):

Community Forest trails and roads are open to bicycling unless otherwise posted. All traffic shall stay on established roads and trails. This activity may be seasonally restricted.

Horseback Riding:

Community Forest trails and roads are open to horseback riding unless otherwise posted. All traffic shall stay on established roads and trails. This activity may be seasonally restricted.

Hunting, Trapping & Fishing:

Hunting, trapping and fishing are allowed on all Community Forest lots unless specifically restricted. This activity is subject to all applicable regulations promulgated by state and federal agencies. Hunting may be restricted during active forest harvests for the safety of workers. Any hunting or trapping activities that legally require written land owner permission must have written permission from the Committee prior to conducting that activity.

All structures including blinds and tree stands, as well as the clearing of trees and brush, are not allowed without written permission from the Committee.

Nature Observation:

Milan residents and visitors are welcome on Community Forest lands to observe wildlife in all seasons. Observers shall be respectful of the wildlife being observed and the forest resource in general.

All structures including blinds and tree stands, as well as the clearing of trees and brush, are not allowed without written permission from the Committee.

Snowmobiling:

Snowmobiling is allowed only on established trails which have been posted for such use. All applicable State regulations regarding snowmobiling shall be followed. Creating trails is not allowed unless authorized in writing from the Committee. Snowmobiling will be restricted seasonally, and trails may be otherwise closed due to forest operations or to protect the forest resource.

Off Highway Motorized Recreational Vehicle Use:

Use of OHRVs (including but not limited to ATVs, motorbikes, UTVs and 4 wheel drive vehicles) is allowed only on established trails that have been posted for such use. Some trails may not be suitable for all types of vehicles and restrictions as to types and size of vehicle may be imposed. All applicable State regulations regarding OHRV use shall be followed. Creating trails is not allowed unless authorized in writing from the Committee. Where allowed, OHRV use will be restricted seasonally, and trails may be otherwise closed due to forest operations or to protect the forest resource.

Camping:

No camping or fires are allowed on Community Forest lands.

Educational Uses

Use of Community Forest lands for educational purposes is encouraged and is available to all educational institutions and levels, including home schooling, public agencies, professional organizations and associations. Organized trips into the Community Forest shall be coordinated with the Committee. As appropriate and to the extent possible, the Committee or its individual members may assist.

Historical and archeological research is important, in particular as it relates to the settlement and use of land within the Town of Milan. Archeological excavation and artifact retrieval requires written authorization from the Committee and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer. All structures, remnants, artifacts and so forth on Community Forest lands belong to the Town of Milan and their control and disposition is a responsibility of the Committee.

Non-Educational Events

The use of Community Forest lands for non-educational uses is at the discretion of the Committee and requires written authorization by the Committee. This includes but is not limited to races, rallies, festivals and private parties.

Resource Removal

The collection, extraction and/or use of physical resources of the Community Forest are at the sole discretion of the Committee. Any such activity must have prior, specific written authorization of the Committee. This includes, but is not limited to, firewood, sap, gravel, sand, bark, and trees of any size.

Picking of berries, fiddleheads, mushrooms, and other traditional food items for personal home use is allowed. However, care shall be taken to leave some and take some so that a future supply is better assured.

Any picking for sale or commercial purposes is prohibited.

Review and Amendment

The Committee will review this Public Use Policy annually. Public input is encouraged at any time. Changes to this policy may be made after the annual review or at other times as appropriate. No changes will be made until a public hearing is held regarding such changes.

Under unexpected or emergency conditions, protection of the forest resource may require deviation from these policies. The Committee reserves the right to grant limited exceptions to these policies when immediate action is necessary, with subsequent appropriate notification to the public.

Adoption of Policy

A public hearing on this policy was held on _____.

Upon review of all public comment and changes made in response, this policy is hereby adopted by the Milan Community Forest Committee.

Date: _____

Chair, Milan Community Forest Committee