

# **MONT VERNON CONSERVATION COMMISSION LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN: WAH LUM RESERVE**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to preserve the natural resources, scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, recreational trails, and historical significance of the Purgatory Brook watershed for future generations. This document shall control the uses and management of The Wah Lum Reserve (The Reserve) and may be occasionally amended subject to approval of the Mont Vernon Conservation Commission (MVCC) and Amherst Land Trust (ALT). The MVCC has discussed the idea of appointing a Purgatory Watershed Commission to assist them with the management of this property. A successful plan will;

- Permanently protect and manage The Reserve as open space
- Protect wildlife habitat
- Protect the Purgatory Watershed and downstream water quality
- Maintain the views from the summit and along the brook
- Provide recreational opportunities for the community while protecting the ecological integrity of the Reserve
- Use best forestry management practices.
- Engage the community in the care, enjoyment, and stewardship of the Reserve
- Protect unique natural and historic resources

Protecting the Wah-Lum Reserve natural environment is of primary concern. Monitoring and minimizing impacts due to human activities will be continuous. A large portion of the environmental protection efforts will be monitoring and enforcement of provisions addressed in this plan. Long term environmental protection will mean supporting efforts to protect other land adjacent to the brook.

## **VIEWSHED MANAGEMENT**

The view from the summit to the south and west is one of the most striking features of The Reserve. This view was opened up during the 1999 timber harvest and is rapidly filling in. Jon Nute, UHN County Forester has recommended cutting every 1-3 years to maintain the view. Before any cutting is done the MVCC will request at least two licensed Foresters to submit proposals for view maintenance. Special consideration will be given to plans which use natural growth like blueberries, laurels, etc. to keep growth low. It is the intention of the MVCC to request these bids by April 1, 2008. Protection of the view and scenic qualities of the area will include:

- No buildings, fences, athletic fields, towers, mobile homes, or manmade structures except as the MVCC and ALT deem necessary for forestry conservation or noncommercial outdoor recreational uses outlined in this plan and which have minimal impact on the conservation values of the property.
- No mining, quarrying, excavation or removal of top soil, gravel, sand, or similar materials shall be allowed. The property shall not be altered from its natural state by dredging, filling or dumping. Any alterations shall be permitted only as deemed necessary for conservation purposes only by the MVCC and ALT.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Purchase and sales agreement between Amherst Land Trust & Boisvert Properties, LLC dated 7/17/07.

## **FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The property shall be maintained in perpetuity as open space without there being any industrial or commercial activities. Timber harvesting is permitted provided it is supervised by a licensed professional forester with emphasis on protecting important natural areas and critical wildlife habitat. The Reserve was heavily logged in 1999. New growth is coming in well but the forest will not be ready for timber harvest for several years. Minor thinning may be done in 15 years or so to open up the stand and allow remaining trees to get bigger, but a commercial harvest is approx. 30-50 years away. The terrain is quite difficult and Best Forestry Techniques and available timber will dictate much of the process. Nevertheless, the following rules shall apply

- Best Management Practices will be followed
- No timber cutting within 500' of Purgatory Brook.
- Proposed trail buffers will be walked and approved by MVCC / ALT prior to cutting
- Effort will be made to minimize impact to existing trails
- Trails restoration plans shall be part of any harvest plan.

## **WATERSHED AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION**

Due to topography and proximity to the waterway all Reserve lands within 500' of Purgatory Brook are subject to higher levels of protection. Some uses may eventually be prohibited in this area, such as bicycles, camping, horseback riding. Regular monitoring should provide adequate warning of over/misuse and allow corrective action to be taken before much damage is done.

- No activity shall be permitted which harms state or federally endangered or threatened species complied by the NH Natural Heritage Inventory.
- It is recommended that the MVCC, in conjunction with NRPC develop and maintain an inventory of important wildlife and plant habitats in the watershed to enable protection of these resources and identify prime wetlands in the watershed.
- Monitor water quality of the Purgatory Brook by strengthening a working relationship with the Souhegan Watershed Association, which has implemented a water quality testing program (for the presence of e.coli bacteria, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity). In 2005, the SWA included and tested the Purgatory Brook because it was an important tributary to the Souhegan River.

## **MANAGEMENT OF RECREATIONAL USE**

Foot access is available on Old Wilton Road and Dow Road, which has some parking available. A parking area for 6 cars with all spaces visible from the road to ease policing efforts will be provided on Purgatory Road. This will require minimal clearing of trees, brush or rocks and a gate. The gate will be installed at the far end of the parking lot and will allow access for view maintenance, emergency equipment, and special events. Special Community, educational events or events involving fundraising or awareness activities for the Reserve will be allowed, for-profit activities are prohibited. All special events must have approval from the MVCC and any other jurisdictional body.

It is the intent of this plan to accommodate as many uses as possible while still protecting the natural environment in compliance with the Mission Statement. If any of the allowed uses becomes problematic the MVCC may, at a public meeting, adopt more strict regulations or prohibit such use until the problems have been corrected. Exclusion of certain uses does not imply they are allowed. Any use not listed below shall require specific review by the MVCC.

### TRAIL USE

Trails are open to all allowed uses but this will be under constant review and subject to change at any time. More intensive uses may be prohibited from some, or all, trails during mud season. Mud season is defined by the NH Bureau of Trails but MVCC reserves the right to open / close the trails at any time based upon local conditions and the need to protect the trails from excessive wear. To support the trail management effort the MVCC will develop:

- Signage and maps for users
- A trail inventory with maintenance requirements and recommended alterations
- A priority list of trail maintenance activities, in conjunction with MV Trail Committee.
- A knowledge of and commitment to best trail maintenance and management practices

### RECREATIONAL USES

YES	NO	USE / ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hiking	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bicycles	Restricted to specific trails and subject to seasonal prohibitions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Horseback Riding	Restricted to specific trails and subject to seasonal prohibitions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Camping	Subject to restrictions – Leave no trace, not less than 100 ft. from trail, by written permission of MVCC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fishing	In accordance with NH State Law
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hunting	In accordance with NH State Law
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skiing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Snowshoeing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Firewood Collection	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campfires	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OHRVs	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Snowmobiles	Restricted to designated snowmobile trails with 6" snow on frozen ground, by written permission.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paintball / Airsoft	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Events	By written permission from MVCC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Running	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## References

“Land Use Policies for SPNHF Forest Reservations”, by Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 4/30/02.

“Policy Regarding Use and Management of Conservancy-Owned Lands”, Monadnock Conservancy, 2003.

“Exeter River Corridor and Watershed Management Plan: Wildlife Habitat and Natural Communities”, The Exeter River Local Advisory Committee.  
[www.des.neh.gov/rivers/plans/exeter/exeterplan\\_5.htm](http://www.des.neh.gov/rivers/plans/exeter/exeterplan_5.htm).

“Report of Test Results of Souhegan and Merrimack Rivers”, Souhegan River Watershed Association and Merrimack River Advisory Committee. 2005.