



Community Forest Training Program: Basic Principles of Community Forests

March 5, 2025

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Welcome!

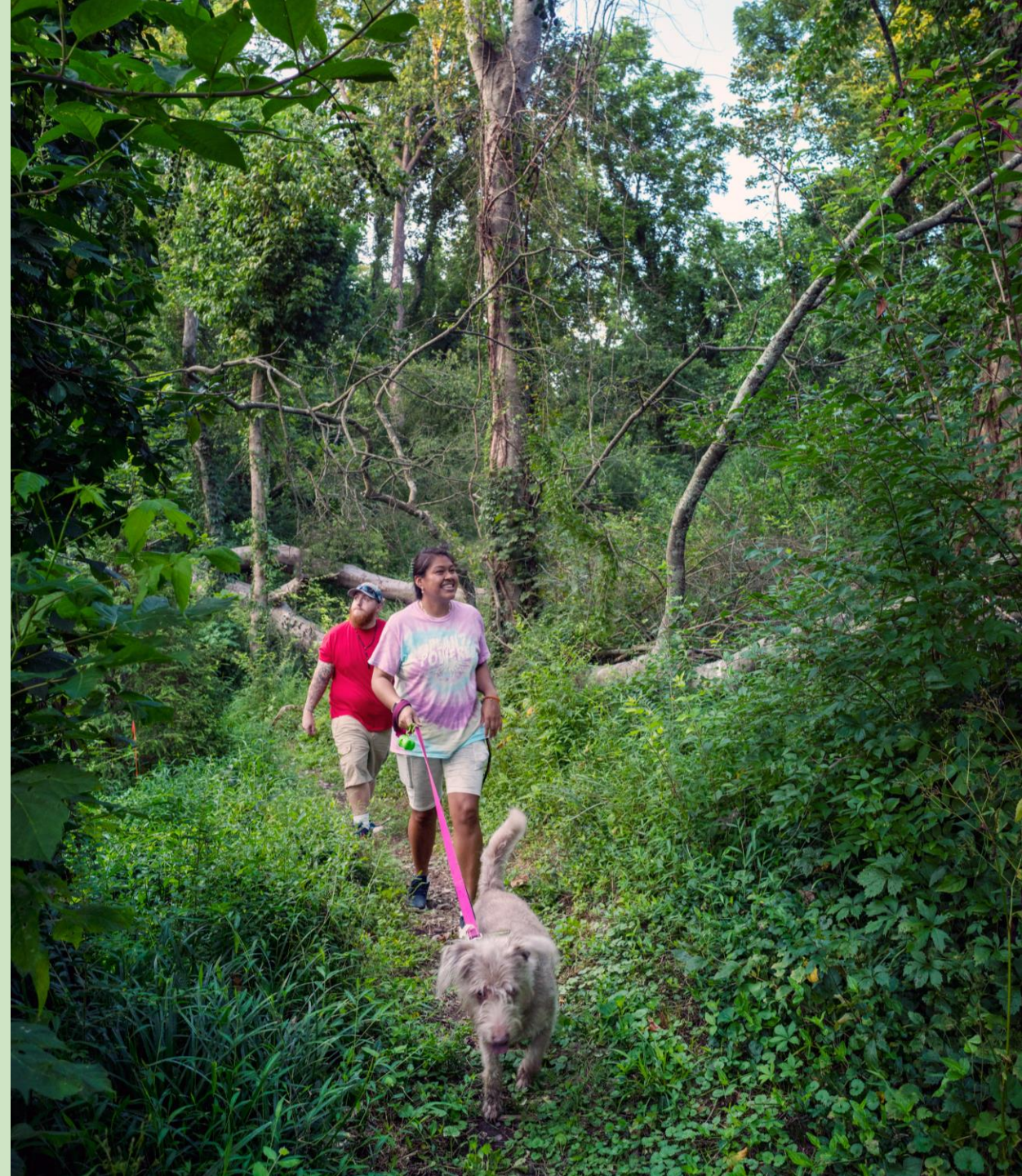
Please introduce yourself in the chat with:

- Your name
- Your city, county, or town
- Your organization
- What drives your interest in community forests?



Agenda

- Program Overview & Goals
- Basic Principles of Community Forests
- Framework for Success
- Case Study: Mink Brook Community Forest
- Reflection Exercise & Discussion
- Next Steps



Who We Are



David Patton

VP, Center of Strategic
Leadership
National Lands Initiative
Director



J.T. Horn

Senior Director,
National Trails Initiative



Sophie Neuhaus

Program Manager,
10-Minute Walk Program



Jennifer Clinton

Senior Parks & Conservation
Economist,
Land and People Lab

Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit, working to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

**We believe in
OUTSIDE FOR ALL**



Community is at the center of all we do.

Communities that place a high value on outdoor access for all are



HEALTHIER



MORE RESILIENT



MORE EQUITABLE

U.S. Forest Service Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

The Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (Community Forest Program) offers a unique opportunity for communities to acquire and conserve forests that:

- provide public access and recreational opportunities;
- protect vital water supplies and wildlife habitat;
- serve as demonstration sites for private forest landowners; and
- provide economic benefits from timber and non-timber products.



Community Forest Training Program: Series Overview

5-month, virtual workshop series designed to provide land managers with the **strategies, skills, and resources** needed to create and sustain community forests.

Session Dates:

- March 5: Principles of Community Forests
- April 2: Governance, Ownership, and Funding
- May 7: Community Engagement and Visioning
- June 4: Management and Stewardship
- July 2: Project Implementation



Our Goals

By the end of this program, you will...

1. Understand the **key principles and strategies** for successful creation of a community forest.
2. Recognize the **role of community and other stakeholders** in creating, governing, and sustaining a community forest.
3. Have a **roadmap for implementation** of a community forest in your own community, including funding and technical assistance opportunities.





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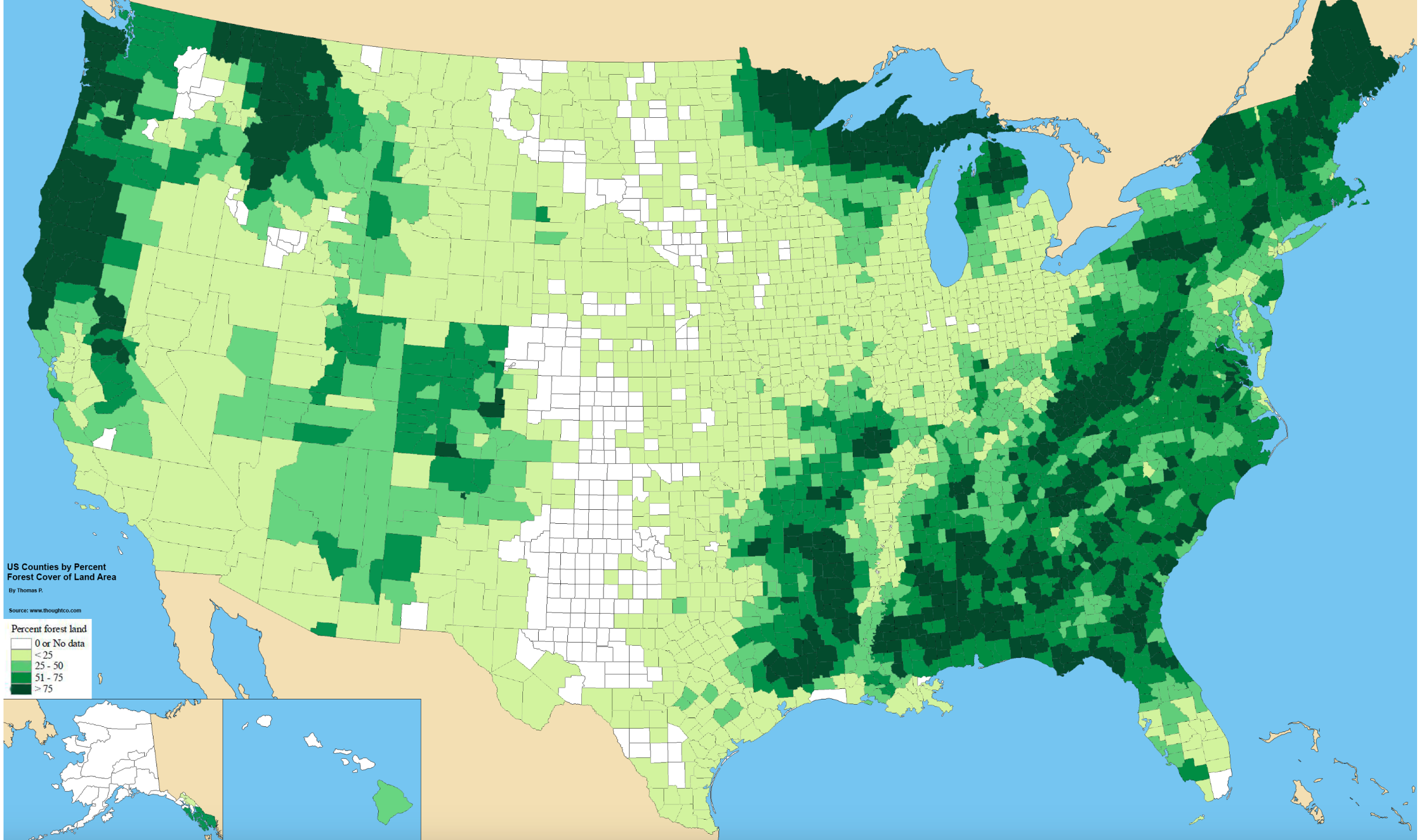
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George Dusenbury V.P. Southeast

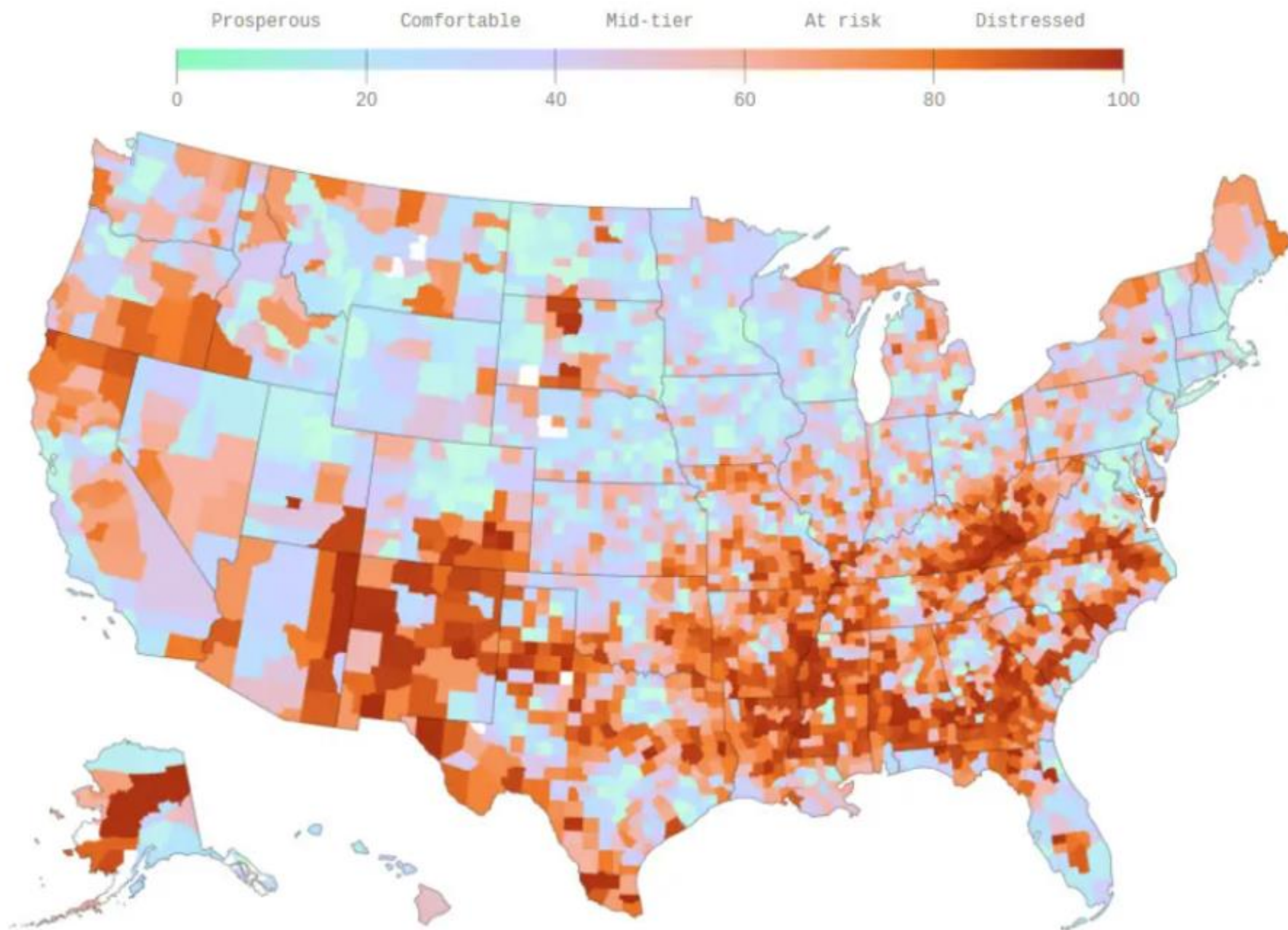
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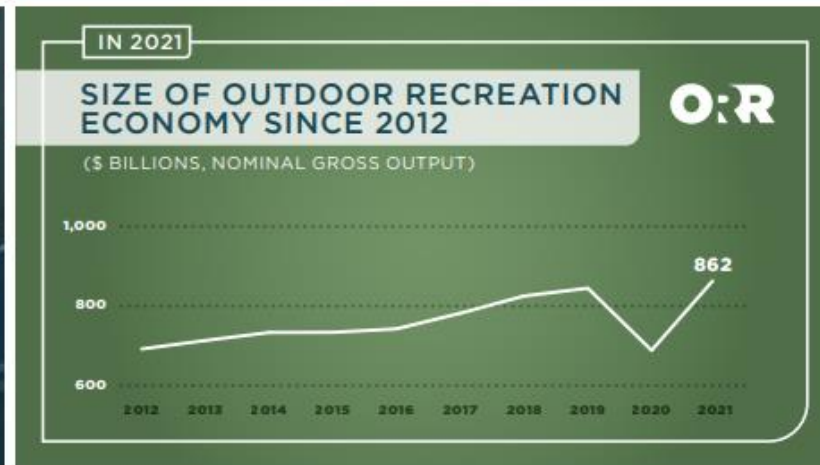
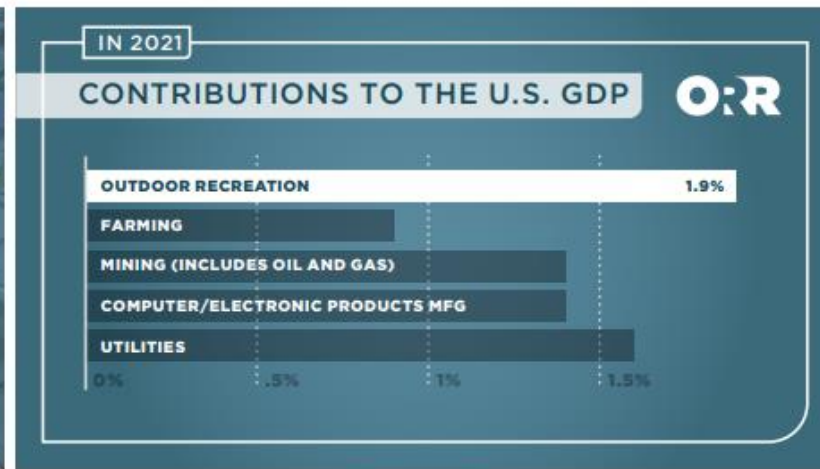




Distressed communities index



Data: Economic Innovation Group Distressed Communities Index; Map: Lazaro Gamio / Axios



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Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation

Nationally



\$6.2 billion

Biking



\$37.2 billion

Boating



\$8.8 billion

Climbing



\$2 billion

Canoeing & Kayaking



\$12.2 billion

Equestrian



\$11.3 billion

Fishing



\$18.4 billion

Hunting, Shooting, & Trapping



\$16.2 billion

Motorcycling & ATVing



Appalachia Region Program

Conservation that is planned and implemented in partnership with local communities can provide uplift and enhanced quality of life.

Access to outdoor recreation can be a positive force for economic prosperity, public health, climate resilience, and quality of life

Specifically, regional outdoor recreation provides 1,143,381 jobs and \$40.9 million annually in compensation

Outdoor recreation **accounts for:**

139,000 jobs

2.9%

in Georgia

**of all employees
in the state**

Top industries **include:**



- **Boating/Fishing**
- **Hunting/Shooting/Trapping**
- **RVing**
- **Motorcycling/ATVing**
- **Equestrian**



VISION STATEMENT

Georgia is an outdoor recreation mecca, supporting healthy, economically vibrant communities by providing plentiful access to nature and recreation.

MISSION STATEMENT

To be an inclusive coalition of outdoor enthusiasts advocating for policies, projects and programs that strengthen and expand Georgia's outdoor recreation infrastructure, culture and economy.

GOALS

1. Increase public and private investment (funding) to build and steward outdoor recreation amenities throughout Georgia.
2. Establish a State Office of Outdoor Recreation to advocate up, collaborate laterally and support down
3. Create a statewide trails master plan to connect communities and provide opportunities for people to explore the outdoors.
4. Increase commitments to outdoor recreation in state initiatives like the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



GEORGIA FORESTRY
FOUNDATION

EDUCATION

ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY

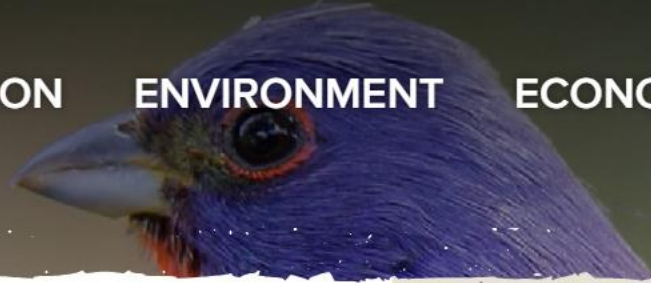
ABOUT

NEWS

CONNECT

GPB LIVE EXPLORATION →

DONATE



BIRDING ACCESS PERMIT PROGRAM

GROWING BIRDING AND SUSTAINABLE FORESTS TOGETHER

Privately-owned working forests cover over 90 percent of Georgia, providing 22 million acres of forested landscape that support the state's bird population. Although they are some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems for forest-dependent species, the birding community has experienced limited opportunity to access these privately-owned lands.

PARTNERS



TIMBERLAND
INVESTMENT RESOURCES LLC



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Birding on Timberland

Collaboration between Birds Georgia & GA Forestry Foundation



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Let's Work Together

Sustainable, inclusive outdoor recreation
and resilient communities



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J.T. Horn
Senior Director,
National Trails Initiative



Defining Community Forests

What makes a community forest different than other forms of conservation land?

1. Community ownership
2. Community participation in management
3. Benefits flow back to the community
4. Permanent protection

Defining Community Forests

What makes a community forest different than other forms of conservation land?

1. Community ownership

Municipal or county ownership, land trust NGO ownership

2. Community participation in management

Stakeholder committees, governmental commissions, facilitated public meetings, town votes, etc.

3. Benefits flow back to the community

Community benefits tied to community priorities: economic (timber or drinking water), social (recreational access or outdoor education), ecological (wildlife corridors or wetlands)

4. Permanent protection

Conservation easement, deed restrictions, or grant agreements

Benefits of Community Forests

For the forest...

- Local stable ownership
- Long-term sustainable stewardship
- Habitat protection and connectivity
- Water quality protection
- Slowing fragmentation
- Conserved forever

For the community...

- Economic vitality
 - Timber
 - Recreation
 - Tourism
- Community resilience
 - Drinking water protection
 - Flood resilience
- Preserve local character
- Build community
- Open access & recreation
- Outdoor classroom

Community Forest vs. Other Conservation Models

Federal Lands and State Lands:

- Decision making is vested in leaders who may not be connected to local communities.
- Federal or state approvals can slow community driven initiatives like trail building or events like trail races
- Acquisition limitations dictated by Congress or state legislatures (proclamation boundary)

Conservation Easements:

- Retain the benefit flow to a private party landowner (i.e. timber revenues to a timber company)
- Often do not include recreational access

Land Trust Ownership:

- Vests decision making with a private board of directors
- Benefit flows retained by a private entity
- Land trusts can own community forests if they open up decision making and share benefit flows

Pause & Reflect

What are your community's greatest needs?
Which needs can community forests help you meet?



Setting the Table for Success

- ☐ **Be intentional about how you engage citizens and experts.** Community forests require a participatory process that's different from a traditional land protection process. The more you're intentional about inviting people in and blending community input with rigorous expertise, the better result you will get.
- ☐ **Expect a longer timeline.** These projects do not happen fast – if you've never been through the process, the idea that it could take 18-36 months might seem surprising.
- ☐ **Pick a compelling property.** The land should have unique value to the people that live in that place. It's one of the ways you get people to show up and go through a longer process.
- ☐ **You don't need a piece of land to start this process.** Know that your starting point can be different depending on where your community is.
- ☐ **Identify a local champion.** Every project needs someone or some group of people that live in the community and have this as their priority. Outside orgs can help with the real estate piece, but longevity and long-term success requires sustained community leadership.
- ☐ **Establish a mechanism for effective community leadership.** This process can't be owned or led by a municipal agency or professionalized staff alone. Community members must have a voice and authority in the process. A committee or other volunteer board that fits within your municipal structure is key.



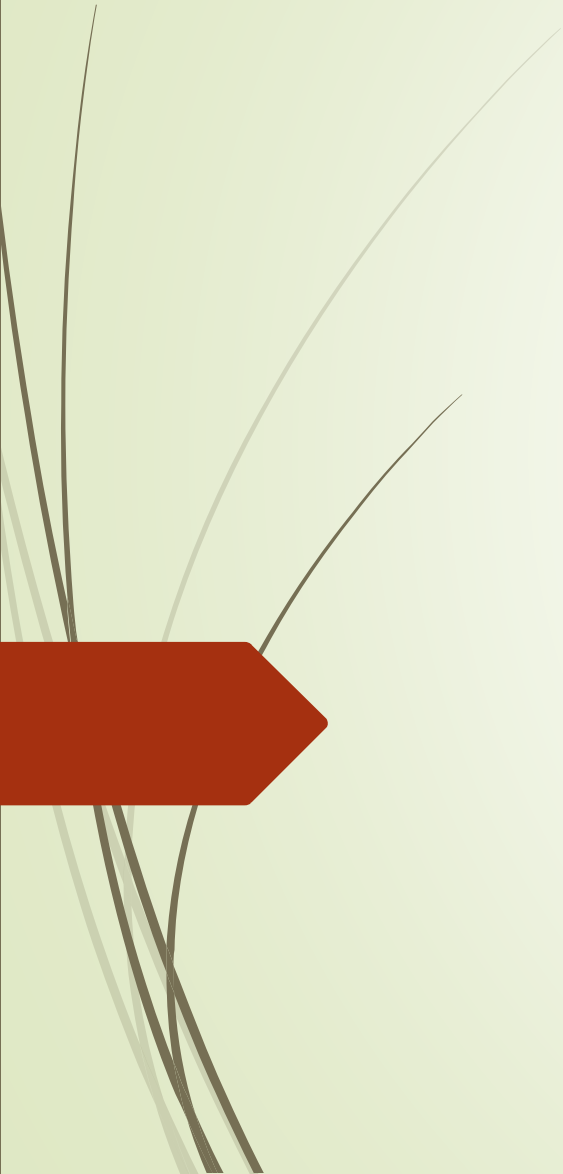
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Case Study: Mink Brook Community Forest

Robert Houseman | Hanover, NH





Mink Brook Community Forest Hanover, NH



Robert Houseman, Hanover Town Manager

TOWN OF HANOVER, GRAFTON COUNTY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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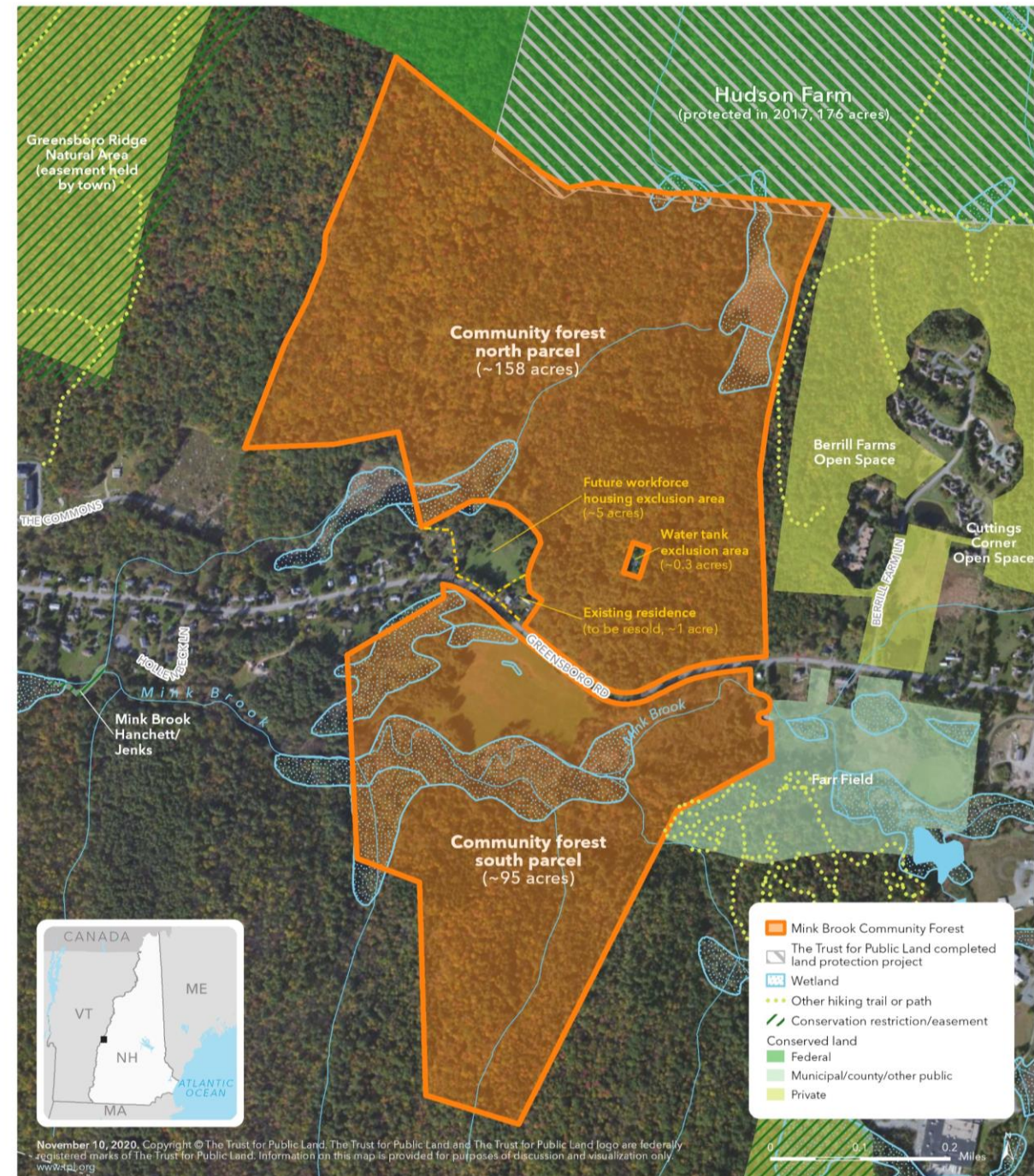
LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|
|  | Street or Road |  | Mink Brook Community Forest |
|  | Appalachian Trail |  | The Trust for Public Land Completed Land Protection Project |
|  | Local Trail |  | Conservation restriction / easement |
|  | 100 ft Contour Line |  | Conserved Land - Federal |
|  | Mink Brook |  | Conserved Land - Municipal / County / Other Public |
|  | Other Stream or Brook |  | Conserved Land - Private |
|  | Parcel Boundary |  | Wetland |
|  | Town Boundary |  | Planting Fields |



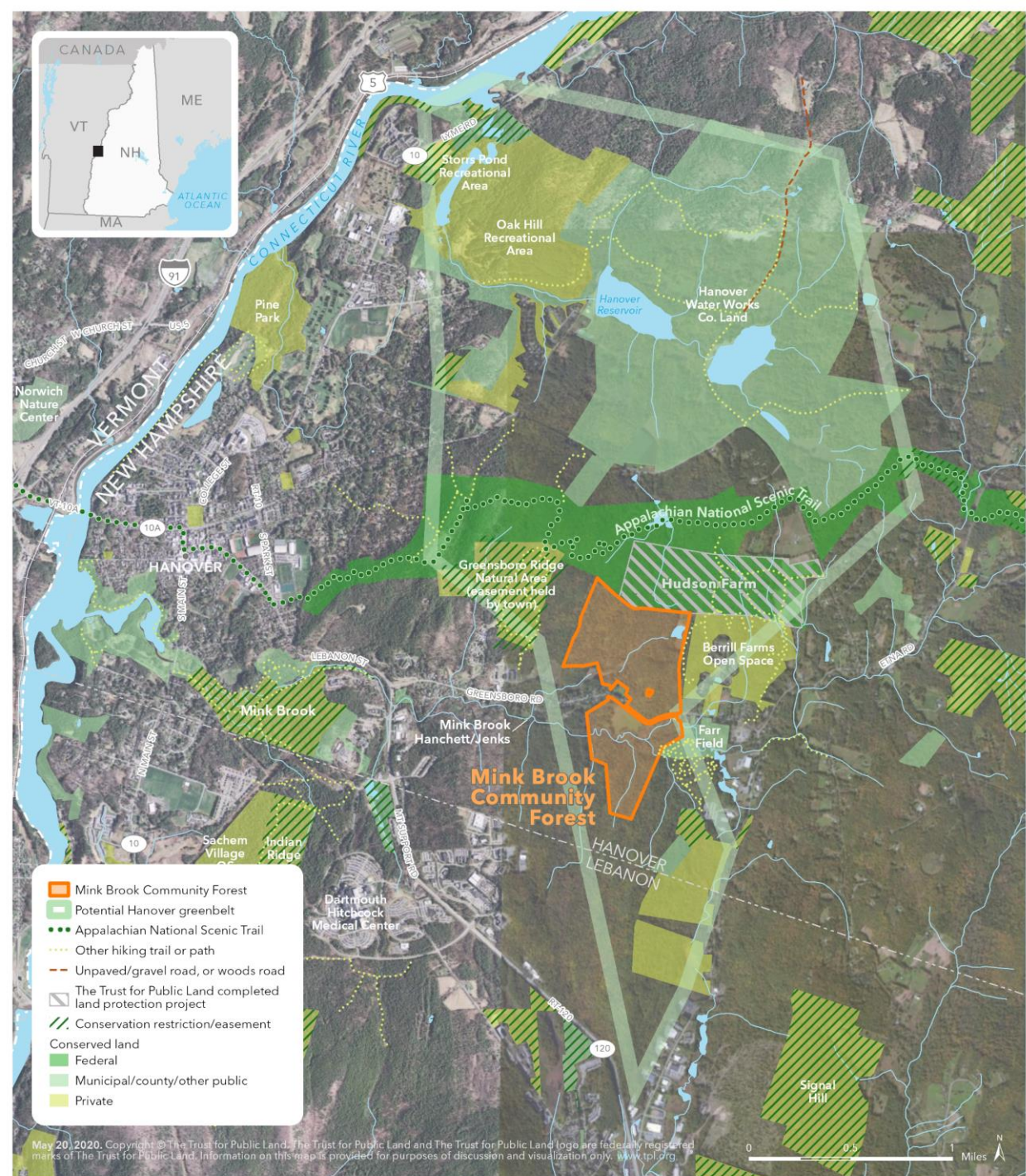
Project Structure

1. 254 acres Mink Brook Community Forest
2. 5 acres for future workforce housing
3. 0.27 acres for future replacement of municipal water tank
4. Existing home on 1 acre sold to a private buyer



Hanover Open Space Plan

- Emerald Necklace – greenbelt around the downtown
- Focus on Mink Brook Watershed
- Focus on the Appalachian Trail
- Wildlife movement corridors (Bear, deer, bobcat)
- Community demand for trails



110 Greensboro Rd Open Space

- Key parcel in Hanover Greenbelt
- Confirmed wildlife corridor
- Buffer to Appalachian Trail and connectivity to local trails
- Access to nature for 30,000 people within 3 miles
- Flood resilience and water quality in Mink Brook
- Working lands (forestry & agriculture)



Vision for Property

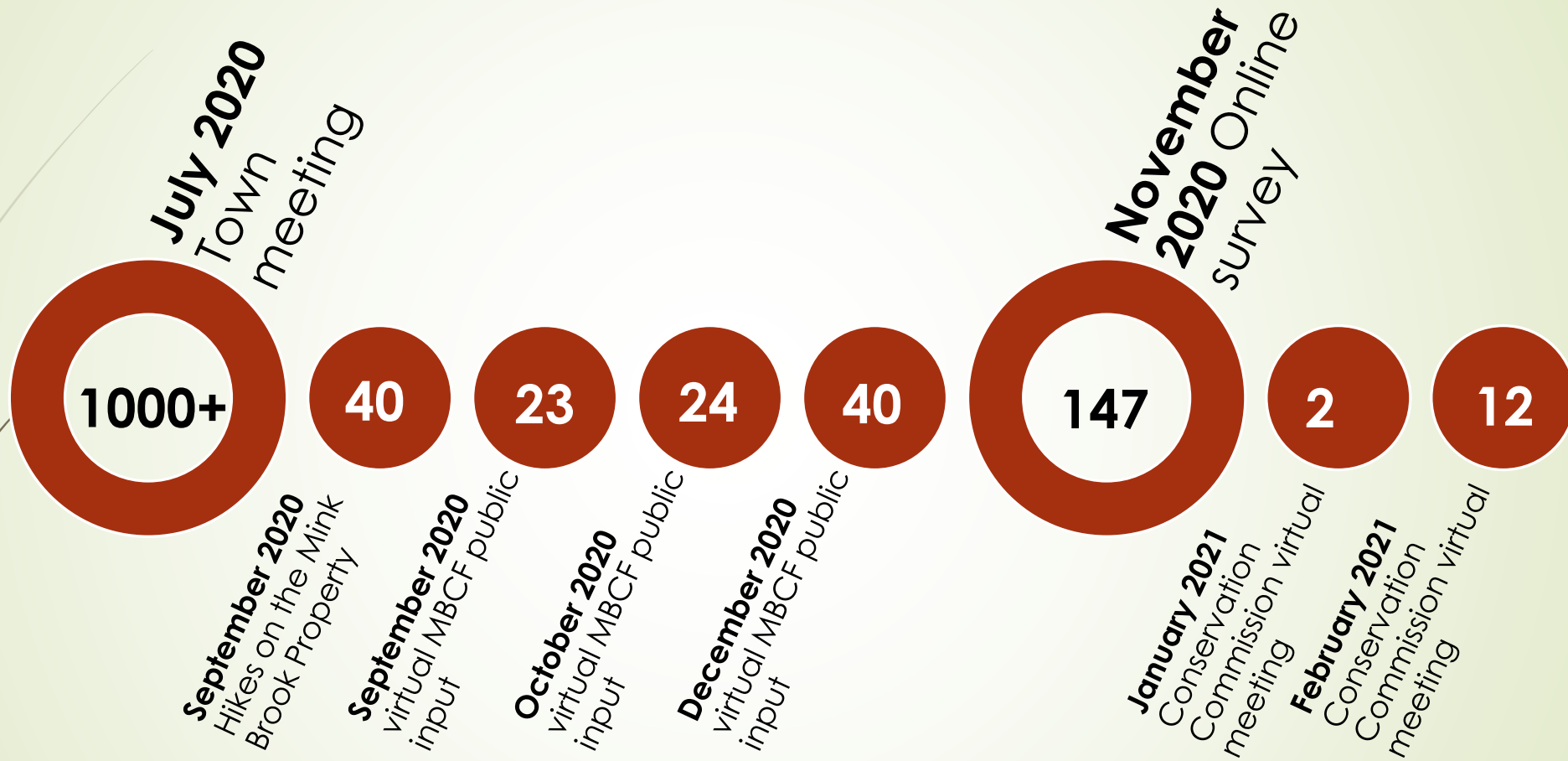
- Conserve the majority of acreage to meet the Open Space Plan
- Infill development for workforce housing to meet affordability goals.
- Plan for water tank replacement
- Collaborate with TPL, Hanover Conservancy, and a housing trust
- Find leverage for municipal funding commitment



Intentional Community Engagement

- COVID Pandemic overshadowed public process
- Conservation Commission (municipal) leads public engagement & long-term stewardship
- Public meetings by Zoom and site walks in small groups
- Townwide survey
- Town meeting vote for budget appropriation and to authorize purchase of real estate
- Management plan developed blending community input with professional expertise from a forester and ecologist voted on by Conservation Commission

Stakeholder Involvement



➤ Numbers along the timeline represent unique stakeholders from the public.



► Town Meeting 2020. Photo Credit: Valley News - James M. Patterson)



Stewardship Objectives



- Maintain the ecological integrity and health of the forest and open land.

- North of Brook - Protect and enhance ecologically significant forest as no-cut area
- South of Brook - Forest management to improve wildlife habitat and create a diverse forest. (Small amounts of timber revenue)
- Remove invasive species
- Floodplain management to protect downstream infrastructure
- Manage deer browse for forest health

- Maintain public access to the property for recreation and education.

- Develop a trail system & maximize accessible options
- Provide education and stewardship opportunities through the conservation commission, local schools, and adult learning programs



\$2,995,000 Total Project Cost

- \$600,000 – Federal USFS Community Forest Program
- \$500,000 – Municipal
- \$200,000 – State (NH LCHIP)
- \$595,000 – Resale of house by TPL
- \$1,100,000 – Private

Total Project Cost includes purchase price, due diligence, TPL staff time and \$100K stewardship fund



Integrating Workforce Housing

110 Greensboro Rd Housing



Access to
municipal water
and sewer



2-mile commute to
downtown,
Dartmouth College,
Medical Center



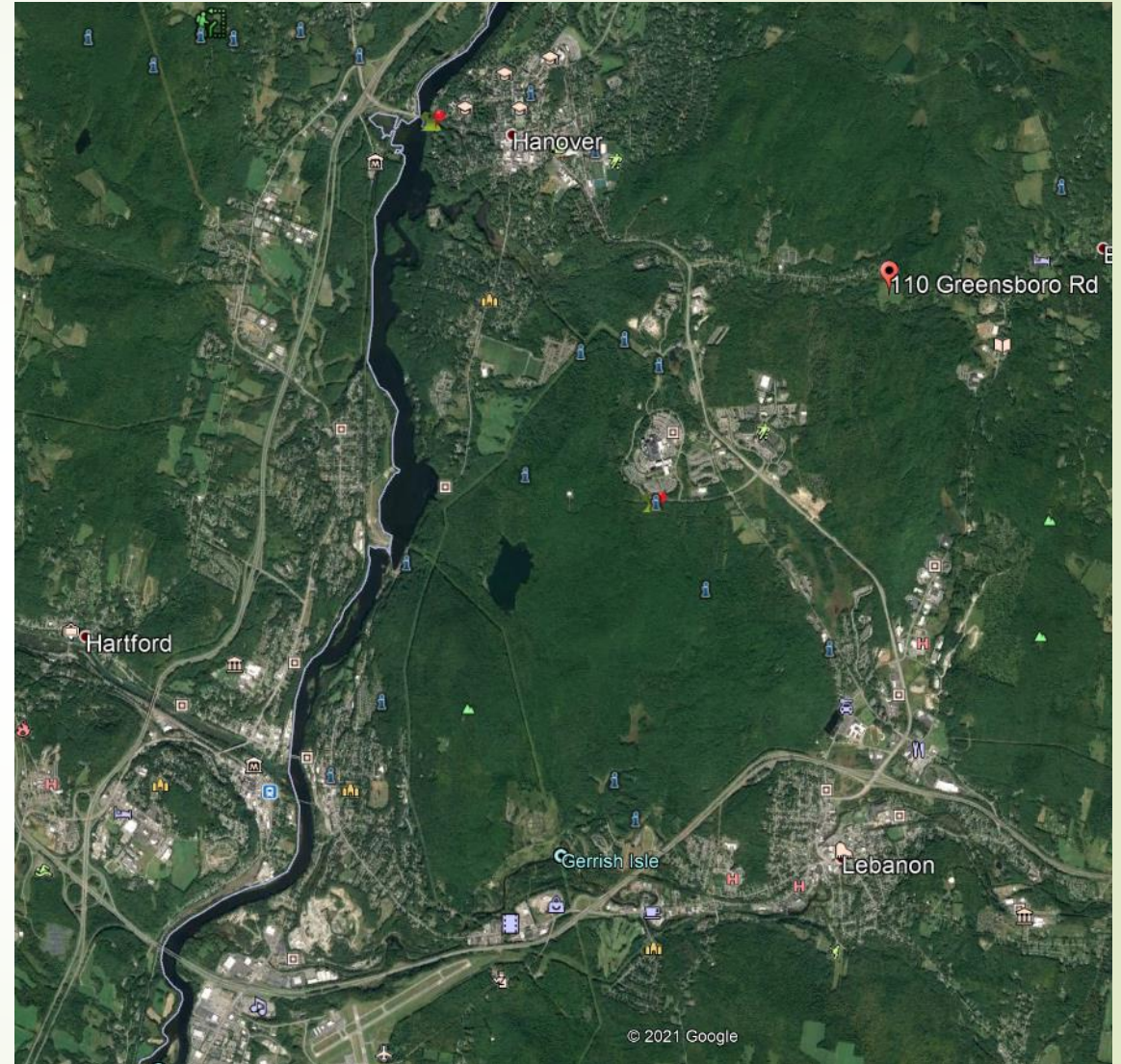
Paved road with
existing curb cut



Neighborhood of
modest homes
(capes, ranches,
0.5 acre lots)



Level site with
frontage

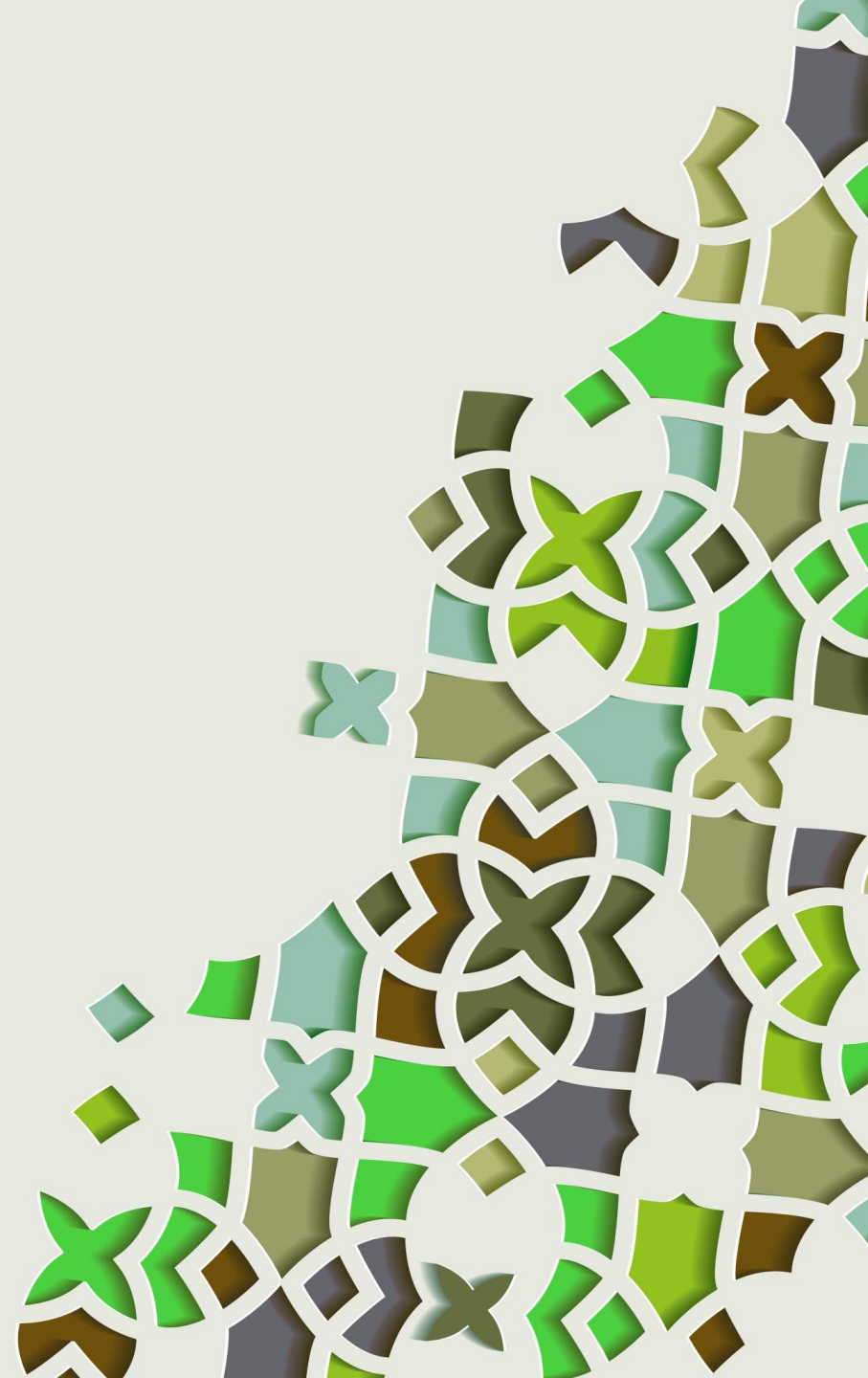


Hanover Housing Market

- Proximity to Dartmouth College & Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center drive market
- Lack of on-campus student housing = over 700 rental units tied up as student housing
- Lack of building lot inventory & community concerns = few new developments in last decade
- Median home price = \$1,200,000 (February 2024)
- Price per square foot = \$440
- What is missing: the missing middle - modest homes for municipal employees, nurses, teachers, service industries

Questions

- Robert Houseman, Town Manager
- robert.houseman@hanovernh.org
- 603-640-3211



Q&A

Please share your questions in the chat!



Reflection

For the next few minutes...

- Complete the worksheet ***Setting the Table for Success: Getting Started***.
- Discuss:
 - What are the benefits of community forests for your local needs?
 - Where is your community already strong?
 - Where can you learn from others?

In a moment, you'll be split into breakout rooms to discuss.
Questions?

Community Forest Training Program

Session 1 | March 5, 2025

Setting the Table for Success: Getting Started
Before you begin, it's critical to lay the groundwork for a successful community forest by setting realistic expectations, engaging a diverse array of stakeholders, and identifying how best to champion this initiative in your area.

Use the worksheet below to assess how community forests can benefit your community and how to get started.

Name Your Goals: What are your community's top priorities?

1. List your community priorities below.
2. Circle, **highlight**, or **bold** any priorities that community forests may be able to help you address.



Since 1972, TPL has protected 4 million acres of public land; created 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places; raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands; and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors.

To learn more, visit tpl.org.

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Next Steps

- **Homework:**
 - Continue the worksheet *Setting the Table for Success: Getting Started*.
 - Share one takeaway from today's session with a colleague.
- Series Invitations
- Report-Out Slides & Recording
- **Session 2: April 2, 2025**
Governance, Ownership, & Funding

Thank You!