



Community Forest Training Program: Management & Stewardship

June 4, 2025

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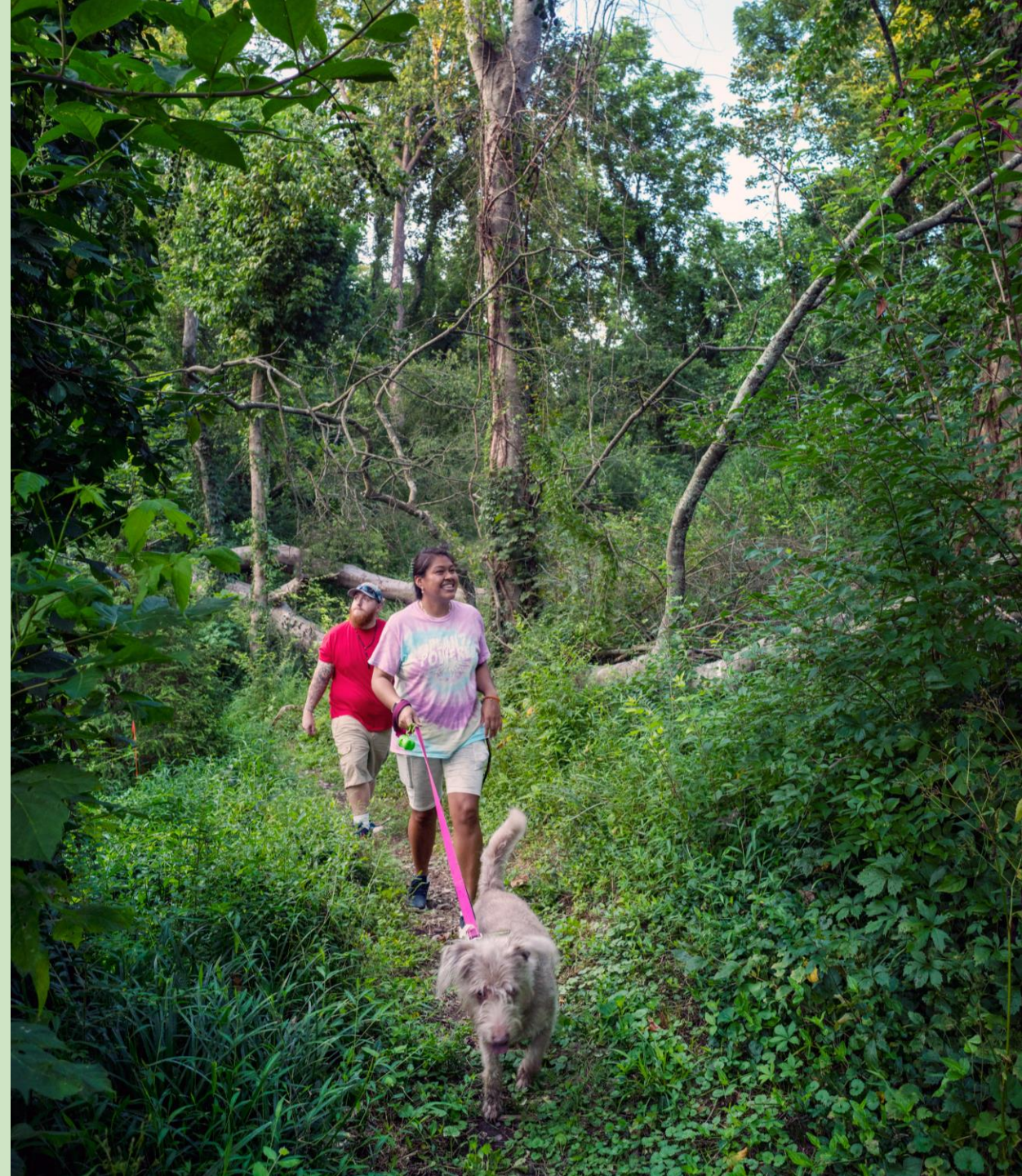
Welcome!

Warm-Up Exercise: In one sentence or less, how do you define stewardship?



Agenda

- Session 3 Recap
- Key Principles for Long-Term Management Planning
- Panel: Community Forest Management & Stewardship
- Speaker Q&A
- Breakout Room Activity
- Next Steps



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: Ownership, Governance, and Funding
- May 7: Community Engagement and Visioning
- June 4: Management and Stewardship
- July 2: Project Implementation



Community Engagement & Visioning

Why is broad community input critical for community forests? How do you build broad support?

- ❑ **It's not a *community* forest without *community* engagement.** Public ownership, input, and management is what sets community forests apart from other conservation projects.
- ❑ **The character of the community will influence the character of the community forest.** Community members must be bought into the long-term vision for the land in order for it to produce meaningful benefits. An established community vision sets the stage for management and stewardship.
- ❑ **Everyone needs a seat at the table.** Go beyond your usual suspects – actively seek out new stakeholders. A comprehensive, sustainable community vision means casting a wide net and bringing people into the process who may never have participated in conservation work before.
- ❑ **Be mindful of your message.** Whether you're engaging user groups or elected officials, clear and intentional messaging around the benefits and values of a community forest is critical for cultivating support.
- ❑ **Conflict is a when – not an if.** Conflict is to be expected when you're building consensus among diverse perspectives. Being prepared to manage conflict effectively is an essential component of a community forest process.



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Betsy Cook
Associate Vice President,
Maine State Director



Long Term Management & Stewardship

Bringing the Community Forest to Life!

Why does good long term management matter?

It is the path to...

- Building community and shared sense of ownership
- Bringing community's vision to life
- Responding to evolving community needs
- Activating the land
- Having fun!



Developing a Management Plan



Management & Stewardship Approach

1. Use **Management Plan** as foundation.
 - Build Annual Implementation Plans from 10-year Management Plan
2. Determine **one entity** that can take lead on coordinating all management activities.
3. “Map” out the **constellation of partners** than can help to implement management plan. Be creative!
 - Hired contractors (e.g. forester, trail builder)
 - Non-profit partners (e.g. trail focused non-profits, education non-profits)
 - Community institutions (e.g. school system, municipal services – road maintenance)
 - Volunteer groups / days
4. **Assess** implementation and management progress annually, evaluate new needs, adapt and adjust.
5. **Celebrate** community and constellation of partners working to bring the community forest to life!

Models for Stewardship & Management

Kingfield Community Forest

- Town ownership
- Non-profit coordinates management
 - Hires professionals
 - Organizes volunteers
- Formal agreement between Town and non-profit
- CF Committee is decision making body, approves management plan and annual implementation plans
 - Housed within town
 - Facilitated by non-profit

Bethel Community Forest

- Non-profit ownership
- Non-profit coordinates management
 - Hires professionals
 - Organizes volunteers
- CF Committee is decision making body, approves management plan and annual implementation plans
 - Housed within non-profit

Funding

Management & Stewardship

- Management Endowment
 - [Calculator](#)
- Activation Fund
- Ongoing Grants





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Panel Discussion: Community Forest Management & Stewardship Models



David Paganelli
County Forester,
Vermont Dept. of Forests,
Parks & Recreation



Matt Lessnau
City Council Member
and Mayor Pro Tem,
City of Ilwaco



Betsy Cook
AVP, Maine State Director,
Trust for Public Land



JT Horn (Moderator)
Senior Director, Trails Initiative,
Trust for Public Land

Q&A

Please share your questions in the chat!



Reflection

For the next few minutes...

- Think back on the original benefits and vision you brainstormed for your community forest project during Session 1 (on **page 1** of your worksheet).
 - What are the key benefits you're hoping to produce?
 - How might those key benefits influence how you manage the forest in the long-term?
- As a group, share what benefits you're trying to maximize for. For each of those benefits, consider:
 - Who needs to be involved in long-term stewardship?
 - What should go into a forest management plan to achieve those goals?
 - What funding opportunities align with those goals?

Questions?

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.



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Next Steps

- **Homework:** Share a **question** you still have about community forests and/or a **case study** you would like to workshop with TPL experts.
- Report-Out Slides & Recording
- **Session 5:** Project Acquisition & Implementation

Thank You!