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Town Forest News: July 2015 update

The new Windham town forest, also known as the Southeast Lands, now has a new name. In an acknowledgement of the property's rich history, the Forestry Committee has named it the McIlvaine Town Forest. Watch for more on its interesting history in an upcoming article.

We continue preparing for our selective thinning harvest, which will result in a healthier, more accessible forest for recreation and wildlife. Our licensed forester held a showing with interested logging contractors on June 23, and bids were submitted for the thinning and harvesting work. DH Hardwick and Sons of Antrim, NH was the high bidder and was chosen for the project (we want the high bidder, since they are paying us). We expect much of our wood products will be processed by New Hampshire businesses. Many of the wood chips made from the low grade hardwoods we are cleaning out, will be turned into renewable energy. Northern Wood Power, part of Schiller Station in Portsmouth, gets around 60% of its wood chip fuel from New Hampshire sources. We expect they will be getting quite a few truckloads of wood chips from our harvest. New Hampshire is also home to many white pine sawmills that can benefit from the pine that will be harvested. At this time, we anticipate that harvesting work will take place either in the fall of 2015 or spring of 2016. The duration of the harvest will probably be 6-8 weeks once it begins. Additional notification will be posted on the town web site when a start date has been confirmed with the logging contractor.

Recreation and hunting update: We would like to remind residents that ATV's and other motorized vehicles are prohibited from using the town forest and all town owned lands per town ordinance number 3:00:11:02. According to this ordinance, violators may be fined up to \$1000 and /or required to pay restitution for damages caused by ATV or motorized vehicle usage. Signs regarding motorized vehicle use have been posted near trailheads at Bayberry Road, Weston Road and Osgood Road. Hunting is an allowed use in the McIlvaine Town Forest. Trail users are reminded to dress appropriately during hunting seasons. We ask that hunters avoid the town forest area if harvesting is actively occurring. Installation of tree stands should be avoided during harvest. If the harvest start is delayed beyond fall 2015, please remove your tree stands at the end of hunting season so that they will not be on the property during the harvest project. Residents should use caution when using the existing trails during the harvest period. For safety, please avoid areas being actively harvested.

The Windham Forestry Committee is looking forward to the benefits of an improved McIlvaine Town Forest as the result of implementing responsible forest resource management practices.

Submitted by Wanda Rice, Chair Windham Forestry Committee