

TOWN OF WILLISTON

MEMORANDUM

November 7, 2022

TO: Erik Wells

CC: Matt Boulanger, Terry Marron, Danielle Doucette, Ethan Tapper

FROM: Simon Myles and the Catamount Community Forest Committee

RE: Catamount Community Forest Stewardship Fund Request

This memo relates to a request to spend funds from the Catamount Community Forest Stewardship Fund. Terry Marron and Ethan Tapper (County Forester) have requested to spend \$3,000 on treatment of invasive species in the late summer of 2023. The Catamount Community Forest Committee (CCFC) is recommending that the request be approved by the Selectboard.

As part of acquisition of Catamount, the Trust for Public Land set aside \$20,000 in a Stewardship Fund for the forest. This is to be used for management, repairs and improvements to infrastructure. No money has been expended from the fund to date.

In August 2021 the Selectboard and CCFC adopted a Priority Policy and Approval Procedure for the fund which guides its management and use. It also reflects the goals established in the Catamount Community Forest Management Plan (CCF Plan). To be eligible to receive Stewardship Fund money a proposal must further the fund goals and the CCF Plan.

The process for releasing funds is that a proponent submits their request to the CCFC who review it against the Stewardship Fund Priority Policy. The CCFC will then submit written recommendations to the Selectboard who will act upon that request at a Selectboard meeting. The Selectboard may accept, reject or modify the CCFC's recommendation in whole or in part.

The request is for \$3,000 to treat invasive plants prior to the start of forest management activities in the late summer of 2023 (see attached request dated September 27, 2022 for details). The request was reviewed at the CCFC meeting on October 13, 2022.

The proposal aligns with a number of CCF Plan goals, specially it:

- Will help protect native biodiversity, as invasive species outcompete native plants.
- Will assist in containing the current population of invasive species at the property. It will help prevent further infestation in the future following the forest management activities in summer 2023.
- It will help further the forest management goals to maintain a healthy and productive forest, and to encourage a diversity of native species.

In reference to the specific factors in the Priority Policy to be considered:

- Invasive treatment has been ongoing at Catamount by volunteers. This request will supplement that work by hiring professional treatment. The Forest Management project at Catamount is a partnership with UVM, part of a nationwide project called Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change (ASCC). The purpose of the ASCC project is to research and demonstrate how forest management can help forests adapt to climate change, in part by encouraging a more diverse, complex and resilient forest. Encouraging regeneration of a diversity of native tree, shrub and

plant species is integral to this work. It is extremely important that invasive species are treated so they do not out-compete the native species that the CCF Plan seeks to encourage.

- It is preferable to undertake the work prior to the forest management completing in September / October 2023. This will minimize any risk of invasives establishing as they often have a longer growing season than native plants.
- There are currently no other projects seeking stewardship funds that would be affected by this expenditure. The proponent is hopeful that the \$3,000 can be replaced from logging revenue.

The Catamount Community Forest Committee recommend the Selectboard approve the request to spend \$3,000 from the stewardship fund to treat invasive species at the forest.