Create and put forward a comprehensive vision of how the partnership’s multi-functional public "Forest Center" could serve the residents and visitors of the northern Berkshire Mountains.
FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF MTWP BOARD CHAIR HENRY "HANK" ART

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF PROFESSOR SARAH GARDNER
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

GRAPHIC CREDIT: https://native-land.ca/
PROJECT GOALS

1. STAKEHOLDER SURVEY AND REPORT
2. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW ANALYSIS
3. DEFINED USES AND SPACES
4. PROGRAMMING IDEAS
5. POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
6. MISSION STATEMENT
Our project acknowledged and discussed, but did not focus on:

- The controversy over the MTWP’s real or perceived mission
- Any detailed conceptual planning or considerations beyond the project goals

Why?

- Project must reflect MTWP mission
- No concrete details at this point
PROJECT BACKGROUND
Collaboration between FRCOG, BRPC, FLT, EEA
Conceived after 60 public meetings in all municipalities, lots of community feedback
Wanted a special designation of the region
2013 - MTWP Advisory Committee
  • Wanted a special designation of the region
2018 - Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership and MTWP Governing Board
Currently 17/21 municipalities have opted into the Partnership
LAW AND POLICY

- Massachusetts State Law 209, Sections 89-91
- MTWP 2014-2015 Draft Plan
- MTWP Draft Business Plan (2018)
- Shared Stewardship Framework

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

An Act promoting climate change adaptation, environmental and natural resource protection, and investment in recreational assets and opportunity.

Shared Stewardship Framework

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
And the
United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
(Eastern Region, Northern Research Station, and Forest Products Laboratory)
FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

- $30 million government contribution anticipated for MTWP
  - $24 million at a federal level
  - $6 million at a state level
- Establishment of a Forest Center would utilize both government funds and independently-raised funds
- No immediate plans for Forest Center development, so no financial details available
RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW
CATSKILLS VISITOR CENTER
Mount Tremper, NY

FISHER MUSEUM AT HARVARD FOREST
Petersham, MA

GREYLOCK GLEN VISITOR CENTER
Adams, MA

MT. GREYLOCK VISITOR CENTER
Lanesborough, MA
FORESTRY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

MASSWOODS
University of Massachusetts at Amherst, MA

MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNMENT FORESTRY
Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS WOODLANDS INSTITUTE
Franklin County, MA

NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION
Littleton, MA

IMAGE CREDIT: Respective informational websites
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMIES

- Berkshire and Franklin counties are economically stressed
- Franklin County:
  - 9.3% of the population lives below the poverty line
  - 6% unemployment rate
- Berkshire County:
  - 11.2% of the population lives below the poverty line
  - 4.5% unemployment rate
RESEARCH FINDINGS
RESEARCH FINDINGS 0.1
Stakeholder Survey
I. STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

- 10-question survey that focuses on envisioned uses and functions
- Stakeholders were identified by the Board and emailed the form
- Feedback informed our vision of the Forest Center
- Stakeholders included:
  - Land trust representatives
  - Business association members
  - Zoning and planning boards members
  - Town councillors
  - Municipal, state, and federal representatives
  - Museum consultants
  - Private donors
  - Landowners
  - Community leaders
  - Business owners in various industries
I. STAKEHOLDER SURVEY: RESULTS (PART 1)

The survey results show the preferences of stakeholders for different facilities and services. The data is visualized through pie charts, where each chart represents a different facility or service, and the segments indicate the percentage of stakeholders who rated each facility/service as Most Important, Important, or Not Very Important.

- **Education Center**: 48% Most Important, 22% Important, 30% Not Very Important.
- **Living Forest Preserve**: 40% Most Important, 28% Important, 32% Not Very Important.
- **Forestry Assistance**: 24% Most Important, 40% Important, 36% Not Very Important.
- **Tourism Center**: 30% Most Important, 33% Important, 37% Not Very Important.
- **MTWP Headquarters**: 25% Most Important, 32% Important, 44% Not Very Important.
- **Research Center**: 24% Most Important, 24% Important, 52% Not Very Important.
- **Demo Forest**: 56% Most Important, 12% Important, 32% Not Very Important.
- **Marketplace**: 44% Most Important, 44% Important, 52% Not Very Important.

The visual representation clearly indicates the distribution of preferences among stakeholders for each facility/service.
# II. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

## Government Representatives
- Robert O'Connor: Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
- Sarah Reynolds: Town Administrator of Charlemont
- Marguerite Willis: Selectboard Chair of Charlemont
- Emily Johnson: Franklin Planning Board
- Peggy Sloan: Franklin Planning Board
- Jessica Atwood: Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Forestry Experts and Associates
- Jay Healy: Former owner of Hall Tavern Farm
- Tom Kluklinski: Speciality artisan woodworker
- Drew Jones: Hopkins Memorial Forest Manager
- Pete Grima: DCR Service Forester
- Alison Wright: DCR Service Forester
- Bob Leverett: Chair of DCR Forest Reserves Science Advisory Council
- Brian Donahue: President of MA Woodlands Institute
- Meg Burrington: Pantermehl Land Clearing Company
- Julie Richburg: Regional ecologist
- Lisa Hayden: New England Forestry Foundation

## Additional Stakeholders
- Hank Art: MTWP Chair (client)
- Whit Sanford: Greater Shelburne Falls Businesses Association
- Lauren Stevens: Expertise on the history of the Mohawk Trail
- Bonney Hartley: Historic Preservation Manager at the Stockbridge-Munsee Community
- Andy Kawczak: President of the Hoosic Watershed Association
- Rick Chandler: MTWP Vice President
- Meshell Bordeleau: Visitor Services Supervisor at Mt. Greylock Visitor Center
RESEARCH FINDINGS 0.3
Defined Uses + Programming
III. DEFINED USES AND PROGRAMMING

- Public Education Center
- Tourism and Visitor Center
- Forestry Assistance
- Conservation Area
III. DEFINED USES AND PROGRAMMING: PUBLIC EDUCATION CENTER

- **Goals:**
  - increase public appreciation for woodlands and sustainable forest management
  - advance knowledge on the region's history, landscape, communities, and futures
  - provide year-round programming and "pop-up" events

- **Field trip destination for local schools**
- **Educational programming that focus on forest land conservation**
- **Weekend programming events relevant to the season**
- **Temporary and permanent exhibits, indoor and outdoor in the conservation area**

- **History of the Mohawk Trail exhibit**
- **Local indigenous communities and histories exhibit**
- **Climate change adaptation exhibit**
- **Natural resource protection exhibit**

- **Reach out to relevant expertise - Indigenous Cultural Affairs and Historic Preservation officials, local historians and elders with knowledge about the region's history, ecologists and foresters with intimate knowledge of this area**

**IMAGE:** The interactive topographical map at Mount Greylock Visitor Center
III. DEFINED USES AND PROGRAMMING: TOURISM AND VISITOR CENTER

- Goals:
  - serve as a multi-purpose rest stop for visitors with public restrooms and free wifi
  - promote patronage of restaurants focusing on local foods, outdoor recreational opportunities, and regional museums
  - encourage eco-tourism and engagement from central and eastern Massachusetts

- Museums
- Restaurants
- Parks and trails
- Recreational activities

- Consult popular businesses to consider a small discount for visitors who make their reservations through or because of the center
- Should review the Recreation Tourism Inventory and Mapping Project by the BRPC and FRCOG

COMPONENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMAGE: Brochures and maps at the Mount Greylock Visitor Center
III. DEFINED USES AND PROGRAMMING: FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

• Goals:
  ○ build relationships between the Forest Center, landowners, foresters, loggers, and sawmill operators
  ○ encourage responsible stewardship and care of the land
  ○ support conservation to help mitigate climate change
  ○ facilitate sustainable timber harvesting on family forests if desired

• Informational, resource-based website
• Brochures, videos, pamphlets, and books
• Consulting foresters and forestry experts
• Workshops, classes, safety courses, and webinars
• Social events and programming
• Supporter/facilitator of Indigenous land return

COMPONENTS

• Ecological and biological importance and the value of forests
• History of forestry in this region and its continuing impacts
• Traditional ecological knowledge and Indigenous histories
• State and federal grants, awards, programs for landowners
• Regulations, laws, rules, deeds, etc. regarding woodlands
• Climate change impacts, adaptations, and resiliency
• Importance of choosing a reputable forester
• Responsible timber harvesting and logging
• Local tree species and wildlife species identification
• Planning for the future of the forest

PROGRAMMING

• Invest in an educational campaign about forestry, logging, and forest health
• Define sustainable forestry
• Collaborate with existing local FA programs
• Connect with research institutions
• Work with the guidance of Indigenous tribes with regional knowledge
• Advertise, outreach, communication!

RECOMMENDATIONS
III. DEFINED USES AND PROGRAMMING: CONSERVATION AREA

- Goals:
  - define and showcase sustainable forestry practices
  - encourage landowners to conserve their woodlands
  - provide recreational and educational opportunities
  - promote wildlife biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and invaluable ecosystem services/"earthly gifts" *

- Preservation area
- Demonstration area
- Maintained trails
- Signage and storytelling

- Seasonal or regular festivals
- Demonstrative events
- Workshops and safety courses
- Social events and outdoor programming
- Educational opportunities for students

- Reach out to demonstration forest head stewards and managers
- Develop an explicit land use/land access agreement in collaboration with Indigenous communities

*Robin Wall Kimmerer, Potawatomi scientist
### III. DEFINED USES AND PROGRAMMING: EVALUATION MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined Use</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Socio/Economic</th>
<th>Economic/Fiscal</th>
<th>Stakeholder Opinions</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism Center</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation Area</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Center</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td><strong>MTWFP Headquarters</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ratings: 3 is Best and 1 is Worst**

- **Defined Uses**: Used to check stakeholder survey results against our interviews, research, and best judgement.
- **Based on**: Various factors, including environmental, social/equity, etc.
- **Shows our**: Ratings and rationale for the defined uses we assessed, where 3 is best and 1 is worst.
RESEARCH FINDINGS 0.4
Potential Locations
IV. SPATIAL ANALYSIS MAP

- Created on Google Maps
- Labeled markers:
  - Site locations
  - Visitor centers
  - Local schools
  - Recreational infrastructure
  - Logging infrastructure
  - Hospitality infrastructure
- Additional considerations:
  - Deerfield River
  - Route 2
  - Other roads

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1dV4hTPk7ouYLwhaXzyAjwhp1ZLUa03ax&usp=sharing
IV. STAKEHOLDER LOCATION PREFERENCES
IV. WHITCOMB SUMMIT, FLORIDA

- 19 acres
- Current site has a hotel and forestlands
- Known for its view of the Taconic Mountains
- Far from any businesses, schools, recreational or tourism infrastructure
- Owner is open and willing, but Florida is not in MTWP
IV. HALL TAVERN FARM, CHARLEMONT

- 350 acres
- In a well-traveled area near businesses
- Existing sawmill operation and demo forest is perfect for forestry assistance
- Owner is excited about the prospect

IMAGE: Abby and Jay Healy walk the woodlands property; map image from Google Earth
IV. MOHAWK TRAIL STATE FOREST, CHARLEMONT

- 6,000+ acres of forest, ridges, gorges, and river
- Pre-existing visitor infrastructure, name recognition, along Route 2
- Physically difficult to place; demo forest is not an option
- Unsuccessful communication with forest director

IMAGE: Sabrine in front of the Mohawk Trail State Forest sign; map image from Google Earth
IV. BERKSHIRE EAST, CHARLEMONT

- 150 acres
- Ski resort in the winter; hiking and biking trails in the summer
- Pre-existing clientele and name recognition
- Not directly off Route 2; must find it intentionally
- Owner is open and supportive of the idea, but contact requests were unsuccessful
IV. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

- Administered and distributed by the New England Forestry Foundation
- Sets specific parameters for a location and owners and property managers can reach out if interested
- Recommendations:
  - Along Route 2/Mohawk Trail and the Deerfield River
  - In Charlemont and Shelburne municipalities

IMAGE: The Deerfield River at the entrance of the Mohawk Trail State Forest
Mission Statement
"The Forest Center works to connect residents and visitors to comprehensive and diverse educational materials that reflect the history, characteristics, and future of Northwestern Massachusetts; advance and sophisticate the region's small-scale eco-tourism economy by serving as an active visitor resource hub; support landowners to practice sustainable and regenerative forestry that aids in climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation; and protect and manage an on-site woodlands preserve for recreational and demonstrative purposes."
THANK YOU!