**PRESS RELEASE**
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Catamount Community Forest Demonstrates Forest Management for Climate Adaptation

Public invited to learn more about a unique project in Williston

Williston, VT – After three years of planning, the Catamount Community Forest (CCF) in Williston will begin forest management to enhance the forest’s ability to adapt to climate change. In partnership with the University of Vermont, the CCF, which is owned by the Town of Williston, is part of a long-term research project called “Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change,” which will help build a better understanding of how forests can be managed responsibly and adaptively in a changing climate.

“The primary goal of this work is to improve our understanding of how to care for forests in a changing climate,” says Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. “At the same time, we will be demonstrating responsible forest management for biodiversity, wildlife habitat, local renewable resources, and more.”

The project will encompass about 25 acres of the CCF’s 393 acres. It will involve cutting individual trees and groups of trees, creating gaps in the forest’s canopy to encourage new growth, retaining lots of “legacy trees,” and leaving plenty of dead wood on the ground. These practices will encourage the forest to become more diverse and complex over time – more like an old growth forest.

The Town will partner with the award-winning logger LaFoe Logging LLC., under Tapper’s supervision, to implement this work. LaFoe will send wood harvested from the project area to local mills, and the proceeds will be reinvested in improving the health of and habitat offered by the CCF.

“One of the most challenging parts of forest management is how counterintuitive it can be,” says Tapper. “At Catamount we will take an area that looks ‘neat’ and ‘tidy’ and make it look ‘messy.’”

“A more holistic view of forests reveals that many of the things that most people see as ‘messiness’ – dead wood, dead-standing trees, canopy gaps, multiple ages and sizes of trees – are actually critical to forest resilience and adaptability, as well as to the protection of biodiversity. Rather than to try to ‘clean-up’ forests, this project will help users reimagine what a healthy forest actually looks like.”

To improve the public understanding of this project, Tapper is partnering with the University of Vermont, the Vermont Land Trust, Audubon Vermont, Green Mountain Audubon Society, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Vermont Coverts, Vermont Woodlands Association, City Market Co-op, and others to offer a number of walks and events this summer.

Learn more about these planned Catamount Community Forest walks and events by signing up for the [Chittenden County Forester’s email list](https://vermont.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=58398f7a782118e355bf99377&id=58d2751d34%20). People can also learn more by exploring the links, articles, and videos at the project’s [online portal](https://linktr.ee/CatamountCommunityForest).

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View the [press release online](https://fpr.vermont.gov/news/catamount-community-forest-demonstrates-forest-management-climate-adaptation).

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