

Land use discussion  
Mt Toby retreat 5/24/14  
25+ participating

Jennie's flip chart notes from large group discussion (numbers in parentheses indicate "votes" by dot) :

If you were responsible for deciding how to respond to climate change issues by using the 118 acres owned by Mt Toby, what would you do?

- Install PV array: cut electricity costs, generate income, produce power for those in the meeting whose homes aren't well situated for solar. Install over parking area? In sheep pasture? (6)
- Research carbon sequestration potential
- Spiritual nurturance (Mt Toby community and others) (1)
- Network of easy to follow trails open to the public (5)
- Healthy forest ecosystem (animals, trees, humans) (7)
- Harvest more of the forest in optimal sustainable way (2)
- Integrate the land into the local economy (provide livelihood to workers, materials/resources for local use) (3)
- Install a geothermal heating/cooling system (using the wetland) (2)
- Orchard – food for us + shelters (6)
- Lawn -> Community garden plots (7)
- Leave it be, let it become old growth (3)
- Shrubs/food (animal or human) permaculture (3)
- Green wildlands burial ground
- Species inventory (especially consider what was present before human interference)
- Making life easier for the endangered species (7)
- A concern for simplicity (5)
- Don't distract from the larger climate issue by focusing on management of these acres (6)
- Sell the land and take \$ and do good with it
- Build retreat cabins and offer a chance to practice simplicity (1)
- Create a model of ecological living, possible live-in caretaker, ecocenter for education (1)
- Join with other faith communities, draw others into our decision making process (5)
- Decide land use in relation to other parcels nearby – make decisions in landscape context (4)
- Be cautious about seeing land as a commodity, and making changes (5)
- Placing conservation restriction (at least in part) (15)

Observations/Reflections following the meeting:

We have a wide range of experiences that inform our thinking about this issue, including significant expertise in forestry, ecology, native life, activism. At the same time, thinking about stewardship of this land is brand new to many of us.

We are interested in keeping meeting ownership of this land, though we have not thought much about the implications of this

We are not interested in making money from this land

We are not interested in keeping it private. We are interested in sharing the experiences it offers with others who appreciate it.

We are VERY interested in its ecological value – protecting biodiversity and habitat

Most agree that we can get both economic (timber and possibly other products) and ecological value from the land

Most agree that more spiritual nurturance value is possible from our relationship with this land. Such value may not only come from relationship with the natural communities on the land but also from our decision-making processes about human use in the context of our 21<sup>st</sup> century society and changing climate. Forest management provides incentive for us to pay attention and to take responsibility in our relationship with the land. At the same time, decisions about land use can take time and attention away from addressing other (more important?) issues in society.

Young Friends have expressed interest in recreational use of the land, and in getting to know it better in general.

Relevant/practical/factual questions

What's the larger context of our 118 acres? What are our neighbors' plans and goals? Are there efforts for a larger landscape plan that we could join/influence?

How much are our Sunderland/Leverett taxes currently (some 61, most 61B)? How much would they change if we put all forest land in 61B (all recreation, no plan to harvest)?

Does 61B require filing a plan? Is any action required of us for 61B (e.g. maintaining trails, posting)?

What are the costs and other implications if we change our minds, e.g. re-registering the 44 acres as 61 and then deciding against harvest, or registering as 61B and then deciding to harvest?