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| Project Name:Forest Slalom | Date Proposed: 02/02/2022 |
| Property Name: Bryant Mt. / Berkshire Snow Basin | Town(s): Cummington |
| Acres: 234 | Landscape Designation: Woodland & Parkland |
| Forestry District: Central Berkshire | Rec Complex/District: Lakes / Pittsfield |
| Forester: Kristopher Massini | FOTL/F&P Supervisor: Chris Hajar |

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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| \* Increase resistance and resilience of trees and forests to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change |
| \* Manage forest ecosystem health and biodiversity |
| \* Support and enhance forest economy |
| \* Enhance the connection between forests and people |
| \* Cultivate and support partnerships with forestry and conservation Stakeholders |
| \* Other |

GENERAL LOT DESCRIPTION

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| **Acres** | **Forest Type** | | **Stand Description** |
| 118 | Overstory: Variable | Understory: Variable | Approximately 40 acres of former ski trail were last mowed in 2006. Little maintenance since the last mowing has resulted in dense regeneration with forest edges creating in reducing the acreage of herb/shrub habitat. |
| 116 | Overstory: Northern Hardwoods | Understory: Northern Hardwood | Species composition, tree health, and stand structure vary based on elevation and slope. Primary species include sugar maple, red maple, white ash, beech, yellow birch and black cherry, and red oak. Portions of the lower elevation and western edge of this area contain a softwood component of hemlock, white pine, and red spruce. From past management a variable understory of the same species is present. |

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| Description of Project Area: Formerly this land was used by the Berkshire Snow Basin. This alpine ski area was first opened in 1949 and was in operation in various levels of success until approximately 1985. By this point it had been determined without major upgrades the area would not be able to compete with neighboring ski areas. In 1984 the land to the south of the Berkshire Snow Basin was purchased to expand the ski area. Following the financial problems of that plan the Department purchased the entire property in 1994 with the intention of leasing out the Ski Area for continued use. The land to the west was purchased by the Department in 1999, creating the current extents of Bryant Mountain State Forest. In 2006 through a NRCS WHIP grant approximately 30 acres of the former ski trails were mowed, prior to that the main ski slopes were mowed using tractor and brush hog in 1996 by Department personnel and equipment. There has been no formal forest management under the Departments ownership. However, prior to State ownership several timber sales were conducted. Sales are estimated to have occurred in the early 1990’s and early 1980’s. |

# SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

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| Acres | Soil Type | Drainage Characteristic |
| 11.1 | 254B—Merrimac fine sandy loam | Somewhat excessively drained |
| 44.5 | 904C—Lyman-Tunbridge | Somewhat excessively drained |
| 2.6 | 905C—Peru-Marlow | Moderately well drained |
| 175.1 | 909E—Tunbridge-Lyman | Well drained |

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| Average Slope Percent:Variable | Terrain Consistency: Constant |
| General Aspect:North | Terrain Position: Multiple |
| Description of Soils and Topographic Features: This project area spans approximately 450’ of elevation from the East Branch of the Westfield River to a bench halfway up Bryant Mountain (height of former ski lift). Soils within the former maintained ski trails and base lodge and lift area have been altered by development of the ski area. | |

# WETLAND FEATURES

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|  | Present | Crossing | Work within Filter/Buffer |
| Wetlands: | Yes | No | No |
| Regulated Streams: | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Non-Regulated Streams: | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Vernal Pools: | No | N/A | N/A |
| Seeps: | Possible | No | Possible |

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| Description of Wetland Features: Projects completed under this proposal will utilize the existing road and trail system. Repairs will be made as needed to restore access and/or protect resources from insufficient structures. There is an existing wetland located on a bench mid slope which contains cranberries, as was done during the last mowing this area will be protected from ground disturbance. |

CULTURAL RESOURCES

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|  | Present | At Risk | Work Within Buffer |
| Stone Walls: | Yes | No | Yes |
| Foundation / Cellar Hole: | Possible | No | Yes |
| Well: | Possible | No | Yes |
| Structures: | No | N/A | N/A |
| Cemetery: | No | N/A | N/A |
| Other: Remnant Ski Area Infrastructure | Yes | No | Yes |

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| Description of Cultural Resources: Prior to being utilized as a ski area much of this area fell under agricultural use and wood production. |

NATURAL HERITAGE / WILDLIFE-HABITAT MANAGEMENT / OTHER RESOURCES

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| Natural Heritage Polygon: Yes | Natural Heritage Restrictions: Possible |
| Restrictions on Harvest Description: This polygon occurs as a buffer of the East Branch of the Westfield River; projects will adjust management to NHESP recommendations. | |

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| Wildlife Specific Management: Yes | Targeted Species: Early Successional |
| Goals: Reclaim the existing ski trails and maintain them on a rotational basis as early successional habitat. This goal would continue to provide this habitat into the future. | |

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| Additional Habitat Management: Yes | Habitat Type: Field |
| Goals: Prepare lower slopes (Lodge, lift, and parking area) for a return to annual/bi-annual mowing for herb/shrub habitat. | |

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| State Forest Action Plan: Yes | State Wildlife Action Plan: Yes |
| ACEC: No | Public Water Supply: No |
| BIO Map2: Yes | Current Resource Management Plan: Choose an item. |
| Additional Detail: BIO Map 2 lists the uplands of this project area as Critical Natural Landscape - Large Block and categorized the same portions as the Natural Heritage polygon along the East Branch of the Westfield River as Critical Natural Landscape- Aquatic Buffer. | |

FOREST HEALTH / INVASIVE SPECIES

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| Forest Health Concern: No | Species Affected: Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Management Considerations: Click or tap here to enter text. | |

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| Plant Invasive Species Present: Possible | Species Present: Many |
| Management Considerations: Perform an initial survey to determine the extent of infestation and the best management practices for removal. Remove and control invasive exotic vegetation within the existing ski trails and adjacent forest. | |

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| Insect Invasive Species Present: Yes | Species Present: Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and Beech Bark Disease (BBD) |
| Management Considerations: Reducing the density of white ash can reduce the amount of available food for the EAB causing a slowdown in its spread. Salvaging the ash while still economically viable will provide the DCR funds to treat the invasive species present to prepare these stands for a new regeneration. Removal/treatment of the beech understory will be needed to break the cycle of beech bark disease and to regenerate desired northern hardwood species. | |

CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND CARBON CONSIDERATIONS

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| **Action Type** | **Identified Issue** | **Action Description** |
| Resilience | Poor non-functioning or not needed culverts are causing ecological damage. | Repair, replace or remove culverts located in portions of the ski trails and lower lodge area that to stabilize erosion concerns. |
| Facilitated | Treat northern hardwood stands to reduce risks of warmer climate and increase composition of species suited for potential change. | Reduce stocking levels of white ash and beech while favoring species more adapted to changing conditions including red oak, black cherry, and sugar maple. |
| Resistance | Retaining and promoting climate affected species such as red spruce, hemlock, and sugar maple in the mixed wood stands. | In portions of the northern hardwood stands where there is a mixedwood components silvicultural treatments will provide softwood species with the strongest preference for retention and propagation. |

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| Adaptive Management Strategies: Overarching goals of this project are to maintain the existing early successional habitat, improve degraded drainage conditions and maintain a healthy productive native forest. |

**INFRASTRUCUTRE / RECREATION/ AESTHETICS**

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| Access Road: Route 9 – Berkshire Trail | Ownership: Mass DOT |
| Condition: Excellent | Road Repair/Upgrade: No |
| Existing Landing: Yes | Landing Repair/Upgrade: Possible |
| Project Access and Landing Site: Portions of the formers ski area parking lot have sustained damage from beaver activity and will not be repaired/used unless there is long term operational/recreational need. The parking area / pull off on Route 9 will be utilized as entrance for a landing area. | |

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| Existing Skid Trail Network: Yes | Pre-Harvest Repair/Upgrade: Yes |
| Skid Trail Network Description: The existing trail network is in good shape except for several stream crossings which have been compromised by beaver damage and/or storm damage. Use of and repairs to the existing crossings will be preferred over creating new features. | |

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| Shared Infrastructure: Possible | Road/Trail Names: Ski Trails |
| Management Considerations: Equipment will utilize the existing ski trails for maintenance mowing and in some cases skid trails to move materials landing. | |

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| Official Trail Present: Yes | Condition: Grown in due to lack of maintenance |
| Illegal Trail Present: Yes | Condition: There is a growing number of illegal mountain bike trails and hand cut ski trails. Many of these are in poor condition or bad locations. |
| Existing Trail Head: Yes | Condition: Users currently park off of Route 9, this pull off area holds roughly 5-6 cars |
| Recreation Facility: No | Condition: N/A |
| Recreation and Aesthetic Concerns/Opportunities: Along with providing habitat this project would allow for recreational activities including hiking, wildlife viewing, hunting, and winter sports such as alpine skiing and sledding. Coordination with the Recreation Trails Program staff to explore grant possibilities as well as potential use agreements with recreational groups. Repair, replace or remove existing drainage structures within the former ski trails, parking and lodge area. Many culverts have been installed along the ski slopes to control erosion and these have become clogged or blocked over time. These drainage problems have led to erosion and flooding problems that should be addressed regardless of future uses of the area. | |

SILVICULTURE

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| **Acres** | **Silviculture Type** | **Silviculture Description** |
| 118 | Early successional habitat maintenance | Mow existing early successional habitat (former ski slopes) and clear edges to previous extent. Thinning of areas in between trails to diffuse the hard edges and increase growth of desirable species. Potential for the lodge, lift and parking areas (approximately 6 acres) to be retained in herb/shrub habitat with yearly or biannual mowing. |
| 116 | Irregular Shelterwood | Generally, between 20 and 80% of the volume within each stand will be harvested based on species composition, with lower volume removal generally occurring in portions of the treatment dominated by shade-tolerant trees and higher volume removal generally occurring in portions of the treatment dominated by shade-intolerant. A primary goal will be maintaining softwood species in the overstory to promote their retention and regeneration. |
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| General Comments on Silviculture Proposed: Coordination with DCR Recreation and consultation with Mass F&W will occur for the planning and layout of early successional mowing with. Funding for this work will require in-kind services from the adjoining stands, retained revenue funding, or grant funding. |

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS / OPPORTUNITIES

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|  | Description |
| Seasonal Restrictions: Yes | Mowing of the ski trails as well as harvesting along the edges will need to be completed under dry and snow free conditions. |
| Equipment Restrictions: Possible | Within the former ski area tracked mowing equipment will be required. |
| Recreation Restrictions: No | There are no anticipated conflicts. |
| Green Docket: Possible | Any repair, replacement, or removal of drainage structures outside of the harvest area will require local Conservation Commission approval. |
| In-kind Services: Yes | Invasive control, drainage control/stream crossing repair, and parking area improvement. |

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| Potential Local Economic Benefits: This project will aid the local community with increased recreation opportunities; including back country skiing/snowboarding, bird/wildlife viewing, hiking, and hunting. This would help fulfill the goals of this property at purchase. The harvesting of wood products also provides opportunity for many of the trees harvested to be utilized locally for home heating fuel, reducing the burden on fossil fuels. |

**Attachments:**

**Locus Map**

**Proposal Map**

**Map

Description automatically generated**

**Diagram

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