

How is Posted Land Affecting Recreation?

Are you seeing more land posted when you go hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, hiking or snowmobiling? If you own land, why do you post or not post your land? A new study is looking for answers - and your input is needed.

The tradition of easy access to private land for recreation is eroding. Large tracts of land are changing ownership, and land is being subdivided and developed. Those who rely on private land for recreation have reason to be concerned about restricted access. But landowners are in a tight spot as well. Property taxes are high and many landowners say they cannot afford to keep their property intact and open for recreation.

These changes are a threat to all of us who recreate in the Northern Forest, that vast forested area stretching from northern Maine into New Hampshire, Vermont, and the Adirondack and Tug Hill regions of New York.

The Vermont Tourism Data Center and University of Vermont Extension are working with the University of New Hampshire, University of Maine, and Cornell University to conduct a study to better understand changes in land ownership and access to private lands throughout the Northern Forest.

If you own land or recreate on private land in the Northern Forest, please visit www.uvm.edu/tourismresearch/survey.htm to share your concerns and suggestions. Completing the questions takes about 10 minutes, and your confidentiality is assured. You may send your address if you would like to hear about research results.

Information gathered from the Web will help researchers design a mail survey that will be sent to landowners in the four Northern Forest states later this year.

After the mail survey is completed, researchers will hold workshops in the Northern Forest region to share what has been learned and discuss policy recommendations and cooperative actions that can conserve private lands and resolve access issues. The goal is to develop broadly-supported strategies for landowners and land users that encourage increased access and entrepreneurial activities while respecting local traditions.

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For more information about this project and other Vermont Tourism Data Center activities, visit www.uvm.edu/tourismresearch/ or contact the Center at tourismresearch@uvm.edu or (802) 656-0623.