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Contact: Devin Colman
Vermont Division of Historic Preservation
802-828-3043; devin.colman@vermont.gov
http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities

Hinesburg Town Forest First in US to be recognized by the National Register of Historic Places

MONTPELIER, Vt. – The National Park Service officially listed the Hinesburg Town Forest in the National Register of Historic Places on June 7, 2016. Established in 1936, the Hinesburg Town Forest today encompasses 837 acres and has been actively managed and maintained by the Hinesburg community over the past 80 years. It is the first town forest in the nation to be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, recognized as a historic vernacular landscape with a strong tradition of forest stewardship and conservation.

“This was a very interesting project to work on,” said Devin Colman, Vermont State Architectural Historian. “It challenges our traditional notions of what constitutes a historic property, beyond the buildings or birthplaces of important people that are typically listed. The Hinesburg Town Forest is an important piece of Hinesburg’s past and present, and this listing honors the local commitment to historic preservation and Vermont’s landscape.”

The successful nomination is the result of close collaboration between the University of Vermont’s Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, the Hinesburg Town Forest Committee and Select Board, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service. UVM graduate student Sarah Gaulty researched and wrote the original draft of the nomination under the direction of UVM Professor Robert McCullough.

“The listing of the Hinesburg Town Forest is an exciting moment in the history of this important cultural resource,” says Gaulty, who is now a historic preservation consultant in Portland, ME. “It represents the intersection and importance of woodland conservation and town planning in New England communities.”

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register is primarily an honorific designation, and does not restrict the use, maintenance or disposition of the property. The Hinesburg Town Forest designation documents the history and evolution of the property, and provides a basis for making informed decisions about the use and maintenance of the forest for the benefit of the community.

“Being listed in the National Register does not freeze the Hinesburg Town Forest in time,” said Colman. “By its very nature, it will continue to grow and evolve in the coming decades. The purpose of this project is to honor and recognize the historic significance of the site for the benefit of future generations, so that they can understand how this wonderful resource came into being and how to take care of it.”

For more information, please visit:

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/resources/national_register