

TRIPOLI EAST VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT

APPENDIX B – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Appendix B includes:

- A. A discussion of Scoping that was conducted for the project;
- B. Non-significant issues derived from Scoping comments and why they were not considered significant issues;
- C. Alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study and why; and
- D. Cooperating agencies.

A. SCOPING

Scoping is the process of gathering comments about a site-specific proposed federal action to determine the scope of issues to be addressed and to identify the unresolved issues, which are related to a proposed action (40 CFR 1501.7).

The Tripoli interdisciplinary team conducted an analysis of this project area to determine how to best implement the White Mountain Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest plan). During this analysis process, resource specialists from various disciplines inventoried and analyzed information concerning the project area. Opportunities and needs that would move the area from the “existing condition” toward the “desired condition” called for in the Forest Plan were identified through this analysis process.

Comments on the proposed action, potential concerns, and opportunities for management of the Tripoli East project area were solicited from Forest Service employees, members of the public, other public agencies, adjacent property owners, and organizations. A scoping letter was mailed to approximately 104 interested parties, including adjacent property owners, on September 22, 1998.

Seven letters commenting on the proposed action were received during the formal scoping process. Comments in response to scoping were used to define unresolved issues, to develop alternatives, and to analyze effects.

A.1 LIST OF PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

Abenaki Nation Swanton, VT.
Abenaki Nation Hanover, NH (Donna Charlebois)
Bill Adam. Woodsville, NH.
Appalachian Mountain Club Gorham, NH.
Appalachian Mountain Club Boston, MA
Appalachian Trail Conference. Lyme, NH.

Glen Ayers. Montague, MA
George Bates Canton, MA
Pierce Beij Ashland, NH
Ted Beltz Windham, MA
Charles Bond. Jefferson, NH.
Allen Bouthillier, Lancaster, NH
Scott Burgess Littleton, NH
Ray Burton Woodsville, NH.
Wilfred Bishop Lincoln, NH
David Carle Groton, MA
Charles Carroll Kingston, NH
Steve Christianson Burlington, VT
Stephen Staltonstall Montpelier, VT
Nancy Girard Concord, NH
Rebecca Brown Littleton, NH
Julian Czarny Bethlehem, NH
North Country RC&D Laconia, NH
Charlie Diehl Weston, MA
Mike Dickerman Littleton, NH.
Ed VanDorn Pike, NH
Roland DuBois Tacoma Park, MD
Henry Edwards Alexandria, VA
Jeff Elliot Lancaster, NH.
Glen Falkenham Salem, NH.
Leon Favareau. Shelburn, NH
Tom Alt Littleton, NH
NH Fish & Game Dept. Concord, NH.
NH Fish & Game Dept. New Hampton,
NH Fish & Game Dept. Lancaster, NH
Reg Gilbert Fryeburg, ME.
Alan Gross East Swanzey, NH.
Paul Gray Concord, NH
Ed Griffin Rumney NH
David Hardy Moscow,VT
Dick Haldeman Lancaster, NH.
Lee Hallquist Carroll, NH.
Alexis Jackson Laconia, NH.
Frank Hasse Jefferson, NH.
Joe Jalbert Dover, NH
Dartmouth Outing Club Hanover, NH
NHTOA (Eric Kingsley) Concord, NH
James Kennedy Etna, NH
Fred Lavigne
John Lester Warren, NH
Tom Linnell Hanove, NH
Paul Luskey Fryeburg, ME
Roger Marshall Holyoke, MA
Evangeline Machlin Franconia, NH
Stephen & Patricia Medlyn Milford, NH
John Moody, Sharon, VT
NH Historic Preservation Office Concord, NH
Waterville Ski Company Waterville, NH
Charles McCloud Plymouth, NH

W.J. Means Waterville Valley, NH
 Paul Mikalauskas Ashland, NH
 Robert & Carol Miles Woodsville, NH
 Mountain Recreation, Inc. Lovell, ME
 Northern NH Bird Dog Club Groveton, NH
 Nat, Assoc. of RV Parks & Campgrds Vienna, VA
 SPNH Concord, NH
 Landowners Alliance Campton, NH
 North Country Council Bethlehem, NH
 Edgar Nutt Charleston, NH
 The Wilderness Society Boston, MA.
 Anne Petermann Burlington, VT
 Mick Petrie Franklin, VT
 NH Wildlife Fed Concord, NH
 Thom Richardson Whitefield, NH
 Jamie Sayen, Groveton, NH.
 Roy Schweiker Concord, NH
 Nat Scrimshaw Campton, NH
 Toni Seeger E. Stoneham, ME
 Bart Semcer Bloomfield, NJ
 Sherwood Sexton, Campton, NH
 NH Sierra Club Hanover, NH
 Francis Shea, Fitchburg, MA
 Gary Simula Bristol, NH
 Frosty Sobetzer Lyme, NH
 NHHNH Concord, NH
 John Stetser South Tamworth, NH
 Audubon Society of NH Concord, NH
 Robert Stone Manchester, NH
 Loon Mtn. Corp Lincoln, NH
 Doug Teschner Pike, NH
 Paul White & Michele Wilson Conway, NH
 Wildlife Management Institute Stratford, NH
 George Zink Wonalancet, NH
 The Wilderness Society Boston, MA
 Jay Seavey Manchester, NH.

B. OTHER ISSUES BROUGHT FORWARD DURING SCOPING

B.1. Issues That Should be Addressed at a Higher (Forest, Regional, National) Level.

Appropriateness of Logging on National Forests

Logging is an inappropriate use of public forests and is contrary to the public interest.

This is a national-level issue and cannot be resolved within individual, site-specific projects.

B.2 Issues that Can be Resolved by applying Forest plan Standards and Guidelines and Mitigation Measures

Winter Recreation

The Tripoli East project will have negative effect on winter recreation by closing trails and plowing

roads for many winters.

In the past, when logging has occurred in the area of the Tripoli Road, the road has been closed to snowmobile use Monday through Friday and open to snowmobiles Saturday and Sunday and on holidays. Harvesting and hauling operations have been restricted to weekdays. This mitigation has allowed both logging and snowmobile use to occur on and near the Tripoli Road and has reduced safety concerns that would result from the joint use of the Tripoli Road. The same mitigation measures will be used for the Tripoli East Project. See EA, §3.3.2 **Recreation** and Appendix D – Mitigation Measures.

Wildlife

*The proposed project area has not been investigated or monitored for the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), which may have habitat needs within the boundaries of the Project Area, and therefore, Indiana bat habitat may be negatively affected.*

The Tripoli East Biological Evaluation / Assessment (BE/BA) disclosed that the project area contains potential suitable habitat for woodland bats including Indiana bat. The BE/BA assumed potential suitable habitat was occupied by Indiana bat and therefore bat surveys were not conducted. Potential effects of the no action and all action alternatives on Indiana bat and potential suitable habitat are analyzed in the BE/BA and summarized in EA, §3.2.2 **Terrestrial Wildlife**. As disclosed in the Tripoli East BE/BA and the Environmental Assessment, the proposed action and action alternatives would create openings in the forest canopy suitable as foraging habitat for woodland bats. The majority of the proposed stands within the project area would be harvested during the winter, thus avoiding potential Indiana bat (in hibernation elsewhere during winter logging). Forest Plan standards and guidelines, mitigation measures, and BO Terms and Conditions that maintain snags and wildlife cavity trees in the Tripoli East Project Area would minimize any potential impact on woodland bat habitat. All proposed actions are consistent with the Forest Plan TES Amendment.

Heritage Resources

Timber harvesting negatively impacts historic sites (skid trails across them, and harvesting units come within 50 feet of them).

The USFS is required to comply with federal law and regulations to insure that the Forest has "taken into account" the effects or possible affects of our proposed actions on heritage resources. See also this Appendix B, §D.2.

C. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER STUDY

The ID team considered 12 alternatives for the Tripoli East Vegetative Management Project. Of those 12 alternatives, eight were eliminated from further study. The following discussion documents the proposed alternative and its source and the reason for elimination from further study.

C.1 Alternative A (public)

Remove units 114/1 and 114/27 from the project and relocate the East Pond Trail away from unit 114/9.

Reason for elimination - See EA, §2.3.6 **Alternative 6**. Alternative A is similar to Alternative 6, which is part of the range of alternatives analyzed for this project. While alternative 6 does not eliminate harvesting in these units, it modifies the proposed action to reduce the visual effects of harvesting adjacent to roads and trails. To mitigate the impact to recreation users, harvesting around the East Pond Trails would be winter-only and would be restricted to non-holiday weekdays (Monday through Friday) to allow for weekend and holiday use of the trails (see EA, §3.3.2.2 **Mitigation Measures** and Appendix C - Mitigation Measures). There would be short-term impacts where skid trails cross the Little East Pond Trail (see EA, §3.3.2 **Recreation**).

In the Scoping letter, it appeared as though the trail went through stand 114/9. Final field layout shows that the trail is located along the east side of stand 114/9. The proposed treatment for stand 114/9 is group selection, and the groups closest to the trail are between 30-75 feet from the East Pond Trail (see Maps 2-6) within the visual standards and guidelines for the trail. It would be infeasible and impractical to move the trail when the treatment is within the forest Plan standards

and guidelines for visual quality along this trail.

C.2 Alternative B (public, agency)

Relocate the snowmobile trail off the Tripoli Road to allow simultaneous use of the project area for snowmobiling and timber harvesting.

Reason for elimination - This Alternative is infeasible. In the field, Forest Service personnel looked for opportunities to relocate snowmobile traffic off the Tripoli Road. By utilizing an existing corridor below the road, some portions of the snowmobile trail could be moved off the Tripoli road. However, these relocations would require the building of 3-4 bridges with spans from 12 to 48 feet. In addition, there are areas where snowmobiles would still have to use the road. Details of the relocation possibilities considered can be found in the project file.

The intent of this alternative would be to create a trail that would eliminate snowmobile traffic from the Tripoli Road and allow logging activities to occur simultaneously in the project area without creating safety concerns. Past mitigation measures for this area have restricted hauling activities to non-holiday weekdays (Monday through Friday, leaving a snow surface on the road) and have restricted snowmobile traffic to weekends and holidays. Felling and skidding activities could still occur at any time. This solution does not allow for the simultaneous use of the project area for snowmobiling and hauling activities. However, this mitigation is a compromise that allows both uses in the project area and has been an effective public safety measure (EA, §3.3.2.2 **Mitigation Measures** and Appendix C - Mitigation Measures).

Because no feasible relocation could be found that would remove all snowmobile traffic from the Tripoli Road, and, because previous mitigation measures have been successful at protecting public safety, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

C.3 Alternative C (public)

Develop alternatives that emphasize the non-motorized recreational values for this area.

Reason for elimination - This alternative is beyond the scope of the Tripoli Project. The

production.”

Forest Plan designated the type of recreation to be emphasized in each management area. The goal of MA 6.1 is to “Emphasize a semi-primitive non-motorized recreational experience in a predominantly natural or natural-appearing landscape (Forest Plan, p. III-47).” The Tripoli East project area is located in Management Areas 2.1 and 3.1. One goal of MA 2.1 is to “Broaden the range of recreation options, mainly those offering roaded natural opportunities (Forest Plan, p. III-33).” One goal of MA 3.1 is to “Broaden the range of recreation options, mainly those offering semi-primitive motorized opportunities (Forest Plan, p. III-36).”

To emphasize non-motorized values in the Tripoli East project area would neither meet Forest Plan direction for management areas 2.1 and 3.1 nor meet the needs identified for this project (EA, §1.4.2 **Need for Change**). Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further study.

C.4 Alternative D (public)

Alternatives not connected to logging must be developed in response to the majority of Americans who don't want their forests cut down. The “no action” alternative does not adequately address the needs of the majority who oppose logging our national heritage, as that alternative is unlikely to be selected because the Forest Service’s investment in the project.

Reason for elimination - This alternative is beyond the scope of a site-specific project and can only be addressed at the national level. “No logging of Forest Service lands” is a national issue that needs to be addressed at the congressional level. The no action alternative is a viable alternative. It responds to the concerns of those who want no management activities to take place and provides a baseline (reference point) against which to describe the environmental effects of the action alternatives.

C.5 Alternative E (public)

Prescribe primarily single-tree selection, group selection where needed, and clearcutting only as a last resort. Cutting should be done “conventionally with well-trained woods workers who are motivated to do careful logging, and not total mechanized

Reason for elimination - Alternative 3 proposes to manage using only uneven-aged management - no clearcutting (EA, §2.3.3 **Alternative 3**).

Harvesting is accomplished by well-trained and highly skilled professionals.

C.6 Alternative F (public)

Develop an alternative to manage this area for forest-interior species. A change of management prescription should be considered if necessary to maintain the integrity of this area for these species.

Reason for elimination - See Alternative 1 (EA, §2.3.1).

Over half of the White Mountain National Forest is designated Management Areas 6.1, 7.1, and 9.1. These management areas are not subject to vegetation management. The Tripoli East Habitat Management Units (416 and 417) also include Management Area 6.1, 7.1, and 9.1 lands. The habitat in these management areas is available to forest-interior species. Activities proposed in the Tripoli East project area are located in Management Area 2.1 and 3.1 lands, which emphasize management of early-successional wildlife Management Indicator Species. Habitat Management Unit analysis indicated a shortage in early-successional age classes in the northern hardwood forest type. To meet the need for additional early-successional habitat (Forest Plan, pp. III-13, VII-B-3 through VII-B-9), the majority of the Tripoli stands are proposed for even-age management. Management Area 3.1 will emphasize the pine warbler, broad-winged hawk, and white-tailed deer management indicator species, which are not considered interior species. Emphasis will be placed on increasing habitat for wildlife dependent on early-successional stages of vegetation (Forest Plan, III-39). The practice of even-aged management creates early-successional habitat. In addition, data from several years of forest-wide bird monitoring indicates that population trends of the forest-interior dwelling oven bird are not declining in the forest-wide planning area (USDA, Forest Service, 1993a, 2001a) (see Appendix H, §B.3.1).

C.7 Alternative G (public)

- *Develop an alternative to protect stands that meet criteria for old growth; and*
- *Riparian areas that meet these criteria deserve special consideration because of the special benefits of wildlife and watershed protection.*

Reason for elimination - NHNHI did not identify any exemplary communities such as old growth stands per their site-specific surveys of the Tripoli East project area (Sperduto, 1998). Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines routinely incorporate riparian areas and watershed "protection" via buffers (USDA-LRMP 1986a, III 15-16). Standards and guidelines also limit clearcutting within a watershed during a ten-year period to less than 25 percent (USDA-LRMP 1986a, III-17). Ten percent of Habitat Management Units 416 and 417 in the Tripoli East project area are managed for extended rotations intended to provide a component of older age class for development of old growth characteristics (USDA-LRMP 1986a, III-13).

C.8 Alternative H (public)

Timber sales should enhance historic features.

Reason for elimination One can argue that in certain cases, timber sale activities can enhance the values found in cultural sites. Examples would be freeing up old apple orchards, old fields, and cellar holes that are being impacted by tree root action. In the case of this project, we did not see the need for this approach.

D. COOPERATING AGENCIES

D.1 Federal – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Forest Service works in close cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). On 23 September 1999, the White Mountain National Forest entered into formal consultation with the USFWS regarding the potential effects to federally-listed threatened and endangered species from continued implementation of the WMNF Forest Plan. Formal consultation was concluded in 2000, when the USFWS issued their Biological Opinion (BO). The Forest Plan was amended in 2001 to include the terms and conditions of the BO. Management activities proposed under the Tripoli East Vegetation Management project are subject to the terms and conditions of the BO.

D.2 State of New Hampshire Historic Preservation Office

On September 13, 2002, the Forest Service received a letter from the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer concerning the cultural sites in the Tripoli Project area. That letter stated, "Based on the project review documentation which you have submitted to the Division of Historical Resources and through our discussions pertaining to the protection of identified historic sites, it appears that the undertaking, as proposed, will have 'no adverse effect,' pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.5, on any properties or districts that are listed in or may be eligible for the National Register, nor properties of known or potential architectural, historical, archaeological or cultural significance, if the work is done as discussed."