



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

White Mountain National Forest
Saco Ranger District

33 Kancamagus Highway
Conway, NH 03818
Comm: (603) 447-5448
TTY: (603) 447-3121

File Code: 1950

Date: 30 May, 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to invite you to comment on the Bee Line Trail Relocation Project. The project is being considered in response to significant negative impacts to the natural resources in this area, primarily due to erosion. The trail relocation would be located on lands managed by the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) in the Town of Albany, New Hampshire.

The enclosed Scoping Report provides additional detail about this project, instructions on how to comment, as well as a map for your reference. This document is also posted on our WMNF web page: www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain.

You have received this letter because you own property in close proximity to the project area or have expressed interest in similar projects. I am interested in receiving your comments about our proposal, including any information about the project area that could help us improve our plans.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the White Mountain National Forest.

Sincerely,

/S/ TERRY MILLER

TERRY MILLER
District Ranger



White Mountain National Forest Scoping Report

Project Proposal for the Bee Line Trail Relocation on the Saco Ranger District

2007



Bee Line Trail 2005

Introduction

The Saco Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is initiating a public scoping and environmental analysis process for a trail relocation on WMNF land, in the town of Albany, Carroll County, New Hampshire. The project is described below under Purpose and Need and Proposed Action.

This report includes the Purpose and Need for the project, the Proposed Action, the Decisions to be Made, and How You Can Submit Comments to the Forest Service. The enclosed map displays the relocation described herein.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to address resource damage due to erosion and reduce deferred maintenance by relocating a heavily eroded segment of the Bee Line Trail onto more sustainable and appropriate terrain.

The Bee Line Trail is a moderately used trail that provides a less traveled route to the summit of Mount Chocorua and is within the Mount Chocorua Scenic Area. The segment in need of relocation is adjacent to a small stream that has continuously undercut the slope on which the trail is situated, resulting in sedimentation in the stream and diminished water quality. The trail has steadily deteriorated, which has created a particularly vulnerable trail and somewhat hazardous situation. The proposed trail relocation is compatible with the standards and objectives identified in the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005). The trail relocation is also consistent with the goals and objectives in the WMNF Plan for

non-motorized dispersed recreation, Management Area 8.5 (Scenic Areas), and riparian and aquatic habitats:

“Existing roads, facilities, campsites, or trails within 100 feet of perennial streams or ponds should be considered for relocation as part of normal project planning, except when doing so would result in greater overall impact to the land or water resource.”

Proposed Action

The proposed action includes the relocation and subsequent rehabilitation of the relocated segment of trail. The relocation is located on the Bee Line Trail between the Bolles and Brook Trails, adjacent to a tributary of Paugus Brook. The length of the relocation is entirely within MA 8.5 (Scenic Areas) and is approximately 500 feet. The project would consist of building a new segment of trail that loosely parallels the existing trail, approximately 300 feet from the stream bank on which the current trail lies. The relocation would bypass the failing section of trail, veering away from the stream, and then rejoin the existing trail. The Bee Line Trail will be constructed to Level II standards, as referenced in Forest Service Handbook 2309.18.

The old segments of trail will be decommissioned and rehabilitated. This will include obscuring the trail with brush and removing blazes where present and stabilizing as necessary with drainage structures to reduce erosion impacts. The construction and rehabilitation work would be performed by Forest Service crews.

The project is displayed in the attached map. The trail relocation and rehabilitation would be implemented in the years of 2007-2008.

Decisions to be Made

After receiving your input, other public comments, and recommendations from an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists, Saco District Ranger Terry Miller, as the Responsible Official, will decide:

1. The level of analysis necessary to assess and document the environmental effects of this proposed project. This includes determining whether this project meets criteria for categorical exclusion from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment, including an assessment of any extraordinary circumstances (as defined in FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3), and whether there is sufficient information and analysis to make a decision to implement the proposed project.
2. What mitigation measures and monitoring requirements will help assure the proposed project meets LRMP standards and guidelines for all resources.
3. Whether a Forest Plan amendment will be required to accommodate this project.

If no significant issues or extraordinary circumstances are identified, it is possible that the project may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or environmental Impact Statement under FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.2-1, Construction and reconstruction of trails. Once the level of documentation is determined and the analysis is completed, copies of the environmental analysis and decision documents will be mailed to people who submit comments during this scoping period, and to people who request copies.

Findings of Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary reviews and surveys of the project areas by resource specialists indicate that the following resource conditions exist:

1. Threatened and Endangered Species or Their Critical Habitat

To date, no Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species or Designated Critical Habitat, Species Proposed for Federal Listing or Proposed Critical Habitat, or Forest Service Sensitive Species have been observed or are known to be present.

A complete Biological Evaluation will be included during the environmental analysis process.

2. Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds

No effects are anticipated to Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds.

3. Congressionally Designated Areas

The project area does not include any Congressionally Designated Areas.

4. Inventoried Roadless Areas

This project area is within an inventoried roadless area, however this project is in compliance with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule and no effects are anticipated.

5. Research Natural Areas

The proposed project area is not located within or adjacent to a Research Natural Area (RNA) or a candidate RNA (CRNA).

6. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites & Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas.

Prior to implementation site specific surveys will be completed and an Archaeological Resource Report will be prepared for review by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

How You Can Submit Comments

Comments should include the following information:

- 1) Your name, address, and, if possible, your e-mail address.
- 2) The title of the project you are commenting on.
- 3) Your specific concerns and reasons the concern may lead to environmental effects

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, Faxed or otherwise submitted by 11:59 pm ET on the 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice in the Manchester Union Leader. When the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. The publication date in the Manchester Union Leader is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Do not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

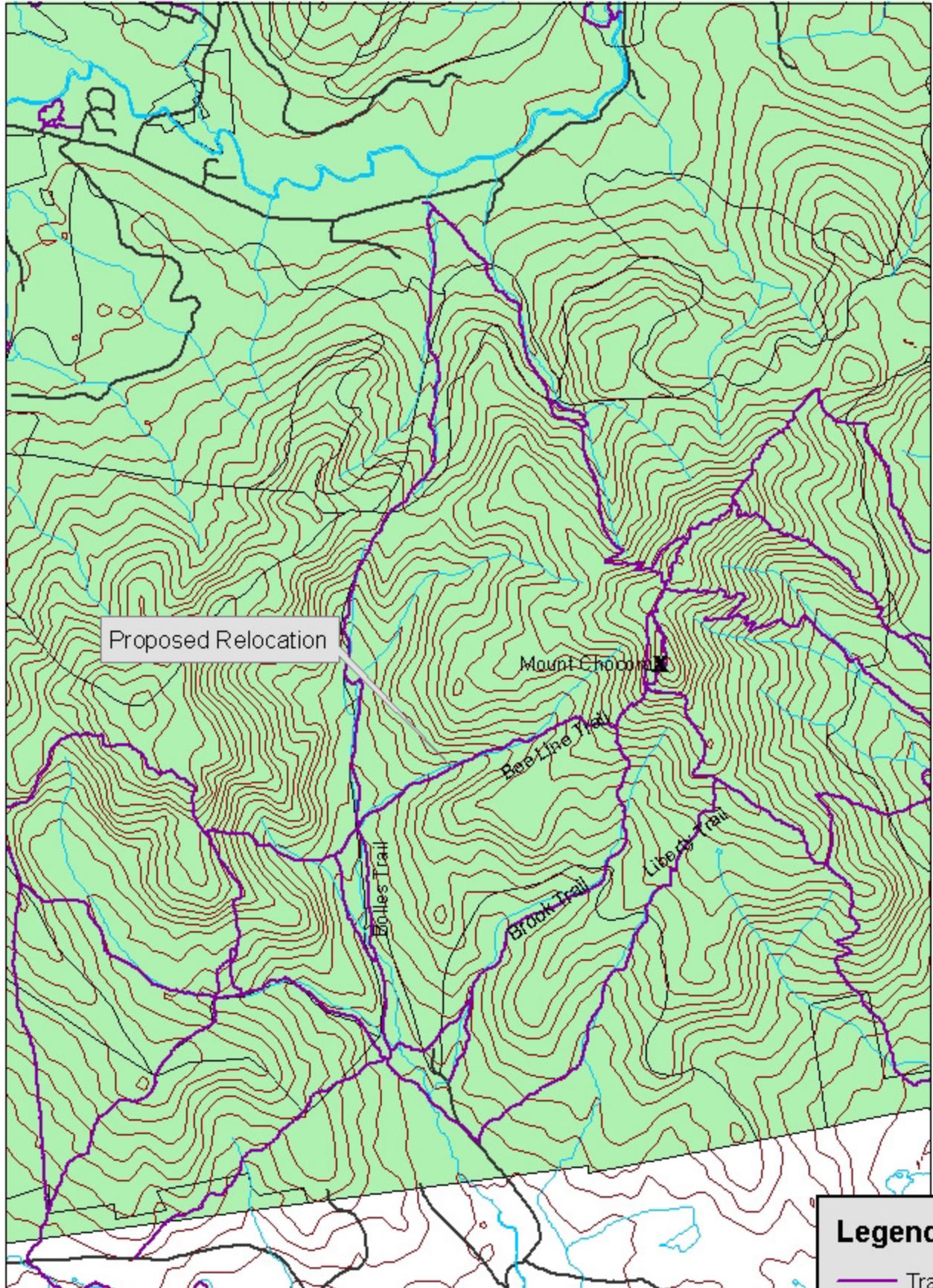
You may submit your comments to the Forest Service via any one of the following means:

- 1) **Mail** – send to Jana Johnson, Project Team Leader, Saco Ranger Station, 33 Kancamagus Highway, Conway, NH 03818
- 2) **FAX** – send attn: Jana Johnson @ 603-447-8405
- 3) **Phone** – contact Jana Johnson @ 603-447-5448 or use TTY @ 603-447-3121
- 4) **E-mail**: Send to (comments-eastern-white-mountain-saco@fs.fed.us), and must include an identifiable name. Comments submitted as electronic documents must be in plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rft) or Word (.doc) format. You should receive an automated electronic acknowledgement as confirmation of receipt of your comments. If you do not receive acknowledgement, it is your responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

- 5) **Oral comments** may be submitted Monday through Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm, by phone (603-447-5448 x109) or in person; and must be received by close of business on the 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice.

The purpose of soliciting your comments during this scoping period is to collect additional information and to identify any unresolved issues regarding the proposal. To make your comments responsive they should be specific to the proposed action. Be sure to provide supporting rationale for your comments, including concerns about environmental effects of the proposed project. Please be aware that your name, address and comments will become part of the public record and may be available for public inspection.

Bee Line Trail Relocation



Legend

- Trails
- VMNF

Bee Line Relocation Close Up

