



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

White Mountain National Forest
Saco Ranger District

33 Kancamagus Highway
Conway, NH 03818
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File Code: 1950

Date: January 11, 2008

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to invite you to comment on the Lawrence Trail Relocation Project. This project is being proposed to relocate two short heavily eroded segments of the Lawrence Trail onto more sustainable and appropriate terrain. The short trail relocation is designed to address the existing resource damage associated with erosion and sedimentation, and to reduce long term deferred maintenance needs.

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/white.

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,

//TERRY MILLER//

TERRY MILLER
District Ranger





Lawrence Trail Relocation Project

United States
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Service

White Mountain
National Forest

Saco Ranger District

January 2008

Scoping Notice

Saco Ranger District



Undermined log steps and severe erosion
Lawrence Trail
2003



For Information Contact:
Jana Johnson
Saco Ranger District
White Mountain National Forest
33 Kancamagus Hwy
Conway, NH 03818
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Scoping Report
Lawrence Trail Relocation Project
White Mountain National Forest
Saco Ranger District

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Scoping Report
Lawrence Trail Relocation Project
White Mountain National Forest
Saco Ranger District

Introduction

The Saco Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is initiating a public scoping for the Lawrence Trail Relocation on WMNF land in the Town of Albany, New Hampshire.

This Report includes the Purpose and Need for the project, a description of the Proposed Action, the Decisions to be Made, and information on How You Can Submit Comments to the Forest Service. The enclosed map displays the proposed project area.

Purpose and Need

The Lawrence Trail plays a unique role in connecting the eastern and western trail networks within the Sandwich Range Wilderness. Unfortunately, a portion of this trail currently resides on an extremely steep grade, composed of unstable soils. The Lawrence Trail Relocation Project proposes to preserve this unique recreation opportunity by relocating a heavily eroded section of the Lawrence Trail onto more sustainable and appropriate terrain. The short trail relocation, consisting of two 500 foot switchbacks, is designed to address the existing resource damage associated with erosion and sedimentation, and to reduce long term deferred maintenance needs.

The new relocation in addition to the ½ mile relocation in 2006 (shown below) will significantly improve the sustainability of the Lawrence Trail. The 2006 relocation terminated at the base of the steep ascent on which the proposed relocation is situated.

The Lawrence Trail is in the Sandwich Range Wilderness (Management Area 5.1). The proposed trail relocation is compatible with the standards and objectives for Wilderness as identified in the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005):

- “Trail construction, reconstruction, and maintenance should be consistent with the appropriate Wilderness zone management direction.”
- “Trails should be maintained to standards described in FSH 2309.18, consistent with the ROS objectives of each management area.”
- “Zone B must be managed according to FSH Level I standards and according to primitive ROS standards.”



Old Lawrence Trail



Relocated Lawrence Trail

Proposed Action

The proposed action includes the relocation and subsequent rehabilitation of two short segments of trail. The relocation is located on the upper third of the Lawrence Trail between the crossing of Whittin Brook and the summit of Mount Paugus. The relocation would consist of building two small switch backs, which will traverse the slope within approximately 200 feet of the existing trail. The Lawrence Trail will be constructed to Level 1 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, removing blazes and stabilizing as necessary. Stabilization techniques may include minor drainage structures, including water bars or check dams, designed to reduce erosion. The construction and rehabilitation work would likely be performed by a Student Conservation Association crew, in partnership with the Wonalancet Out Door Club (WODC) and supervised by a Forest Service employee.

Project components are displayed in the attached maps. The trail relocation and rehabilitation would be implemented in the years of 2008-2011.

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 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*

A botanical survey was completed during the 2007 field season. To date, no Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species or Designated Critical Habitat, Species Proposed for Federal Listing or Proposed Critical Habitat, or Regional Forester Sensitive Species have been observed or are known to be present. A complete Biological Evaluation will be conducted during the environmental analysis process.

2. *Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds*

The project will not result in an adverse effect to any floodplains, wetlands, or any municipal water supply.

3. *Congressionally Designated Areas*

The project area does include a Congressionally Designated Wilderness Area, however no effect to wilderness characteristics is anticipated and all actions will be compatible with the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005).

4. *Inventoried Roadless Areas*

The project area does not occur in any Inventoried Roadless Areas.

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.*

The WMNF Cultural Resources Atlas shows no known cultural sites in the project area. Site specific surveys were completed and an Archaeological Resource Report is being 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.

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.

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, Faxed or otherwise submitted by 11:59 pm ET on the ***February 15, 2008***.

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 ***February 15, 2008***.

Lawrence Trail Relocation Project



Proposed Trail Relocation

Lawrence Trail

Legend

- Roads
- - - Proposed Relocation
- Streams
- - - Existing Trail
- 100 foot_contour
- Sandwich_Range_Wilderness
- ownership

0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles

