



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: January 5, 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to invite you to comment on the Lawrence Trail and Basin Trail Relocation Projects. These projects are being considered in response to significant negative impacts to the natural resources in this area, primarily due to erosion. Two trail relocations would be located on lands managed by the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) in the Towns of Sandwich and Chatham, 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/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,

/S/ TERRY MILLER

TERRY MILLER
District Ranger



White Mountain National Forest Scoping Report

Project Proposals for Two Trail Relocations on the Saco Ranger District

Introduction

The Saco Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is initiating a public scoping and environmental analysis process for two trail relocations on WMNF land. Both projects are 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 maps display the two relocations described herein.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of these two projects is to relocate two highly eroded and damaged segments of trail, on the Basin Trail near Basin Pond and the Lawrence Trail, onto more sustainable and appropriate terrain to prevent resource damage and improve recreation opportunities for trail users. The segment to be relocated on the Lawrence Trail poses a threat to public safety and is highly eroded with no viable option for repair using standard and accepted methods of trail stabilization. The Basin Trail portion is regularly subjected to overflows from nearby Basin Pond causing trail users to go off the trail to find drier ground and is also in need of a well-established stream crossing. This has resulted in negative resource impacts along the stream banks and areas adjacent to the current trail.

Proposed Action

The relocations are proposed to take place on .5 miles of the Lawrence Trail within the Sandwich Range Wilderness, and .3 miles of the Basin Trail in Evans Notch. The Lawrence Trail is in Management Area 5.1 and Basin Trail in Management Area 2.1. The proposed actions are consistent with management area direction for both areas, using standard trail building methods and tools in the construction of new trail. The Lawrence Trail will be constructed to Level 1 standards and the Basin Trail to Level II standards, as referenced in Forest Service Handbook 2309.18 and would be performed by Forest Service crews. The old segments of trail would be decommissioned which includes obscuring the trail with brush and removing blazes where present and stabilizing as necessary with drainage structures to reduce erosion impacts.

Decisions to be Made

Based on your input, on the recommendations of an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists, and on the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Saco District Ranger, Terry Miller, as the Responsible Official, will decide whether the proposed action will proceed as proposed, as modified by an alternative, or not at all. If the project proceeds, he will determine what mitigation measures and monitoring

requirements the Forest Service will apply to the project. He will also determine whether or not the project requires a Forest Plan Amendment.

How you Can Submit Comments

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** – janajohnson@fs.fed.us

Comments must be submitted or mailed within thirty days after the postmark date of this letter's envelope, and should include the following information: Your name, address, and, if possible, your phone number and e-mail address.

- 1) The title of the project you are commenting on.
- 2) 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.