

Decision Memo

Log Cabin Toilet Low and Burbanks Grant Coos County, New Hampshire

USDA Forest Service
Androscoggin Ranger District
White Mountain National Forest
300 Glen Road, Gorham, NH 03581

Background

The Log Cabin facility includes a three-sided log shelter and a pit toilet located in Low and Burbanks Grant, in Coos County, NH. It is on the northwest side of Mt. Adams off Lowes Path at an elevation of 3300'.

There has been a “cabin” facility on this site since 1890. The Log Cabin facility is owned by the Randolph Mountain Club (RMC) and is operated on National Forest Land under a special use permit. There has been a pit toilet on the site for more than 30 years. In the past, when it was full the pit was filled in and the toilet moved to a different spot. The current pit toilet has been in its location since about 1992. Due to site limitations, the pit toilet is no longer moved when full, instead it is periodically dug out and the waste buried on site. The Randolph Mountain Club requested permission to construct a “Beyond the Bin” composting system to replace the pit toilet.

Purpose and Need

At sites where recreation use is concentrated, such as Log Cabin, there needs to be an effective system for handling human waste. While the current pit toilet works, it is not the ideal system; it necessitates having to handle human waste when digging out the pit and digging holes to bury the waste elsewhere. Converting from a pit toilet to a “Beyond the Bin” composting system will lessen the effect on the area from having to dig pits to bury waste and provide a more effective, state of the art method for handling human waste.

Decision

It is my decision to allow the RMC to convert the Log Cabin pit toilet to a Beyond-the-Bin composting toilet.

RMC may clear a 20' x 20' area of trees adjacent to the current pit toilet to install a 9' x 12' platform for a compost bin and a 4' x 8' drying rack. This will allow sunlight to hit the bin and warm it enough to reach the necessary temperature for composting. Approximately 6 trees

between 4-8 inches and 10-15 trees between 1-4 inches in diameter will need to be cut to create the clearing.

The footprint of the existing pit toilet will not change or be moved; the pit toilet will be filled in and a 4' x 6' platform built over it. The existing outhouse building will be raised about 2 feet by adding lumber underneath and a small vestibule with a door will be built in the back of the structure. This will be done to accommodate a 70-gallon collector bin under the privy to collect the human waste that had formerly gone into the pit. The bottom of the 70-gal collector bin will have a perforated metal screen to filter off liquid waste which will then pass through a series of charcoal filters and then piped into a drainage area away from any water source. The remaining solid waste will regularly be emptied into a larger 200 gallon compost bin located on the 9'x12' platform in the adjacent clearing. The waste will be mixed with bark chips and turned until composted. Once it is composted, it will be spread on a drying rack to separate composted material from the bark chips. The nonpathogenic, composted material will then be spread in the Forest at least 200' from any trail, facility, or water source.

The RMC will be responsible for all costs and maintenance for the composting toilet.

Mitigation Measures

A concern about accessibility was raised. The current toilet is not accessible. The toilet building itself will not change but it will be raised to accommodate the composting bin, therefore the toilet will continue to be inaccessible. In an effort to make the toilet as barrier-free as possible, a railing will be added to the steps and grab bars will be added inside the toilet.

RMC will maintain the system regularly throughout the year. This will address concerns raised about odor, flies, and winter accumulation of waste.

Environmental Analysis

The following is a summary of our analysis of resource conditions in the project area.

- *Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species:* It was determined this project would have no effect on gray wolf, eastern cougar, or Canada lynx. The project is consistent with the conservation measures outlined in the Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment (United States Forest Service (USFS) 2000). (Biological Evaluation in Project File).

The project is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability for the following Regional Forester sensitive species that are present or likely to be present in the analysis area: Bicknell's thrush, eastern small-footed myotis, and northern bog lemming.

- Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds: The project area is not located within any floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds. There are numerous springs and seasonal streams near the project area. These would not be affected by the project.
- Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas: The project is not located within a designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Area. The nearest Wilderness Area is the Great Gulf Wilderness Area. There are no National Recreation Areas on the White Mountain National Forest. This project will not affect Congressionally designated areas.
- Inventoried roadless areas: The project is located within the Great Gulf Wilderness Extension inventoried roadless area. This project will not change the characteristics that make it a roadless area.
- Research Natural Areas: The project area is not within a Research Natural Area. The project will not affect research natural areas.
- American Indian religious or cultural sites: There are no known Native American religious or cultural sites in the analysis area.
- Archeological sites or historic properties or areas: There are no known archeological sites or historic properties in the analysis area. (Heritage Resource Reconnaissance Report in Project File).

Public Involvement

This project was first listed in the White Mountain National Forest Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions on October 1, 2002. It has been listed in all subsequent editions. A public involvement (scoping) letter was mailed from the Androscoggin Ranger District to 268 people on January 17, 2003. A list of those contacted through the scoping process can be found in the Project File. The letter described the proposed project and requested comments and concerns from the public. The list included individuals and groups who are interested in recreation and special use activities on the Androscoggin Ranger District and/or the White Mountain National Forest.

We received twenty-two responses to the scoping letter. All respondents supported the idea of converting the toilet to a compost bin. There were some concerns raised about accessibility, costs, water quality, and maintenance. Responses can be found in the project file and have been addressed earlier in this decision document.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan for the White Mountain National Forest as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed to meet forest plan standards and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidelines

for Management Area 6.2 which state in part: Semi-primitive non-motorized recreation experience opportunities will be the dominant objective. Facilities and trails will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained consistent with the recreation experience opportunity (III-52). Also, buildings and structures may be provided to support resource management objectives (III-53).

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented in the 2003 field season.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

Contact Person

For Further Information on the decision contact Marianne Leberman, Permit Administrator at 603-466-2713 (ext. 214), TTY number, 603-466-2856 or Pat Nasta at 603-466-2713 (ext. 222).

_____/s/ George R. Pozzuto_____
GEORGE R. POZZUTO
District Ranger

_____/5/9/03_____
Date

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