



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

May 2005



Randolph Mountain Club

Special Use Permit

Renewal

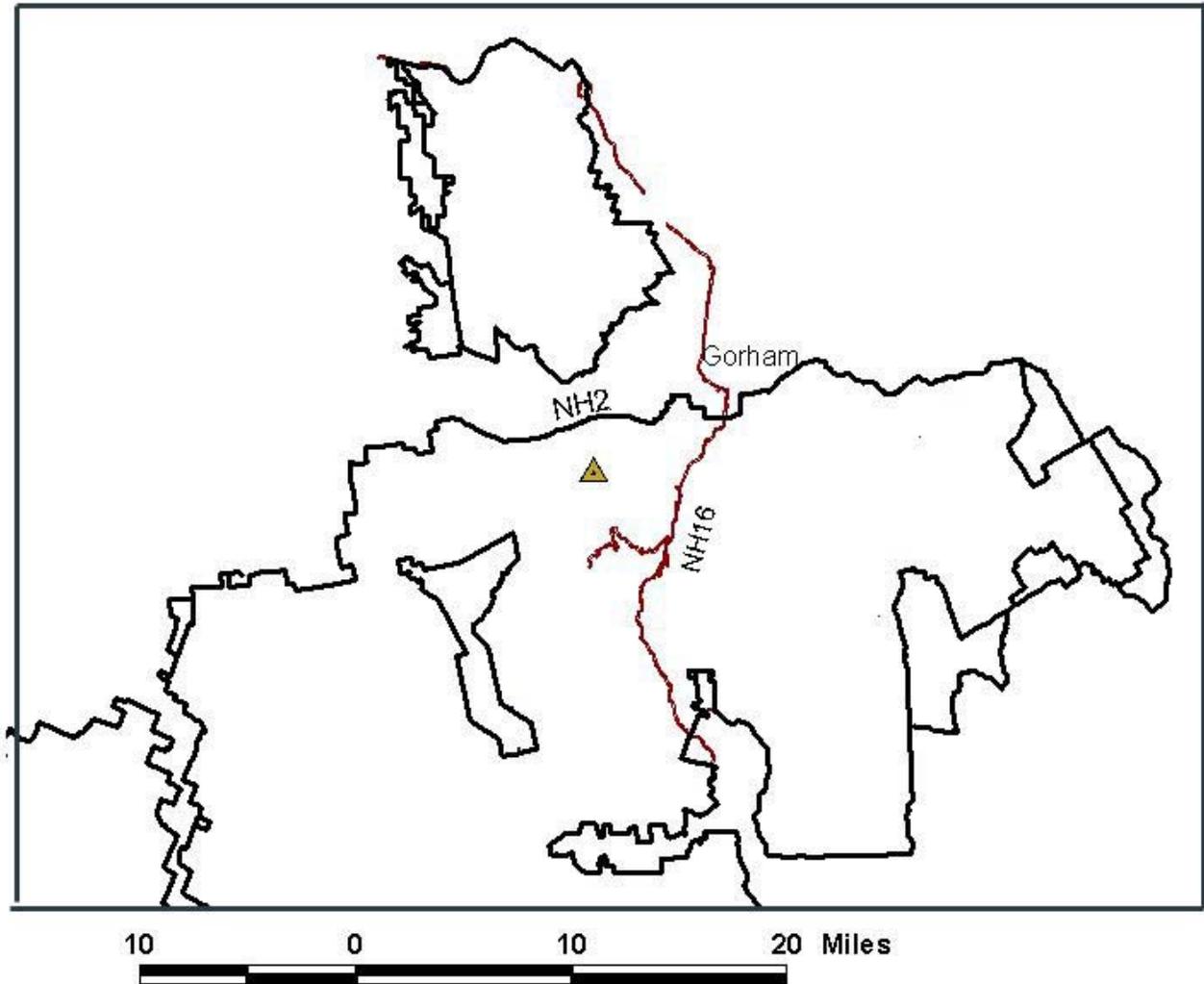
- ◆ Crag Camp
- ◆ Gray Knob
- ◆ The Perch
- ◆ Log Cabin

Scoping Report

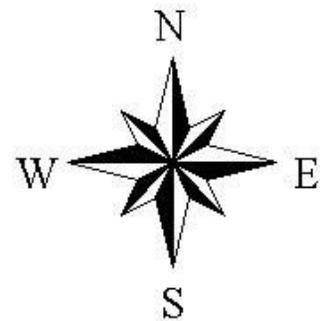
Androscoggin Ranger District
White Mountain National Forest
Low and Burbanks Grant
Coos County, New Hampshire

For Information Contact: Pat Nasta
Androscoggin Ranger District
White Mountain National Forest
300 Glen Road
Gorham, NH 03581
(603)466-2713, ext 222
FAX/TTY (603) 466-2856
www.fs.fed.us/r9/white

Map 1: Vicinity Map Randolph Mountain Club Facilities

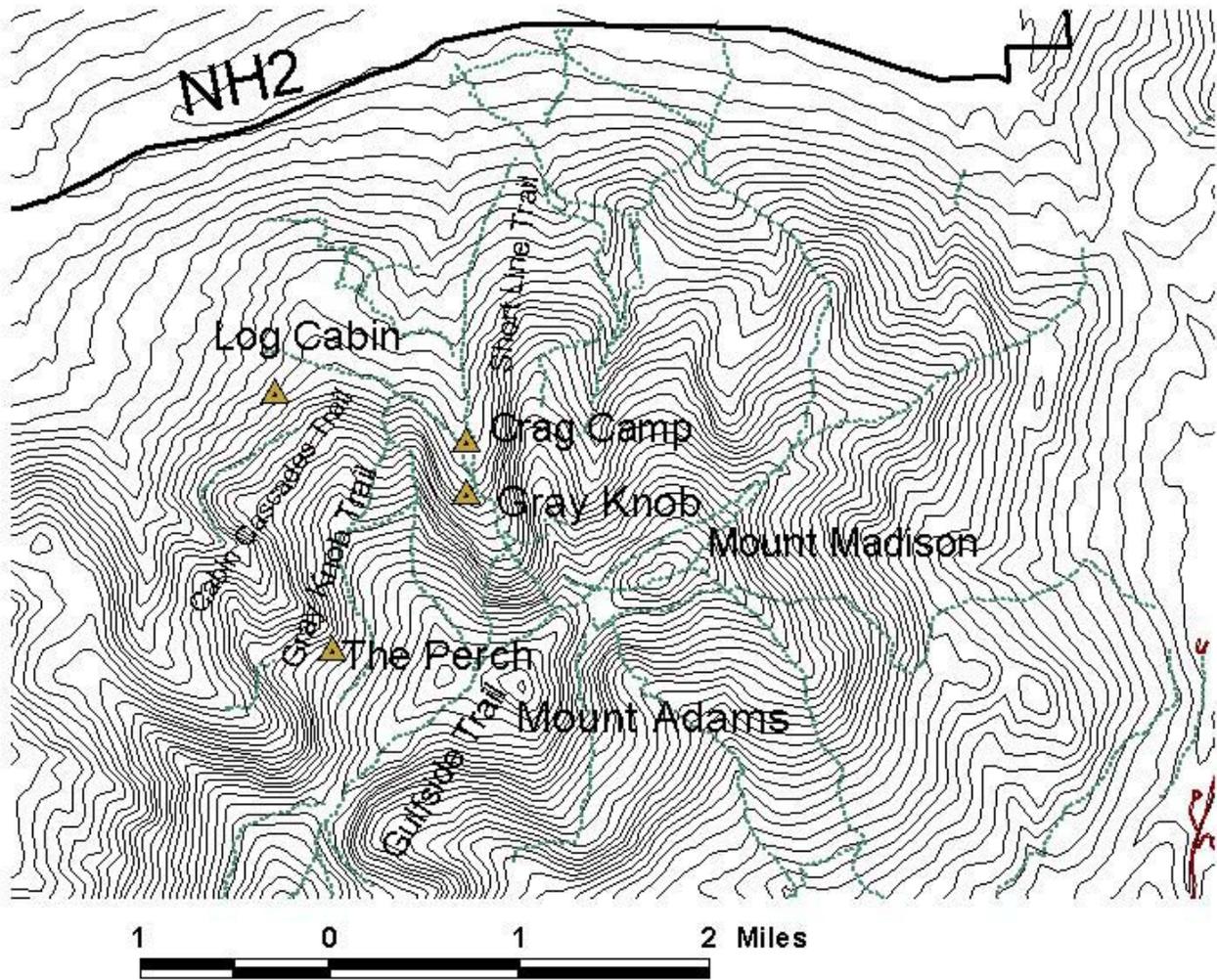


-  **Forest Boundary**
-  **RMC Facilities**
-  **Trails**
-  **Roads**

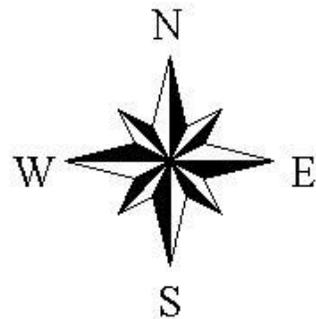


Map 2

Randolph Mountain Club Facilities



-  Forest Boundary
-  RMC Facilities
-  Roads
-  Trails
-  100' Contours



What is the Forest Service Proposing?

The Androscoggin Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest is proposing to renew the Special Use permits currently held by the Randolph Mountain Club (RMC). The permits authorize the RMC to operate four backcountry facilities on Mount Adams. The four facilities are:

- Gray Knob Cabin
- Crag Camp Cabin
- The Perch Shelter and Tent Platforms
- Log Cabin Shelter

Our proposed action is to renew the four RMC Special Use permits that are expiring on December 31, 2005. The permits would be replaced by one Special Use permit covering all four facilities. The maximum tenure for the permit would be 20-years.

Location and Features of the RMC facilities on Mt. Adams

The four facilities are located in Low and Burbanks Grant on the northwest side of Mount Adams in the northern White Mountains (See Maps 1 and 2).

Gray Knob Cabin

Facility.....Cabin with a Bio-Sun composting toilet and a compost drying rack.
Elevation..... 4,370 feet
Fee..... \$10.00 per night
Capacity.....15 people
Permit Area....2.2 acres



Gray Knob Cabin

Crag Camp

Facility.....Cabin with a Bio-Sun composting toilet and a compost drying rack.
Elevation..... 4,247 feet
Fee..... \$10.00 per night
Capacity.....20 people
Permit Area....4.5 acres



Crag Camp Cabin

The Perch

Facility.....One three-sided lean-to and four tent platforms with a Bio-Sun composting toilet and a compost drying rack
Elevation..... 4,313 feet
Fee..... \$5.00 per night
Capacity..... 20 people (eight in the lean-to, 16 on the tent platforms)
Permit Area....1.6 acres



The Perch Shelter



**Tent platforms
at the Perch**

Log Cabin

Facility..... Adirondack-style shelter with a bin/batch composting toilet and a compost drying rack.
Elevation..... 3,263 feet
Fee..... \$5.00 per night
Capacity 10 people
Permit Area 2.9 acres



Log Cabin

Background

Permits and Operations

The Randolph Mountain Club currently holds 20-year Special Use permits with the Forest Service for their four facilities on Mt. Adams. These four permits expire on December 31, 2005. RMC, in compliance with clause 30.e of the current Special Use permits, requested on October 25, 2004, to re-permit their camps on Mt. Adams.

The four facilities are owned and maintained by RMC. The Special Use permit authorizes RMC to occupy National Forest System lands and provide White Mountain National Forest visitors the services agreed upon in the permit. The Forest Service requires RMC to submit annual operating plans that identify work projects, staffing plans, and other details associated with operating and maintaining the facilities. The facilities are inspected regularly and compliance with the permit clauses is overseen by a Forest Service permit administrator. Permit fees have been waived due to RMC's non-profit status, volunteer trail work, service to the public, and contributions toward meeting White Mountain National Forest goals [36 CFR 251.57(b)(2) and (3)].

All camps are available to the general public on a first-come, first-served basis. Overnight camping fees charged by the RMC are used exclusively for the maintenance and staffing expenses for the four camps. A caretaker is in residence at Gray Knob throughout the year, and during the summer months there is a second caretaker at Crag Camp. Caretakers visit the Log Cabin and the Perch regularly. Visitors bring their own provisions, do their own cooking, and are required to keep the facilities clean and pack out their own trash.

RMC in the White Mountains

RMC was created in 1910 after heavy logging left the Randolph trail system in need of major rehabilitation. Their mission through the decades has continued to focus on trail work and service to hikers. Today their stated purpose is to “promote the enjoyment of the Randolph, New Hampshire area through hiking, trail development, upkeep of camps and shelters, and sharing the collective knowledge of its members (RMC 2005).”

Mountaineers began building private cabins on Mt. Adams in the late 1800s. The RMC acquired several of these in the early 1900s, including the Log Cabin and the Perch (destroyed by the hurricane in 1938, and rebuilt in 1948), with the stipulation that they be maintained for the hiking public. The White Mountain National Forest was created in 1918, and by the late 1930s, private camps were no longer allowed on Mount Adams. RMC acquired Gray Knob and Crag Camp in 1939 and has maintained them for the public since then. The Town of Randolph jointly maintained Gray Knob with the RMC until the early 1990s, when the Club took it over completely (RMC 2005).

Purpose & Need and Management Direction

The purpose of the project is to allow RMC to provide public recreation opportunities in accordance with the Forest Plan. The Randolph Mountain Club facilities contribute to current Forest Plan goals and objectives “to feature quality recreation opportunities not likely to be provided elsewhere on other lands (USDA 1986a, p. III-2).”

The need for the project is to address the fact that RMC’s Special Use permits for the facilities will expire December 31, 2005, and to respond to RMC’s request for permit renewal.

RMC’s facilities are in Management Area 6.2. One of the goals of the 1986 Forest Plan for this management area is to broaden the range of recreation options, mainly those forms of semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities. General direction for recreation in this management area states: “Semi-primitive non-motorized recreation experience opportunities will be the dominant objective. Some areas will be managed for primitive recreation experience opportunities. Facilities and trails will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained consistent with the recreation experience opportunity (USDA 1986a, p. III-52).” RMC’s facilities provide a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity not provided by the Forest Service in this area and are consistent with Forest Plan direction.

The goals and objectives in the Draft Forest Plan (revision of the 1986 Forest Plan, due to be finalized in 2005) state: “The Forest will work with the private sector through the Special Use program to provide recreation opportunities (areas, facilities, services and events) that the Forest alone is not able to offer (USDA 2004a, Ch.1, p.12).” The Draft Forest Plan also places Crag Camp, the Perch and Log Cabin in Management Area 6.2, and Gray Knob would be in Management Area 8.1. Although new facilities in MA 8.1 are prohibited, the existing RMC facilities (in MA 6.2 and MA 8.1) are consistent with the semi-primitive non-motorized recreation experience and provide a service that the Forest alone is not able to offer.

Environmental Analysis

Our environmental analysis will consider your comments as well as those provided by a Forest Service interdisciplinary team. Renewal of RMC's Special Use permits for Crag Camp, Gray Knob, the Perch, and Log Cabin is in the category of actions identified in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 Chapter 30, Section 31.2 (15):

“Issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are no changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorizations.”

The Randolph Mountain Club is not proposing changes in the facilities, uses, or services provided and authorized under the current permits. We expect this permit renewal to be routine, with no resulting individual or cumulative significant effects on the environment, and therefore the analysis can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA).

The environmental analysis will include on-site surveys for rare plants and heritage resources, and will identify any extraordinary circumstances that exist and could result in significant effects to the environment. In accordance with FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30, the following specific resource conditions will be considered:

- 1) Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.
- 2) Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.
- 3) Congressionally designated areas.
- 4) Inventoried Roadless Areas
- 5) Research Natural Areas
- 6) American Indians and Alaska Native Religious or Cultural Sites
- 7) Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas

Preliminary Issues

No environmental or administrative issues have been identified to date.

What Decision Will Be Made?

After conducting and reviewing the environmental analysis, including public involvement and resource specialists' input, the District Ranger of the Androscoggin Ranger District will decide whether or not to renew the four expiring Special Use permits requested by the RMC.

How Are You Involved In The Decision?

We are seeking your comments to help identify issues or concerns associated with the proposal to renew RMC's Special Use permits. The regulations governing this kind of analysis do not allow appeals of the

final decision, so we encourage you to share your comments and concerns now so we can incorporate them into the environmental analysis.

How Can You Comment?

In order for your comments to be considered in the next stage of analysis, they should be received by June 3, 2005 and submitted in one of the following ways:

Written comments

By letter – Androscoggin Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest,
300 Glen Road, Gorham, NH 03581, c/o Katherine W. Stuart, District
Ranger

By FAX – (603) 466-2856, ATTN: RMC Permit Renewal, c/o Katherine W. Stuart

By email – kstuart@fs.fed.us

Oral Comments

Oral comments must be received in person at the Androscoggin Ranger Station or via telephone (603) 466-2713 (TTY 603-466-2856), during normal business hours (8:00am – 4:30pm).

In your comments, please include the following information:

- 1) Your name, address and telephone number or email address.
- 2) The project you are commenting on: Randolph Mountain Club Special Use Permit Renewal
- 3) Site specific comments about the proposal along with supporting information you believe will help me identify issues, develop alternatives, or predict environmental effects of our proposal.

Please direct questions to Pat Nasta, NEPA Coordinator, at the above address or call 603-466-2713 ext. 222. Please be aware that your name, address and comments will become part of the public record and may be available for public inspection. If this is a concern, please contact us at your earliest convenience.

References

RMC 2005. www.randolphmountainclub.org April 2005.

USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service). 1986a. White Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (As Amended). Laconia, NH: USDA-FS, Eastern Region, White Mountain National Forest.

USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service). 2004a Draft Forest Plan

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication or program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202/720-2600 (voice or TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write the USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, Washington, DC, 20250-9410 or call 202/720-5964 (voice or TDD). The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.