



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

White Mountain National Forest
Pemigewasset Ranger District

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White Mountain National Forest



File Code: 1950
Date: March 7, 2007

Dear Planning Participant,

The White Mountain National Forest is initiating an environmental analysis which will define a set of actions to include in a climbing management plan for the Rumney Rocks climbing area located on Rattlesnake Mountain in Rumney, NH. This analysis will consider several different actions affecting climbing and climbing related activities on Rattlesnake Mountain.

Location

The Rumney Rocks Project is located entirely in the Town of Rumney, Grafton County, New Hampshire, which is on the Pemigewasset Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest. The Project Area consists of approximately 150 acres encompassing the area in and around Rumney Rocks. This analysis will contribute to a climbing management plan on land designated by the WMNF Land and Resource Management Plan as appropriate for this type of management. The management areas for Rattlesnake Mountain are designated as 6.1 - Semi-Primitive Recreation and 2.1 - General Forest Management.

Background

Rumney Rocks Climbing Area is a natural cliff feature where climbers from all over the world come to test their skill and strength against some of the most challenging sport climbing in the world. The climbs at Rumney Rocks are featured in many different climbing magazines, posters, and calendars making this area of the WMNF a very popular climbing destination. Over the past decade the amount of use at Rumney Rocks has skyrocketed creating environmental and social concerns. These concerns relate to the physical environment of Rattlesnake Mountain, and the social aspect of the climbing community. Work carried out for this analysis is in accordance with the Forest Plan, under the section Forest Wide-Management Direction, for Rock and Ice Climbing, Guideline 6:

When issues are no longer effectively addressed by application of standards and guidelines, climbing plans for specific areas should be developed to minimize environmental and social impacts. WMNF Land and Resource Management Plan page 2-22.

Why Analyze Rumney Rocks Climbing Area

Climbing is, and will continue to be, an important recreational activity at Rumney Rocks. The goal of this analysis is to identify and analyze actions necessary to provide for the continued enjoyment of rock climbing at Rumney Rocks within a managed recreation environment, while protecting the area's resources consistent with the Forest Plan.

Proposed Actions

The WMNF is considering several different actions to be taken at Rumney Rocks to address the environmental and social concerns related to this area. Those actions are:

1. Improve and connect the network of walking paths at Rumney Rocks.



- Patch together the network of walking paths leading to and from the crags, creating a uniformed network of paths for climbers to travel on.
 - Work on these paths to decrease the amount of erosion on Rattlesnake Mountain. Create rock steps, cribbing, and water bars to further reduce the amount of damage due to erosion.
 - Stabilize these paths to sustain current and future use of climber traffic.
2. Establish a moratorium on new fixed climbing protection on selected crags. This moratorium will be located on crags that:
 - Are identified as having Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive plant species.
 - Are potential new nesting sites of Peregrine Falcons.
 - Social concerns have indicated that the crag has reached the carrying capacity for fixed protection.
 3. Evaluate and improve the safety, drainage, and structure of the Rumney Rocks overflow parking area.
 4. Establish where and when mixed (rock and ice) climbing at Rumney Rocks is environmentally and socially acceptable.
 5. Create a trail that is adjacent to Buffalo Road located on land administered by the WMNF linking the parking areas to the crags for the purpose of eliminating the need to walk on Buffalo Road.
 6. Construct hardened staging and belay areas, clearly defined at the base of the crags.
 7. Establish a scheduling mechanism for guided group use that exceeds six participants.

Public Involvement

We are inviting you to comment on this project. We suggest you consider the following when looking at the activities proposed for the Rumney Rocks Project:

- Does our proposal make sense and do you agree that it will improve the climbing experience and address environmental and social concerns in the area?
- Is there anything in or about this Project Area that you would like to make the Forest Service aware of so that it can be considered in our analysis?

Your comments will be used to identify issues associated with this project, to develop alternatives to the Proposed Action, and to refine the analysis of the effects.

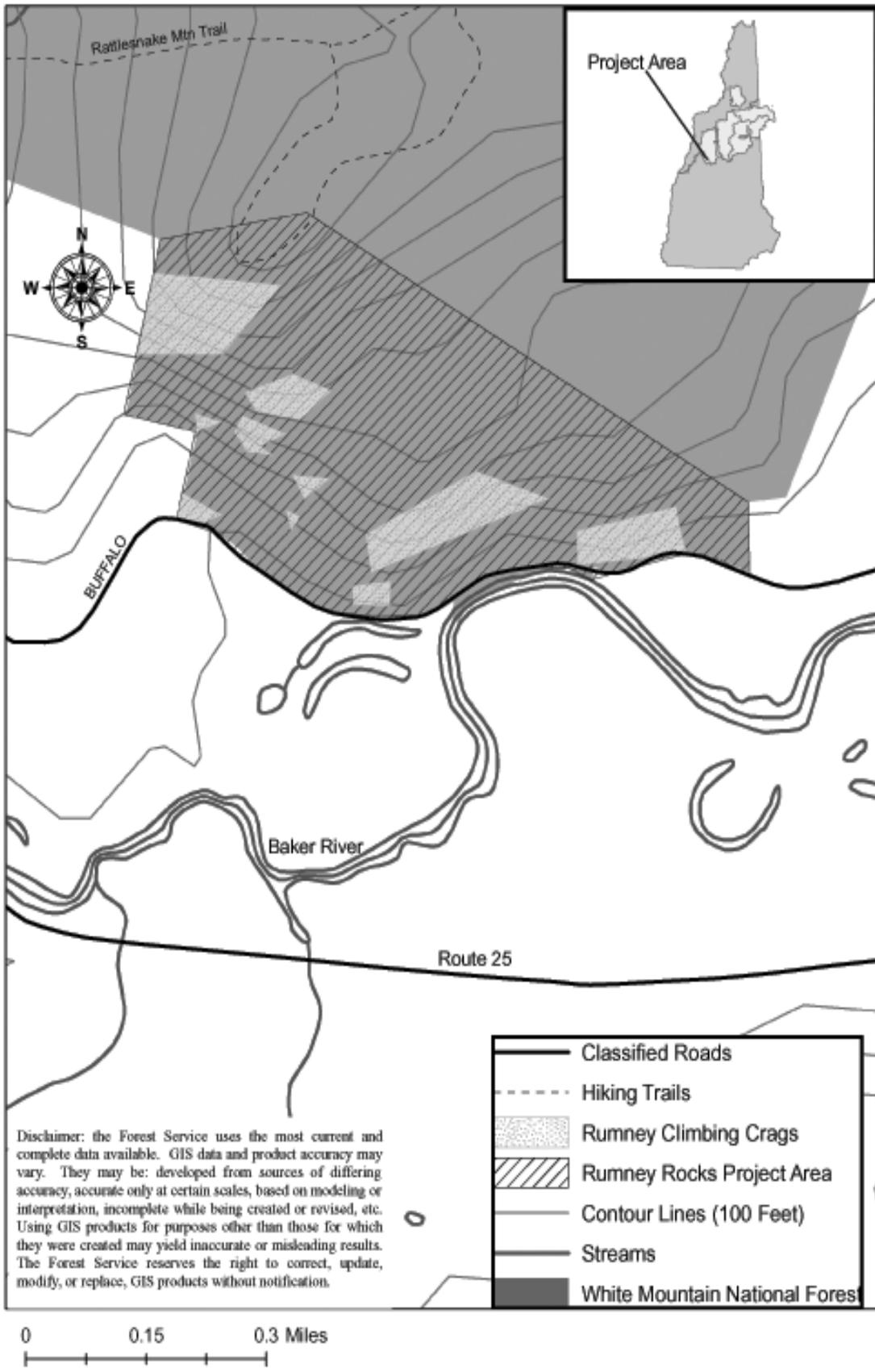
The results of our analysis of the Rumney Rocks Project will be documented in an Environmental Assessment, and a decision is expected in August of 2007. Before a decision is made on this project, you will be given an opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment during a 30-day comment period. If you provide comments during the comment period, you will also be eligible to file an administrative appeal of the Rumney Rocks project decision. You will not be eligible to appeal the decision if you only respond to the scoping letter, which you are now reading.

If you comment on this scoping letter, you will receive the 30-day comment report and also a copy of the Decision Notice for the Rumney Rocks project when it has been signed.

Your comments may be provided orally or in writing (phone, letter, FAX, or e-mail) and must be received by April 20th, 2007. Indicate in your response that your comments are in reference to the Rumney Rocks project. Comments should be addressed to John Serfass, District Ranger, in one of the following ways:

By Mail – Pemigewasset Ranger Station, ATTN: Rumney Rocks Project/Spencer Bleadorn, 1171 NH Route 175, Holderness, NH 03245,

Rumney Rocks Project Area



By FAX – (603) 536-5147, ATTN: Rumney Rocks Project / Spencer Bleadorn

By phone – (603) 536-1315 (voice) or 603- 536-3281 (TTY), ask for Spencer Bleadorn

By email – sbleadorn@fs.fed.us

Information about this proposal is also available on our website at: http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/projects/projects/index.php

Please include the following information with your comments:

- Your name, address (include in any email correspondence), and, if possible, telephone number; and
- Site-specific facts or comments concerning the proposed Rumney Rocks project, along with supporting information that you believe would be valuable as we develop this project.

Your views on this project are important to me. If you need more information on this project, please contact Spencer Bleadorn at (603) 536-1315.

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

Sincerely,

/s/ John J. Serfass

JOHN J. SERFASS

District Ranger

White Mountain National Forest
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