



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: March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to invite you to comment on the proposed Sandwich Snowmobile Trail Relocations Projects. The proposed project is located on the Saco Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest.

The proposed project consists of the relocation of 600 feet of the Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail from private land onto adjacent National Forest, and relocation of 700 feet of the Sidehillers Snowmobile Trail from within a utility line corridor onto adjacent National Forest land. These two trail segments are located in the Town of Sandwich, Carroll County, New Hampshire.

The enclosed Public Comment Package 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/forests/white\\_mountain/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/), under Projects and Plans

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.

This project proposal is subject to formal notice, comment and appeal regulations. In order to have standing to appeal any decision on this project proposal, you must submit timely and substantive comments during this 30-day comment period. This is fully explained in the Public Comment Package.

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

Sincerely,

//Terry Miller//  
TERRY MILLER  
District Ranger



**Sandwich Snowmobile Trail Relocations**  
**Scoping Report**  
White Mountain National Forest  
Saco Ranger District

**Introduction**

The Saco Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is initiating a public scoping and formal 30-day comment period for the relocation of two short sections of snowmobile trail on WMNF land in the Town of Sandwich, New Hampshire. 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 map displays the two relocations described herein.

**Purpose and Need**

These projects are in response to requests made by the Sandwich Sidehillers, a winter trail club. The Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail currently lies entirely on private lands. One of the landowners, abutting National Forest land, would like the trail moved off their land. This segment is approximately 600 feet in length. The Bennett Street Trail serves as a connector between the Sandwich Notch Road and White Lake trail systems.

The Sidehillers Snowmobile Trail currently lies on National Forest land within a corridor that also serves as a power transmission line. A short section of the trail cannot be maintained or groomed due to the steep grade. Options to relocate this portion of trail in the transmission line corridor were not considered further because utility pole guy wires would present a serious hazard to snowmobile operators. This trail connects Sandwich Notch Road to North Sandwich and also to the Young Mountain and Bennett Street trail systems.

Both relocations are compatible with the standards and objectives identified in the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (UDA-Forest Service, 2005). The proposed action areas lie in Management Area 2.1 (General Forest Area), which includes lands suitable for winter motorized recreation. Both trail relocations are also consistent with the goals and objectives in the WMNF Plan for winter motorized dispersed recreation:

- The Forest Service will provide for snowmobile use on designated trails in certain areas. The importance of the natural setting will be emphasized.
  - The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile network.

**Proposed Action**

The two projects, as proposed, include the following:

- Relocation of approximately 600 feet of the Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail from private land onto White Mountain National Forest land.
- Relocation of approximately 700 feet of the Sidehillers Snowmobile Trail out of the transmission line corridor. An existing skid trail will provide 300 feet of this corridor.

Please see the attached map for additional information. The two trail relocations would be implemented by the winter of 2006.

### **Decisions to be Made**

After considering your input, the recommendations of an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists, and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, I will decide whether to approve the implementation of these projects as proposed. Based upon the environmental analysis contained in the project file to date and on experience with similar activities on the WMNF, I anticipate that this project may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement under FSH 1909.15-2004-3, Chapter 31.2, #1, which allows for categorical exclusion of projects that involve: "Construction and reconstruction of trails." This category requires a project file and decision memo.

*As such, this may represent your only opportunity to provide formal comment on this project.* Once the level of documentation is determined and the analysis is completed, copies of the decision will be mailed to people who submit comments during this 30-day comment 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. To date, no Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species or Designated Critical Habitat, Species Proposed for Federal Listing or Proposed Critical Habitat, or Forest Service Sensitive Species have been observed or are known to be present.
2. The projects will not result in an adverse effect to any extraordinary circumstance, floodplains, wetlands, or any municipal water supply.
3. The Project Area does not include any Congressionally Designated Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or National Recreation Areas.
4. The Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail relocation, as proposed, would move a 600-foot long by 14-foot wide segment on the south edge of the Sandwich 3 Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). This IRA was analyzed for its potential as Wilderness in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005 FEIS, Appendix C), and it was not proposed in any of the Plan alternatives or in the signed Record of Decision because its inclusion would result in a "cherry-stem" boundary, a difficult management situation for Wilderness character. The Land and Resource Management Plan designated this IRA as MA 2.1 with an ROS of "Semi-Primitive Motorized", allowing development of motorized recreation opportunities.
5. Neither of the project areas is located in a Research Natural Area.
6. The WMNF Cultural Resources Atlas shows no known cultural sites in the project areas. A site specific survey has been completed and an Archaeological Resource Report is being prepared for review by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

### **How to Submit Comments**

Comments should be addressed to Saco District Ranger Terry Miller as follows:

- Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, FAXed or otherwise submitted by 11:59 pm ET on the 30<sup>th</sup> calendar day following publication of the legal notice.

- **Mail:** Send to Holly Jewkes, Project Team Leader, Saco Ranger Station, 33 Kancamagus Highway, Conway, NH 03818. Letters can be hand delivered Monday through Saturday, 8:00am-4:30pm.
- **FAX:** Send to Attn: Holly Jewkes @ 603-447-8405.
- **E-mail:** Send to ([comments-eastern-white-mountain-saco@fs.fed.us](mailto: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.
- **Oral comments** may be submitted Monday through Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm, by phone (603-447-5448 x127) or in person; and must be received by close of business on the 30<sup>th</sup> calendar day following publication of the legal notice.

Comments must be submitted or mailed within thirty days after the publication date of the legal notice in the Manchester Union Leader. Comments should include the following information:

- 1) Your name, address, and, if possible, your phone number and 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 substantive 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.

# Snowmobile Trail Relocations Sandwich, NH



