



Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail Relocation

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

White Mountain
National Forest

Saco Ranger District

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Decision Memo Saco Ranger District



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1.0 Decision

1.1 Project Area and Background

This project is in response to a request 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.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The proposed project is compatible with the standards and objectives identified in the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005). The proposed action area lies within Management Area 2.1 (General Forest Area), which includes lands suitable for winter motorized recreation. This area has a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class of Semi-primitive Motorized and is defined as: "Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate-to-large size. Concentration of users is low but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted."

The trail relocation is 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.

The purpose of the proposed project is to respond to the need to relocate the trail off of private land, and to allow the continued use of the Bennett Street Trail as a connector route between the Sandwich Notch Road and White Lake trail systems. Elimination of this connector route would displace snowmobiles to other trail corridors and would limit access to the Sandwich Notch Road and White Lake trail systems.

Proposed Action

The project includes the relocation of approximately 600 feet of the Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail from private land onto White Mountain National Forest land. This portion of trail would be subject to all WMNF plan standards and guidelines. It would require the removal of some vegetation and some level of ground disturbance during construction. The existing trail on private property would no longer be maintained by the Sidehillers Snowmobile Club.

1.3 Description of Decision

After careful consideration of public input, the recommendations of an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists, and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, I have decided to proceed with the proposed action activities to relocate this section of trail onto WMNF land.

1.3.1 Reasons for Decision

My decision to relocate this 600 foot section of trail will allow this snowmobile trail to continue to serve as an important connector route between the Sandwich Notch Road and White Lake trail systems. Allowing this relocation avoids the creation of a situation that would potentially require closure of this trail or a large rerouting of this snowmobile trail.

My decision is in accordance with Forest Plan direction, as we will be specifically maintaining our role as part of the snowmobile network with minimal change to the existing condition. During the 2005 Forest Plan revision the impacts of snowmobiles was examined in great depth. The 2005 Forest Plan specifically examined the use of snowmobiles on the WMNF. The plan directs; “The Forest Service will provide for snowmobile use on designated trails in certain areas.” In addition a goal of the plan states: “The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile trail network (FP, 2005, 1-13).”

Extensive consideration was given to the potential effects of relocating this section of trail onto the WMNF and specifically the Sandwich 3 inventoried roadless area. I have determined that actions taken as part of this proposal will not adversely affect the areas eligibility for consideration as an inventoried roadless area in future Forest Plan efforts. The FEIS, Appendix A, specifically addressed snowmobile trails in inventoried roadless areas, it is stated; “If the management area allows snowmobiles then there will be no effect on that use even though the trail is in an inventoried roadless area (USDA-Forest Service, 2005, A-182).” This inventoried roadless area is designated as MA 2.1 with an ROS of “Semi-Primitive Motorized”, allowing development of motorized recreation opportunities.

1.4 Alternatives Considered

1.4.1 No action

The No action alternative would allow the current issues associated with limited access to continue. This alternative would create a situation that would require a large reroute or displacement of trail riders to other areas.

2.0 Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

Decisions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR 1b or one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 chapter 30 sections 31.12 or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect.

2.1 Category of the Exclusion

The project is within Category 1, of FSH 1909.15, section 31.12. This category of exclusion includes “Construction and reconstruction of trails.” This category requires a project file and decision memo.

2.2 Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances

2.2.1 Threatened and Endangered Species or Their Critical Habitat

A complete, Biological Evaluation (Starke, 2006) was prepared and is located in the project file. 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. A site specific botanical survey was completed in the project area and identified no rare plants (Marchowsky, 2005).

2.2.2 Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds

The project will not result in an adverse effect to any extraordinary circumstance, floodplains, wetlands, or any municipal water supply.

2.2.3 Congressionally Designated Areas

The Project Area does not include any Congressionally Designated Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or National Recreation Areas.

2.2.4 Inventoried Roadless Areas

The Project Area does lie within the Sandwich 3 inventoried roadless area. The 600 foot by 14-foot wide relocation of the Bennett Street Trail would be minimal and would not impact the areas ability to meet roadless criteria. This section of trail is on the border of USFS property and private land; adjacent to an existing snowmobile trail. Actions taken as part of this proposal are not expected to adversely affect the areas eligibility for consideration as an inventoried roadless area for future Forest Plan efforts.

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 placed this inventoried roadless area in MA 2.1 with an ROS of “Semi-Primitive Motorized”, allowing development of motorized recreation opportunities.

2.2.5 Research Natural Areas

This project area is not located in a Research Natural Area.

2.2.6 American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites & 2.2.g Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas.

The WMNF Cultural Resources Atlas shows no known cultural sites in the project area. A site specific survey has been completed and an Archaeological Resource Report was reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

3.0 Public Involvement

Public involvement began in 2003 with a request from the Sandwich Sidehillers Winter Trail Club to relocate this portion of the Bennett Steet trail. Several site visits by Forest Service recreation and other resource specialists have occurred since that time. Club members have also attended some field visits to provide input into issues and concerns.

Formal public involvement for the project included a legal notice on Wednesday, March 29, 2006 in the New Hampshire Union Leader. This project was listed in the White Mountain

National Forest Quarterly Newsletter (Schedule of Proposed Actions); direct mailings were sent on March 27, 2006 to approximately 20 interested parties (households) (Planning Record, mailing list), and posted on the White Mountain Website. Comments received from these scoping efforts were used to refine the project, to explore the possibility of extraordinary circumstances and potential effects of proposed activities on resources.

Twelve comment letters, E-mails, and phone comments were received for this project on or before the close of the comment period. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project. See Appendix B – Response to Scoping for the Forest Service response to specific comments received during Scoping.

Of the twelve comments three were in general opposition to this proposal, two were indifferent, and seven were in general support. Of those in general opposition two commenters cited concerns of potential impacts to the inventoried roadless area and future wilderness designation, the third was opposed to all forms of motorized recreation on National Forest lands. The concerns with potential impacts to the inventoried roadless area were considered and it was determined that this small portion of trail will not impact roadless designation. The movement of this trail is less than 200 feet from its original location, and although it will now be moved to WMNF land, the potential effects of this trail on the inventoried roadless area will not change.

4.0 Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

My decision will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Forest Plan Consistency

This decision is consistent with the standards and guidelines contained in the Forest Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005, pg. 2.16-2.17, 3.3). The Forest Plan has been reviewed in consideration of this project. This decision is responsive to guiding direction contained in the Plan, as summarized in Section 1 of this document.

5.0 Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to the Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck Court Ruling of October 19, 2005. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must have provided comments during the 30-day comment period that was provided prior to this decision. A Notice of Appeal must be in writing and clearly state that it is a Notice of Appeal being filed pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Appeals must be filed within 45 days of the date of legal notice of this decision in the Manchester Union Leader, Manchester, New Hampshire to:

USDA Forest Service
ATTN: Appeals Deciding Officer, Bennett Street Trail Relocation
626 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

The office hours are: 8:00am-4:30pm (Central Time), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. A Notice of Appeal may be faxed to 414-944-3963, Attn: Appeals Deciding Officer, USDA Forest Service, Eastern Regional Office; or it may be electronically mailed to:

appeals-eastern-regionaloffice@fs.fed.us.

Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or any software supported by Microsoft applications. It is the responsibility of appellants to ensure that their appeal is received in a timely manner.

The 45- day appeal period is computed using calendar days, including Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays. The day after the publication of this legal notice of the decision in the Manchester Union Leader is the first day of the appeal-filing period, and is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. If you do not have access to the Union Leader, please call the Saco Ranger Station at 603-447-5448, ext. 109 (TTY 603-447-3121) for the published date. There will be no time extensions for appeals.

If no appeal is filed this project may be implemented on, but not before, the fifth business day following the close of the appeal filing period. (36 CFR 215.7 (b) (2) (vi)). Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. At a minimum, an appeal must include the following:

1. Appellant's name and address, with a telephone number, if available;
2. Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal);
3. When multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant (§215.2) and verification of the identity of the lead appellant upon request;
4. The name of the project or activity for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official and the date of the decision;
5. The regulation under which the appeal is being filed, when there is an option to appeal under either this part or part 251, subpart C (§215.11(d));
6. Any specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes;
7. Any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement;
8. Why the appellant believes the Responsible Official's decision failed to consider the substantive comments; and
9. How the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy

6.0 Implementation Date

If no appeal is filed this project may be implemented on, but not before, the fifth business day following the close of the appeal filing period. (36 CFR 215.7 (b) (2) (vi)). Implementation of the entire project may extend over several years.

7.0 Contact Person

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Lauren Oswald, Recreation Planner, Saco Ranger District, (33 Kancamagus Hwy, White Mountain National Forest, Conway, NH 03818) Phone: 603 447-5448 X109 Fax: 603 447-8405. Or lmoswald@fs.fed.us.

8.0 Signature and Date

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b or one of the categories

identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 sections 31.12 or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the Planning Record.

/S/ TERRY MILLER

11 July 2006

TERRY MILLER

DATE

District Ranger

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Appendices A-D

The Bennett Street and Sidehillers Powerline Snowmobile Trail, were scoped together as the Sandwich Snowmobile Trail Relocation Projects. The Response Comments (Appendix A), list of Commenters (Appendix B), and Design Features (Appendix D) apply to both projects; all comments and responses were included for both decisions because some comment letters addressed both projects together others addressed projects individually.

Appendix A: Response to Comments, Sandwich Snowmobile Trails

<p>Comment 1.1. My comments are directed not only at the proposed (power line) relocation of the trail but also addresses the larger question of the impact that the existing snowmobile trail is having on the land under the power lines in that area. In my opinion, elimination or remediation of the larger impacts should be part of the relocation project.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.1: The larger question of the entire trail on the power line corridor is outside of the scope of this decision. The Relocation is intended to address erosion on a steep pitch of trail</p> <p>The 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) determined that within Management Area 2.1 (General Forest Area), which includes lands suitable for winter motorized recreation. Goals and objectives in the WMNF Plan for winter motorized dispersed recreation:</p> <p>a) The Forest Service will provide for snowmobile use on designated trails in certain areas. The importance of the natural setting will be emphasized.</p> <p>b) The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile network.</p>
<p>Comment 1.2. For the past 17 years we have hiked and picked berries under the section of the powerline easement that currently hosts the snowmobile trail. During our first years here the snowmobile trail was not there and the area under the power lines was kept open by periodic spraying, and more recently mowing, of the rather lush growth of vegetation that developed in that area. We and our neighbors found this a particularly rich area for blackberry picking. We also frequently saw moose under the power lines.</p> <p>In the relatively short time that snowmobiling has been encouraged under the lines, and rerouting of the path for dog races to that location has taken place, we have noted a steady degradation of the land in the area occupied by the trail.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.2: The intent of this project is to address the short section of trail in need of rerouting to prevent resource damage and improve safety for trail users. This project does not include considerations to close this trail, or remove it as a snowmobile trail.</p> <p>In addition this corridor is maintained and will remain open for power company access. The Power company has in the past brushed and mowed the access corridor and use it to service the entire transmission line. They have traditionally used various methods to access the line.</p> <p>This corridor is used by many groups from hiking, power company access, to snowmobiling access, to skiing, and dog sledding.</p> <p>During site visits, moose were encountered and several moose tracks were found on the route. The presence of berry producing plants is a desirable byproduct of the powerline corridor, beneficial to both wildlife and humans (recreation). However, it is not the primary objective for this project, and is not likely to be greatly affected by this proposal.</p> <p>An area that is brushed at various intervals is</p>

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	<p>often dominated by pioneer species that have a distinct advantage to the microclimate conditions created by periodic brushing. In between brushing, species composition will change as vegetation is allowed to become established and microclimate conditions change.</p>
<p>Comment 1.3: In fact, there are now two parallel trails worn into the surface just below the area of proposed relocation. There is increased erosion along the trail, made worse by seepage from a small stream that crosses under the power lines.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.3: This proposal includes the stabilization of other areas of trail below this point where there are currently erosion and rutting issues. This stabilization would be achieved through the use of water bars, seeding or other erosion control devices through collaboration with the NH Bureau of Trails and the Sandwich Sidehillers Snowmobile Club.</p> <p>In addition the need for additional signage along this route is recognized and we are working to mitigate this situation with additional and proper signage.</p>
<p>Comment 1.3a: At the time of a hike I took there two weeks ago there was also clear evidence that the portion of the trail on WMNF land had recently been used by at least one ATV, in violation of the current Forest Plan.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.3a: The area will be signed in accordance with the 2005 travel management sign plan standards which will include forest orders that exclude ATV use. Concerns have been brought to the attention of Law Enforcement personnel.</p>
<p>Comment 1.4: My suggestion for actions which might be taken to remediate the current negative impacts of the snowmobile trail is as follows.</p> <p>a. Eliminate one branch of the parallel trail, mark the remaining part of the trail appropriately and enforce the closure, if necessary, with a suitable barrier.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.4:</p> <p>We agree the intent is to have one designated route; additional efforts will be made to eliminate duplicate routes. The designated route will be marked to appropriate trail standards. Signage efforts will occur in cooperation with the State and local coordinators.</p> <p>However, the corridor is used for maintenance of the transmission line, and will be maintained appropriately for that use also. In addition refer to FS response 1.3 above.</p>
<p>Comment 1.5: Install water bars where necessary to prevent erosion of the remaining section of the trail.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.5:</p> <p>We agree the trail is in need of general maintenance including, erosion control devices such as water bars. In addition refer to FS response 1.3 above.</p>
<p>Comment 1.6: Increase the visibility of signage on the corridor where the trail enters WMNF land. It is presently easy to assume that the entire</p>	<p>FS Response 1.6: There are signage and boundary definition needs along this trail. We are aware of the need for FS boundary work along the land acquired in the 1990s.</p>

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<p>corridor is somehow "power company land" and not subject to WMNF rules. If I had my way, there would be large signs mounted on the power poles announcing that the users are guests on public land.</p>	<p>Additionally, the trail will be posted to meet 2005 sign standards for this type of travel corridor and transmission line.</p>
<p>Comment 1.7: Explore with the Sidehillers the possibility of removing the trail from the entire power line corridor. It is undoubtedly more convenient, and a lot less expensive, for them to have the power company help keep the trail open; but this comes at the cost of greatly increased erosion on a heavily traveled, steep trail kept free of vegetation. The section of the trail on the steep slopes above Mt. Israel Rd. was put there only recently and was a bad idea.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.7: Removing the entire trail from the power line was initially considered but dismissed from further study. This trail connects Sandwich Notch Road to North Sandwich and also to the Young Mountain and Bennett Street trail systems. The Forest Plan directs us to maintain our role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile network. Eliminating this connector would eliminate part of a larger trail network. In addition this location is logical because it decreases impact to this area by having a single corridor serve multiple purposes, provided it can be done safely with no extraordinary resource damage, rather than multiple corridors serving individual purposes. We agree that this steep area of the trail has some problems as currently managed. The proposed relocation, additional maintenance, and law enforcement should be able to correct most of these issues. If monitoring reveals continued problems, then a future proposal will be made to address specific issues. The elimination of the entire trail network is outside of the scope of this analysis. The appropriateness of snowmobile travel was analyzed in detail during the Forest Plan Revision Process. The power line corridor will continue to be maintained to appropriate widths to allow the Power Company to maintain the transmission line. This would continue to occur regardless of the corridors maintenance as a snowmobile trail.</p>
<p>Comment 1.8: My specific comments regarding the proposed relocation are as follows. I agree that the project will not result in adverse effects to the immediate area. In fact, it will help remediate existing problems with erosion in that area (see above).</p>	<p>FS Response 1.8: The proposal is designed to help the existing erosion and safety issues. Additional maintenance on other sections is needed and is planned as part of this project refer to FS response 1.3(above).</p>

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<p>Comment 1.9: A substantial length of what you have described as "an existing skid trail" actually exhibits exposed stone edging that is characteristic of a road bed. It is most likely the remains of one of the old roads serving the Guinea Hill settlement. It is an historical artifact and as such should be carefully characterized so that the trail can be routed around it. The Sandwich Historical Society may be able to provide more information about the road.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.9: The "existing skid trail" has been used in the past 20 years as a skid trail. This project will avoid disturbance to the road bed and rock work as feasible. Post construction disturbance is not expected due to the operation of snowmobiles, because they will only be operated during snow cover.</p> <p>A Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report was completed on this area, and it was determined that this re-route will not impact cultural resources.</p>
<p>Comment 1.10: There are several National Forest boundary signs in the project area attached to trees that are now within the forest, not at the edges. These seem to be left over from the addition of that ca. 50 acre parcel to WMNF in the last few decades. The signs add further to the confusion about boundaries that contributes to misuse of Forest land. They should be removed.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.10: We agree there are signage and boundary definition needs along this trail. We are aware of the need for FS boundary work along the land acquired in the 1990s.</p>
<p>Comment 1.11: I want to make clear that, although not a snowmobiler myself, I have no objection to their appropriate use on WMNF. The current steep trail under the power lines is, however, in my view, not appropriate for use of these machines or the mechanized equipment needed to groom the trail. It should be returned to a foot trail as soon as feasible and the snowmobile trail in the entire power line area relocated.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.11: The 2005 Forest Plan examined the use of snowmobiles on the WMNF. Their use was not excluded and the plan directs; "The Forest Service will provide for snowmobile use on designated trails in certain areas." In addition a goal of the plan states: "The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile trail network (FP, 2005, 1-13)."</p> <p>This trail connects Sandwich Notch Road to North Sandwich and also to the Young Mountain and Bennett Street trail systems. The Forest Plan directs us to maintain our role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile network.</p> <p>The power line corridor will continue to be maintained to appropriate widths to allow the Power Company to maintain the transmission line. This has been power company access for over two decades and it is unlikely that this use will be discontinued in the near future. Mechanized equipment will continue to be used to maintain the powerline corridor, throughout the life of the powerline special use permit.</p>

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	<p>Additional snowmobile trail relocations outside of the powerline corridor will be considered if waterbars and drainage structures are not effective in adequately reducing erosion concerns.</p>
<p>Comment 1.13: I hope that these comments are of some use to you as you continue to plan this project. Please let me know if I can be of further help.</p>	<p>FS Response 1.13: Thank you; all comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 2.1 I do not have a problem with the reroute under the transmission line as this will improve the situation, although I am concerned that this reroute may be the “tip of the iceberg” in terms of minimizing erosion underneath the powerline since there are other areas that are similarly degraded.</p>	<p>FS Response 2.1: This project addresses only the small proposed reroute area. See Response 1.3 in regard to proposed connected actions. Erosion in other areas will be addressed by water bars and other drainage structures. The trail in the proposed relocation area is being relocated because erosion concerns would not effectively be mitigated with waterbars or drainage structures.</p>
<p>Comment 2.2 I am not, however, in support of the second reroute in the IRA. As you know, there is a wilderness bill currently under consideration that would expand the Sandwich Range wilderness nearby. Whereas this trail would not directly affect the proposed wilderness area, the impacts of this trail will be detected within the wilderness area.</p>	<p>FS Response 2.2: This trail is not expected to impact the Sandwich Range Wilderness. It is unlikely that use of snowmobiles in this location would be detected in the Wilderness Area. The trail relocation is within 200 feet of the existing trail and approximately at the same elevation as the current trail. There would be no change in effects to the Sandwich Range Wilderness from the current situation and the situation analyzed for the current plan. No impact to this inventoried roadless area (IRA), or its future potential designation would occur. This is largely because this section of trail is on the border of USFS property and private land; the slight shift in location would not impact roadless criteria.</p> <p>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</p>

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	<p>development of motorized recreation opportunities.</p> <p>The FEIS, Appendix A, specifically addressed snowmobile trails in inventoried roadless area, it is stated; “If the management area allows snowmobiles then there will be no effect on that use even though the trail is in an inventoried roadless area (USDA-Forest Service, 2005, A-182).”</p> <p>If in the future this IRA becomes an addition to the Sandwich Range Wilderness, it would then necessitate the removal of snowmobile trails.</p>
<p>Comment 2.3 Moreover, the “difficult management situation” you mentioned for ‘cherry stem’ areas will become even more pronounced as you try to police illegal use of ATV’s along this new trail.</p>	<p>FS Response 2.3: ATV use was not allowed under the WMNF plan, except on frozen snow covered ground on designated snowmobile routes. On the rerouted section of the Bennett Street Trail their use would not be permitted, with the exception of snow covered and frozen ground.</p> <p>It is highly unlikely that this project will encourage additional illegal ATV use on WMNF land. ATV use on the private sections of this trail is not within the jurisdiction of the USFS and may be allowed or disallowed based on individual landowner preference.</p> <p>Illegal ATV use is a Law Enforcement issue, and State and Federal Law enforcement often collaborate on implementation in specific areas.</p>
<p>Comment 2.4: Evidence underneath the power line suggests that you will not be able to easily control unauthorized use of ATV’s since they tend to follow snowmobile trails.</p>	<p>FS Response 2.4: ATV use was excluded in the 2005 Forest Plan, and is not an appropriate use of WMNF land. Illegal ATV use is a Law Enforcement issue, and State and Federal Law enforcement often collaborate on enforcement in specific areas.</p> <p>The proximity of the powerline to a nearby road makes enforcement of illegal ATVs somewhat more problematic. Illegal ATV use of this relocated trail is less likely and more easily enforced.</p> <p>This area will be signed to meet the transportation management sign plan, including additional signage excluding ATVs from this area. We anticipate that proper signage will</p>

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	alleviate most illegal ATV activity along this corridor.
<p>Comment 2.5: I am also concerned that this action would set a dangerous precedent – namely, if a private landowner disallows snowmobiles on their land then the Forest Service will provide snowmobile access elsewhere. Do you really think that permitting the activity to be relocated less than 50 feet away will take the problem away from the private landowner who objects to the noise and fumes that snowmobiles produce? What about the other landowners in the area that have also expressed their displeasure with this snowmobile trail and who lack the ability to ‘roadblock’ the trail because it passes very close to but not on their property?</p>	<p>FS Response 2.5: This decision would not be precedent setting. The Saco RD examines every project on a case by case basis, and develops alternatives and projects through an interdisciplinary process. This project would apply only to the two trails discussed for reroute.</p> <p>Relocating this small portion of the trail will not largely affect the entire trail system. The trail is primarily on private land, and its management is outside of our jurisdiction. It is unlikely that the elimination of a small piece of trail that would cross FS land would stop all snow mobile traffic in this area.</p> <p>While the rerouted area is in close proximity to the existing trail that currently resides on private land it is not in close proximity to any residence or in a highly visible location as to effect the landowner that has requested the trails removal from his property. Our understanding is that this is primarily a liability issue. In addition this area is wooded which would further provide a noise and visual buffer for this landowner. Individual landowner activities on private property are outside of the span of our control. The FS may not impose its regulations on private property.</p> <p>Neighbors with differing and irreconcilable private property uses likely need to have a different outlet to resolve their personal conflicts. Disagreements involving snowmobile trails on private land are beyond the scope of our control.</p>
<p>Comment 2.6: Or the fact that this trail (Bennett Street) was originally designed and established as a dogsled trail and the primary reason it was relocated two years ago was because snowmobiles took it over and discouraged dogsleds because of the severe incompatibility between dogsleds and snowmobiles?</p>	<p>FS Response 2.6: This trail was designed and established by private citizens, not the USFS. Members of the dogsled and snowmobile community have both reported use of this trail.</p> <p>The 700 feet the trail will be on FS land will be designated as suitable for winter motorized recreation. It will not exclude non-motorized user groups, but will also be available for snowmobile traffic.</p>
<p>Comment 2.7: It would seem that the people that will be most affected by this relocation are those that live in the immediate area. Whereas</p>	<p>FS Response 2.7: Trespass on private land is outside of the scope of this analysis. While ATV enforcement is an issue it is also beyond</p>

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<p>there are literally thousands of miles of snowmobile trails in New Hampshire to choose from, the residents of this quiet valley along Bennett Street cannot pick up and move their houses away from this trail. Granted that there are some residents who have allowed the use of snowmobiles on their property, especially some summer residents, however, many have not authorized such use, and even more are against the casual use of ATV's that often utilize snowmobile trails without permission. If not for any other reason, it is the policing of that latter that will create more of a "difficult management situation," not the snowmobiles, should this trail be allowed to pass on Forest Service land.</p>	<p>the scope of this analysis except on National Forest land, where Federal Regulations apply (and will be enforceable). Also refer to FS response 2.4 and 2.5.</p>
<p>Comment 2.8: I therefore suggest that you allow the 700-ft reroute under the powerline (and use proper signage to remind users that they are on trails suitable for snowmobiles only), and that you DENY the 600-ft relocation onto Forest Service land. The latter will force the Sidehillers to use their snowmobiles in the proper place, that is, on private property away from road less areas used primarily by non-motorized recreationists.</p>	<p>FS Response 2.8: The 2005 Forest Plan examined the use of snowmobiles on the WMNF. Their use was not excluded and the plan directs; "The Forest Service will provide for snowmobile use on designated trails in certain areas." In addition a goal of the plan states: "The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile trail network (FP, 2005, 1-13)." Snowmobile trails are appropriate in MA 2.1, where this project is located.</p> <p>This trail is primarily located on private property and only a small portion of this trail will reside on WMNF property. This project is within the direction of the Forest Plan.</p>
<p>Comment 4.1: I object to both snowmobile trail relocations.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.1: Thank you for commenting. Please refer to FS Response 2.8.</p>
<p>Comment 4.2: The Forest Service continues to ignore the negative effects internal combustion based recreation has on the U.S. and on the W.M.N.F.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.2: During the 2005 Forest Plan revision the impacts of snowmobiles was examined in great depth. The 2005 Forest Plan specifically examined the use of snowmobiles on the WMNF. Their use was not excluded and the plan directs; "The Forest Service will provide for snowmobile use on designated trails in certain areas." In addition a goal of the plan states: "The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile trail network (FP, 2005, 1-13)."</p> <p>This project is within the direction of the Forest Plan. The Forest Service addressed the use of snowmobile on WMNF land extensively during the forest plan revision process.</p>

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<p>Comment 4.3: The Forest Service should not be the landowner of last resort for gasoline-based forms of recreation.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.3: The forest plan directs the maintenance of the WMNF role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile trail network.</p>
<p>Comment 4.4: The discussion of the proposed Bennett Street snowmobile trail is quite biased. The fact that no Management Plan option contains Wilderness status for the proposed trail area is mentioned, but the FS wording is misleading. The language reads " on...the Roadless Area." The snowmobile route is currently on private land. The route is being moved "on to" a Roadless Area. There is a very significant difference.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.4: The scoping letter states under the Proposed Action: "Relocation of approximately 600 feet of the Bennett Street Snowmobile Trail from private land onto White Mountain National Forest land." The Bennett trail is specifically addressed 3 times as being moved from private onto WMNF land.</p> <p>Under Findings of Preliminary Analysis, the movement is addressed again (total of 4 times), the scoping letter states: "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)."</p>
<p>Comment 4.5: Many Western U.S. Forest Service staff people have no problem with adopting cherry stems. The scoping letter asserts, without any documentation, that cherry stems are a "... Difficult situation for Wilderness character." This is a bizarre assertion. "Wilderness character" is not under discussion here. Roadless Area character is in question, but obviously the Forest Service has already decided what is going to happen to the land in question.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.5: The Roadless Area in this project area Sandwich 3 inventoried roadless area (IRA), did qualify as roadless and was considered for wilderness recommendation, but was not recommended because of its "cherry stem" boundary. The scoping letter in part was attempting to provide reasoning as to why this project would not effect future wilderness designation. The Findings of Preliminary Analysis portion of the Scoping letter states: "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."</p> <p>As part of the Forest Plan Revision (FPR) process, the White Mountain National Forest is required by law (Roadless Area Conservation Rule) to conduct an inventory of lands within the National Forest that qualify as roadless. This inventory reconsiders all lands on the National Forest for their roadless area potential, accounting for new land acquisitions, changes to the landscape since the last Forest Plan, and improved computer technology for evaluating</p>

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	<p>areas. Areas that meet the FSH inventory criteria are evaluated and considered for wilderness recommendation (FSH 1909.12). This process was recently completed for the Forest Plan Revision (2005).</p>
<p>Comment 4.6: The future, which may include acquisition of private land by the WMNF or the adoption of a conservation easement on private land abutting the WMNF is ignored in the FS letter.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.6: At this time the forest service does not expect to acquire lands in this location in the foreseeable future. The future potential for these areas as Wilderness was explored in depth during the forest plan revision process.</p>
<p>Comment 4.7: The continued use of standard FS terminology such as “Semi-Primitive Motorized” is absurd. No one can have semi-primitive uses where motors are running. The FS phrase “Semi-Primitive Motorized” is an oxymoron.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.7: The terminology Semi-primitive Motorized definition is: “Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate-to-large size. Concentration of users is low but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such away that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted.” This trail maintains a predominantly natural setting, and aligns well within the SPM definition.</p> <p>This definition is standard and is clearly defined agency wide. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum as the basic framework for inventorying, planning and managing the recreation resource in accordance with the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA), as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA).</p>
<p>Comment 4.8: The fact that M.A. 2.1 allows "motorized recreation opportunities" does not mean that such uses may occur anywhere in M.A. 2.1.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.8: That is correct but they are allowed in the Semi-primitive Motorized ROS class, and MA 2.1.</p>
<p>Comment 4.9: The Forest Service should not be promoting any motorized forms of recreation. Global warming and American troops in Iraq are two reasons why.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.9: This is outside of the scope of this analysis. “Motorized recreation” on NF land was addressed at the Forest Plan level when the WMNF decided to continue to allow snowmobile use but exclude ATV use.</p>
<p>Comment 4.11: The Forest Service is no longer drafting scoping letters. With the recent increase in nonappealable projects, there is no reason for the Forest Service to listen to the public.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.11: The Saco Ranger district uses scoping throughout the planning process, to develop projects, refine projects, create additional proposals, and to develop alternatives. Often the public provides us with</p>

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	<p>additional information, concerns, or ideas, which make the scoping process invaluable to the planning process. We appreciate constructive public involvement and comment from a diverse group of stakeholders.</p>
<p>Comment 4.12: Projects can be used by the Forest Service to do what the Forest Service wishes; shrink a Roadless Area.</p>	<p>FS Response 4.12: This project will not shrink the roadless area, or have a significant effect on roadless criteria. Forest Service projects undergo multiple levels of analysis to determine potential impact to many resource areas, and then choose the appropriate documentation tool. It was determined that it would be appropriate to Categorically Exclude this decision because there were no extraordinary circumstances.</p>
<p>Comment 5.1: Will the erosion on the existing trail under the power line be fixed?</p>	<p>FS Response 5.1: Some of the erosion problems along the powerline will be improved. Much of that will be accomplished during proposed trail maintenance. This is discussed in detail in the connected actions portion of the DM. Please refer to FS response 1.3.</p>
<p>Comment 5.2: Would it be possible to close some of the double trails under the powerline? Pick the most stable one, revegetate, and control erosion.</p>	<p>FS Response 5.2: One trail corridor is preferable and will be signed, designated and maintained. After the relocation is complete the original trail will be obliterated and rehabilitated.</p> <p>As sections of the present trail is improved, frequency of parallel side trails should be reduced, as parallel trails are closed they will become revegetated and erosion will be reduced.</p>
<p>Comment 5.3: “There were ATV tracks on the Powerline trail...USFS boundary signs...and No ATV signs...don’t know it was National Forest”.</p>	<p>FS Response 5.3: The state and FS collaborate on OHV law enforcement activities. The trail will be signed in accordance with the travel management plan, and it is expected that this will eliminate confusion and reduce unauthorized ATV activity. However, the power company is authorized to use ATVs to perform powerline maintenance.</p>
<p>Comment 5.4: The proposed action describes 300 feet of the 700 foot relocation as skid trail. It is my opinion that this is part of an old road that served the Guinea Hill section of Sandwich. This is described in the 1933 excursion from the Sandwich historical society....On this 300 foot section, hand placed stones on the downhill side are obvious. The road may have been used for skidding, but the scars on the downhill side trees are very low</p>	<p>FS Response 5.4: The existing skid trail has been used in the past 20 years for skidding operations. This project will avoid disturbance to the road bed and rock work as much as is feasible. Disturbance is not expected due to the operation of snowmobiles because they are only operated during snow cover. A CRRR was completed on this area, and it was determined that this re-route will not impact cultural resources.</p>

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<p>indicating skidding by horses or a small crawler. Will any effort be made to retain this roadbed as it is?</p>	
<p>Comment 5.5: Some of this land was ...Remove the signs...so that everyone is clear that they are already on National Forest. With permission...remove the signs and return them to the Saco.</p>	<p>FS Response 5.5: There are signage and boundary definition needs along this trail. We are aware of the need for FS boundary work along the land acquired in the 1990s. Additionally, the trail will be posted to meet 2005 sign standards for this type of travel corridor and transmission line.</p>
<p>Comment 5.6: The only comment I have for the Bennett Street relocation is that the friends of the Sandwich Range Wilderness Proposal originally included all of the Flat Mountain Area. However when we found out about the need for this short relocation and George Bate’s desire to continue to brush hog the road up Flat Mnt and include some timber base, we redrew compromise boundaries to reflect those wants. So far we have not been successful in the effort to have these areas included in the NH Wilderness Act of 2006, but Congress has the last word and if we do prevail, this small but critical addition would not interfere with the relocation. However there would be no support for expansion of trail in Sandwich 3 in the future.</p>	<p>FS Response 5.6: The Sandwich 3 inventoried roadless area (IRA), did qualify as roadless and was considered for wilderness recommendation, but was not recommended in part because of its “cherry stem” boundary. The scoping letter was attempting to provide reasoning as to why this project would not effect future wilderness designation.</p> <p>As part of the Forest Plan Revision (FPR) process, the White Mountain National Forest is required by law (Roadless Area Conservation Rule) to conduct an inventory of lands within the National Forest that qualify as roadless. This inventory reconsiders all lands on the National Forest for their roadless area potential, accounting for new land acquisitions, changes to the landscape since the last Forest Plan, and improved computer technology for evaluating areas. Areas that meet the FSH inventory criteria are evaluated and considered for wilderness recommendation (FSH 1909.12). This process was recently completed for the Forest Plan Revision (2005).</p> <p>No future proposals for other snowmobile trails in the IRA are planned or known of at this time.</p>
<p>Comment 7.1: I believe that snowmobiles are acceptable on or near power lines with standard buffer zones to protect residences from adverse impact.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.1: In general this trail relocation is needed to reduce erosion and safety concerns along the powerline. There are no residences immediately adjacent to the rerouted section of this corridor.</p>
<p>Comment 7.2: My comments address the Bennett street area only.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.2: All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>

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<p>Comment 7.3: Prior to the construction of a trail bridge north from Bennett Street, I attended several Conservation Commission meetings and Selectmen meetings in my town to discuss the project. There now exists 3 bridges over Pond Brook, in a ½ mile span on Bennett Street.</p> <p>I am an environmentally concerned naturalist; I found this excessive and opposed it. Concurrently, trail builders used ATVs repeatedly to cross the river for cutting on the other side, prior to bridge construction. This was brought to the attention of DES at that time.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.3:</p> <p>This comment is outside of the scope of this analysis.</p> <p>The Forest Service has no direct authority outside of the Forest Proclamation Boundary. There are organizations within the NH and Maine state governments that provide support for cooperation between snowmobile clubs and private landowners. They have been very successful in providing trail systems outside of the WMNF(PC 36200-16, p A-136).</p>
<p>Comment 7.4:</p> <p>From the new bridge, the trail follows an old logging road north through wet forest to a hill of about 50% slope...From my monitoring of the trail, I found that it allowed approximately 2 weeks of use a year #1, 3 weeks a year #2, and maybe 3 days this year. The base of the slope remains mostly wet from natural drainage off ledge on National Forest property and running east to west from Salettes, including my boundary to the road.</p> <p>As I walked the trail for 3 years, several concerns became evident. Based on topography, geography, and geology, the trail is rarely covered with snow. When it has snow cover, earth is exposed rapidly from the need to accelerate to negotiate the hill. By February, sun hits the slope, and winter is over to this area.</p> <p>The George Bates end of this trail has 8 or more open culverts where water runs year round accept for a possible frozen period in January. I understand that snowmobiles must have frozen and/or snow covered ground to move legally.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.4:</p> <p>On USFS property snowmobiles may only travel on snow covered ground. On the USFS portion of this trail approximately 700 feet, snowmobile operation would require snow cover.</p> <p>Both motorized and nonmotorized trails on the forest vary widely from high to low use. A major forest recreation goal is to provide a range of quality activities and opportunities, and the variation between high and low use is one measure of this range. Staff from each of the Forest’s ranger districts looked at this concern closely, and found no reason to undesignated existing low use snowmobile trails (PC 36200-5, p A-128).</p> <p>For private property concerns please refer to FS Response 7.3.</p>
<p>Comment 7.5: From the beginning, I believe the trail selection route was inappropriate for its use. Other concerns are future use of the trail bridge, i.e. Other motorized vehicles, parking issues etc., impact to myself and others in the valley beyond the current disturbance of winter motorized use.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.5:</p> <p>Please refer to FS Response 7.3 and FS Response 7.4.</p>
<p>Comment 7.6: My land resides in an historic</p>	<p>FS Response 7.6:</p>

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<p>valley that holds a dozen or more still standing stone foundations, including two old school structures on my own property. They are evidence of a social and cultural community dating back to the late 1700s.</p>	<p>A CRRR was completed for the relocation area. No impact to historical resources along the reroute is expected.</p>
<p>Comment 7.8: Prior to purchasing my property in 1996, this and other local snowmobile clubs used an unsanctioned trail through my land, connecting to Mutter’s conservation easement also without permission, onto hiking trails to gain access to Sandwich Notch. They cut across Salette’s door yard on a sled dog trail to Whiteface Intervale. This landowner’s decision to stop use over his land initiated a need to gain access otherwise. Based on limited use of this trail, for reasons mentioned above, I believe the existing route is not the best solution.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.8: Please refer to FS Response 7.4.</p>
<p>Comment 7.9: The limited use creates a block in the corridor, rather than open access. I understand the need although I am opposed to this relocating this trail onto National Forest Service lands without further research and consideration of reasonable alternatives, and discussion with those of use who feel the negative impact.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.9: A no action alternative was considered. A no action alternative would limit the ability of this trail to serve as a connector to the remainder of the Sandwich Notch Road and White Lake trail systems.</p> <p>This trail meets the Forest Plan objective: “The White Mountain National Forest will maintain its role as part of the statewide and regional snowmobile network.”</p>
<p>Comment 7.10: Although I recognize to the need to serve populations who use motorized vehicles for recreation, I have found trail use incompatible with those seeking a natural experience.</p>	<p>FS Response 7.10: These proposed projects occur on public lands managed for multiple use purposes. 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.</p> <p>In addition, this area will only be used for snowmobiling during the “snow” season and will be available year round to other types of</p>

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	use that do not involve motorized vehicles on WMNF property.
Comment 7.11: And while the area in question was not included in the new forest plan wilderness designation, there remains a strong force to make it so.	FS Response 7.11: The Roadless Area in this project area Sandwich 3 inventoried roadless area (IRA), did qualify as roadless and was considered for wilderness recommendation, but was not recommended. Scoping letter states: “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.”
Comment 7.12: I simply believe that some precious areas deserve recognition as rich, natural, habitat for plant, animal and human interaction. Some areas should remain socially and culturally preserved and physically protected from this type of immeasurable impact.	FS Response 7.12: The WMNF provides great diversity in the types of recreation experiences offered. The forest manages lands in order to meet a variety of management objectives. This comment is outside of the scope of this analysis.
Comment 7.13: I am strongly against relocating this trail onto National Forest Lands, and I am in favor of discussing reasonable options.	Comment 7.13: Reasonable alternatives were considered. This project is appropriate for MA 2.1, and Forest Plan objectives.
Comment 6.1: I write to support the trail relocation proposal for the Sandwich Snowmobile and winter Recreation trails.	FS Response 6.1: Thank you.
Comment 6.2: Our winter trails are vital to our area and the off season economy. Maintaining them should be a priority. These low impact relocations may prove imperative to keeping our dwindling winter recreation trails. My wife and I use these trails extensively for cross-country skiing and some snowmobiling. The loss of this area would be a sever blow to many of us.	FS Response 6.2: Thank you.

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<p>Comment 6.3: Please consider the multi-use factors of the National Forest and resist the efforts of some to make this a National Park with minimal usage and very restrictive rules.</p>	<p>FS Response 6.3: These proposed projects occur on public lands managed for multiple use purposes. 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.</p>
<p>Comment 6.5: The proposed powerline relocation...is essential...current unsatisfactory. It can't be effectively groomed, and is virtually impassable, if not unsafe for skiers, snowmobiles and dogsledders.</p>	<p>FS Response 6.5: The powerline trail will continue to be steep, and users would need to remain cautious, however the intent is to help to make the area safer and to reduce erosion problems.</p>
<p>Comment 6.6: Seeing the dogsled races have been impacted or cancelled in the last few years, this provides great opportunity to upgrade our system that...</p>	<p>FS Response 6.6: The powerline trail will continue to be steep, and users would need to remain cautious, however the intent is to help to make the area safer and to reduce erosion problems.</p>
<p>Comment 6.7: These relocations are very minimal as to the Forest impact but are very great for the improvement of recreation in the area.</p>	<p>FS Response 6.7: Thank you for commenting.</p>
<p>Comment 3.1: I am writing to voice support for the proposed Sandwich Trail relocation. The title of the scoping project indicates that it is snowmobile trail relocation, but in fact it is winter trail relocation. We are avid skiers and are also members of the Sandwich Sidehillers Winter Trail Club. We also participate in the Sandwich Sixty Sled Dog Race which also uses these same trails. Accordingly, much of the trail usage is non snowmobile related.</p>	<p>FS Response 3.1: Thank you for commenting. It is a positive trait when multiple uses can collectively and safely use the same corridor</p>
<p>Comment 3.2: The relocations, as proposed, are minimal and are not adding any additional trails in the area. In fact the 2 relocations are requested in order to have less of an impact in both areas. Both relocations run parallel to the current trails within a 100 ft radius.</p>	<p>FS Response 3.2: Thank you for commenting. This will not add additional miles of trail in the area, but does move this portion of the Bennett Street Trail from private property onto USFS property.</p>

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<p>Comment 3.3: 2 years ago, during the sled dog race, 2 racers were not able to control their sleds and crashed down the steep grade of the powerline where the relocation is requested. The relocation will give them a safer, gentler slope to negotiate. Skiers will have an easier time with this reroute as well.</p>	<p>FS Response 3.3: The powerline trail will continue to be steep, and users would need to remain cautious, however the intent is to help to make the area safer and to reduce erosion problems.</p>
<p>Comment 8.1: I support the proposed trail relocations.</p>	<p>FS Response 8.1: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 8.2: The relocation at Bennett St is short and close to the USFS boundary so it is very low impact. Without this relocation other parts of the trail may have to be extensively relocated. This trail section is needed for snowmobile access to other trails, local skiing loops, and the Sandwich Notch 60 Dogsled Race.</p>	<p>FS Response 8.2: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 8.3: The relocation at the powerline Trail off Mt Israel Rd will eliminate a short section too steep to groom and difficult for maintenance equipment to surmount.</p>	<p>FS Response 8.3: The powerline trail will continue to be steep, and users would need to remain cautious, however the intent is to help to make the area safer and to reduce erosion problems.</p>
<p>Comment 8.4: Rerouting this section will also eliminate the possibility of future erosion on this steep section.</p>	<p>FS Response 8.4: See FS Response 8.3.</p>
<p>Comment 8.5: Many years there is very little snow on this section, which has resulted in difficult conditions for Sandwich Notch 60 dog sled race. The rerouting will eliminate these problems.</p>	<p>FS Response 8.5: See FS Response 8.3.</p>
<p>Comment 8.5a: Of particular note is that in addition to snowmobile and dogsled use the Powerline trail at this point is very good for open backcountry skiing (when the power company has recently mowed the brush).</p>	<p>FS Response 8.5a: See FS Response 8.3.</p>
<p>Comment 8.6: This reroute will greatly enhance the skiing, as it will provide a dependable uphill route and an easier downhill route in this steep terrain. When cleared this</p>	<p>FS Response 8.6: See FS Response 8.3.</p>

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<p>location is one of the best telemark runs around with its easy access from Mt Israel rd.</p>	
<p>Comment 9.1: I am very much in favor of these projects. The relocations will maintain an east-west snowmobile trail link which will not be feasible without these relocations.</p>	<p>FS Response 9.1: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 9.2: For your information, I own the land on the east end of the proposed Bennett Street Trail relocation, and I have permitted Sandwich Sidehillers to use a trail on my property.</p>	<p>FS Response 9.2: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 10.1: I am writing in support of both the Bennett Street and Powerline Hill relocations onto National Forest. These relocations will make it possible to keep the trail system open in Sandwich for snowmobiling, skiing and dog sled use.</p>	<p>FS Response 10.1: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 10.2: The SS have volunteered a tremendous amount of time and effort to establish and maintain these trails.</p>	<p>FS Response 10.2: We are aware of the time spent by the SS on these trails.</p>
<p>Comment 10.3: If these relocations are not permitted as suggested or requested, it will require major rerouting to continue access into Wonalancet.</p>	<p>FS Response 10.3: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 11.1: In regard to the SS relocation Projects, both reroutes are very important to the club. They are short but very critical to the overall trail system.</p>	<p>FS Response 11.1: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>
<p>Comment 11.2: The first re-route is necessary so they can remove the trail form private land that we are not wanted on.</p>	<p>FS Response 11.2: The Bennett Street relocation will move a portion of the trail off private property onto WMNF property.</p>
<p>Comment 11.3: The second one is to get around a very steep grade that is difficult to groom without winching the groomer uphill. It is also dangerous for snowmobiles, dog-sled and skiers because it ices up and is hard to keep</p>	<p>FS Response 11.3: See FS Response 8.3.</p>

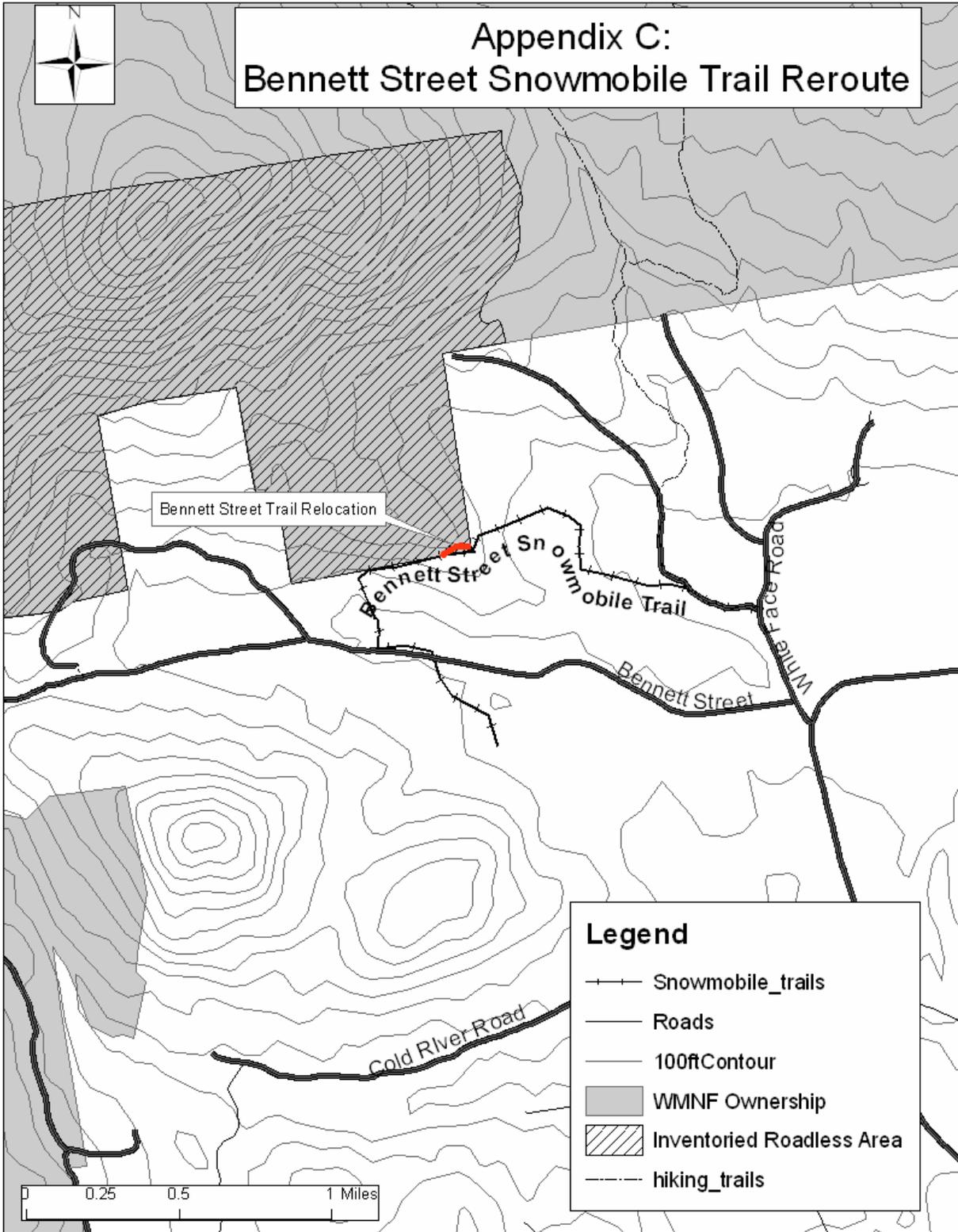
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<p>snow on.</p>	
<p>Comment 12.1: I write to support the trail relocation proposal for the Sandwich Snowmobile and winter Recreation trails.</p>	<p>FS Response 12.1: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project</p>
<p>Comment 12.2: Our winter trails are vital to our area and the off season economy. Maintaining them should be a priority. These low impact relocations may prove imperative to keeping our dwindling winter recreation trails.</p>	<p>FS Response 12.2: We recognize the importance of these trails as connectors to the trail systems in these two areas.</p>
<p>Comment 12.3: The proposed powerline relocation...is essential...current unsatisfactory. It can't be effectively groomed, and is virtually impassable, if not unsafe for skiers, snowmobiles and dogsledders.</p>	<p>FS Response 12.3: See FS Response 8.3.</p>
<p>Comment 12.4: Seeing the dogsled races have been impacted or cancelled in the last few years, this provides great opportunity to upgrade our system that...</p>	<p>FS Response 12.4: See FS Response 8.3.</p>
<p>Comment 12.5: These relocations are very minimal as to the Forest impact but are very great for the improvement of recreation in the area.</p>	<p>FS Response 12.5: Thank you for commenting. All comments were used in the refinement of this project, to consider alternatives to the project, and to consider environmental effects of the project.</p>

Appendix B: Comment Response List, Sandwich Snowmobile Trails

Commenter Number	Commenter Name	City/State	Date Received
1	Ronald G. Lawler	Center Sandwich, NH	04/26/2006
2	Rick Van de Poll	Center Sandwich, NH	04/28/2006
3	Gary Floyd	North Sandwich, NH	04/07/2006
4	Tom Linell	Hanover, NH	04/18/2006
5	Fred Lavigne	Center Sandwich, NH	04/27/2006
6	Earl Hansen	Holderness, NH	04/19/2006
7	Carol Jowdy	Center Sandwich, NH	04/24/2006
8	Chip Kimball	Center Sandwich, NH	04/13/2006
9	George Bates	Canton, MA	04/05/2006
10	Jonathan Peasley	Sandwich, NH	04/18/2006
11	David A. Bowles	Wonalancet, NH	04/18/2006
12	Andrew Cook	Ashland, NH	04/14/2006

Appendix C



Appendix D: Design Features

In addition to the standards and guidelines in the Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 2005a), the following site specific design features will be used in implementing this project. Design features identify how particular standards and guidelines are applied to the project proposal. They also may be features that are not directly associated with standards and guidelines, but will be implemented on the ground to address site-specific safety or resource needs. Design features for the Sandwich Improvement Projects include:

1. If heritage resources are found, project activities will be halted until the Forest archeologist or district paraprofessionals can evaluate the findings and make recommendations on how to proceed.
2. If rare plants are identified in the project area, the district biologist will evaluate the area and make recommendation on how to proceed.