



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture  
Forest  
Service

June 2009



# *Swift River Stream Gaging Project*

## *Scoping Report*

*Town of Albany  
Carroll County, New Hampshire*



*Big Eddy on the Swift River*

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**This document is available in large print.**

**Contact the White Mountain National Forest Supervisor's Office**

**1-603-528-8712**

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## What is Proposed?

The Saco District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is seeking public comments on a proposal by the US Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the NH Department of Environmental Services, to construct and maintain a semi-permanent unmanned steamflow gaging station on the Swift River at the location known as Big Eddy. The White Mountain National Forest proposes to authorize this action with a Special Use Permit to be issued to USGS. This report includes the purpose and need for the project, a description of the proposed action, the decision to be made, and information on how you can submit comments to the Forest Service.

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## Background

The U.S. Geological Survey has requested a special use permit to install a gaging station approximately 5 miles upstream from the mouth of the Swift River at the site known as Big Eddy. The proposal is part of a streamgaging station expansion program to add 15 new sites in New Hampshire. The USGS is the primary national agency for conducting streamflow gaging throughout the Nation.

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## Purpose and Need

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) asked USGS to install and operate 15 new long-term continuous-record stream-gaging stations throughout New Hampshire. A recent study by NHDES identified the Swift River to be a priority for one of these new gages. The Swift River was selected due to recent flooding in New Hampshire. Both agencies have identified a need to measure and record conditions in rural watersheds that may affect down stream flooding. Instrumentation will provide real-time data to be transmitted hourly and accessible on the web similar to that currently available for the Saco River at: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nh/nwis>

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## Proposed Action

The proposed action includes the installation of a stream gaging station (instrumentation enclosed in a locked aluminum box), including a 2x2 foot solar panel for power. A satellite antenna and air temperature thermistor and shield are also part of the gage system.

This gaging station and associated parts would be installed approximately 25 feet off the Kancamagus highway at the top of a small knoll. A conduit containing a transducer line and water temperature thermistor would be placed along (down) the stream bank into the Swift River, along with a vertical staff gage for outside reference readings. Finally, a bank operated cableway would need to be affixed to each stream bank in order to monitor high streamflows using acoustic Doppler current profilers. The cable is to be installed at a height of at least 10 feet above the estimated 100 year flood (stream) water level.

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## What Decision Will Be Made?

An interdisciplinary team analysis will evaluate site-specific issues, consider possible alternatives to the proposed action and analyze effects of the project. Based on this analysis, and on the comments received from the public, the deciding official will make the following decisions:

1. If the proposed action is consistent with Goals and Objectives of the White Mountain NF Land & Resource Management Plan.
2. Whether the proposed action would satisfactorily address the purpose and need identified for this project.
3. Whether the proposed action adequately addresses relevant issues raised by the public and the interdisciplinary team.
4. What level of environmental analysis is appropriate for this project? *In the absence of information identifying any extraordinary circumstances related to this proposal, the action is eligible for a USDA categorical exclusion from further NEPA documentation under 7 CFR 1b.3.*
5. If the project requires a Forest Plan amendment.

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## How Are You Involved In The Decision?

We are soliciting public comments to help identify potential issues or extraordinary circumstances associated with this permit request, to assess the need for alternatives to the proposed action, and to refine the analysis of effects. The results of our analysis will be documented and a decision is expected in August 2009. If you wish to receive further information on this analysis, please respond to this scoping letter or contact one of the following people:

Lauren Oswald -Assistant Ranger

Phone: (603) 447-5448 x109, or email: lmoswald@fs.fed.us

Terry Miller – District Ranger

Phone: (603) 603) 447-5448 x102, or email: twmiller@fs.fed.us

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## How Can You Comment?

In order for your comments to be considered in the next stage of analysis, they should be received by July 24. A legal notice announcing this same information is being published in the New Hampshire Union Leader and Conway Daily Sun. Be aware that your name, address and comments will become part of the public record and may be available for public review. Please address your comments to Terry Miller, District Ranger, in one of the following ways:

**Written comments:**

**By letter** – Saco Ranger District  
ATTN: Terry Miller  
33 Kancamagus Hwy, Conway, N.H. 03818

**By FAX** – (603) 447-8405, ATTN: Terry Miller

**By e-mail** – [comments-eastern-white-mountain-saco@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-white-mountain-saco@fs.fed.us) or  
[twmiller@fs.fed.us](mailto:twmiller@fs.fed.us)

**Oral Comments** - Oral comments must be received in person at the Saco District Office or via telephone (603) 447-5448 (TTY (603) 447-3121), during normal business hours (8:00am – 4:30pm).

In your comments, please include the following information:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- The project you are commenting on: Swift River Stream Gaging Project.
- Site specific comments about the project, along with supporting information you believe will help identify issues, develop alternatives, or predict environmental effects of this proposal.

Information about this proposal is also posted on our website at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white\\_mountain/projects/projects/index.php](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/projects/projects/index.php)

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



*Proposed location of instrumentation box with solar panel and antenna.*

Attachment: Special Use Permit Application – USGS (Swift River)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

