

 <p>Green Mountain National Forest</p>	 <p>Finger Lakes National Forest</p>	<p>Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests</p> <p><i>For Immediate Release</i></p> <p>Monday, January 24, 2011</p>
<p>News Release</p>		<p>Contact: Ethan Ready 802-747-6760</p>
<p><i>Caring for the Land and Serving People</i></p>		

GMNF TO EXTEND COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSED WIND PROJECT

RUTLAND, VT. The Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) recently released for public comment its Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the proposed Deerfield Wind Project in the Towns of Searsburg and Readsboro.

The Forest is evaluating several alternatives in detail, including the original proposal for a 17 turbine project. Two other action alternatives are also being considered. They include development of a seven turbine project on the ridge east of Route 8, and development of 15 turbine project that matches the Public Service Board approved configuration. The Forest Service can also take “no action” should it decide not to approve the project. The Forest Service must now conclude its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and decide whether or not to allow the project to be built on the Green Mountain National Forest.

GMNF officials released the SDEIS and began taking “formal” public comment on Monday, December 27, 2010. The NEPA process requires that the Forest Service allow the public at least 45 days to review and comment on the proposed alternatives. Initially the Forest Service had intended to close the public comment period after 54 days on Friday, February 18, 2011, allowing extra time for the holidays. Due to limited functionality of the Forest Service’s web site throughout the past week, Colleen Madrid, Forest Supervisor for the GMNF has decided to extend the public comment period for two additional weeks, now ending on Friday, March 4, 2011. In an effort to make sure that the public has had ample opportunity to review and comment on the project, the Forest Service has created another web link for the public to view project information.

New Web Link:

http://data.ecosystem-management.org/nepaweb/nepa_content.php?project=7838

GMFL Web Link:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/hm/greenmountain/links/projects/nepa_project.html?project=7838

In addition, the Green Mountain National Forest has scheduled two “open house” meetings where the public will have an opportunity to view project maps and visual simulations. At the meetings people will be able to pick up copies of the SDEIS, ask questions and submit their comments. The first meeting was held on Thursday, January 20th in Rutland. The second meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 25th from 6:00 – 8:00 PM at the Readsboro Central School (301 Phelps Lane) in Readsboro, VT.

####