

# Green In Deed

**2009 Sustainability Report**  
**Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests**  
October 2009



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## Executive Summary

Former Forest Service Chief Gail Kimbell challenged the Forest Service during her tenure to focus on three crucial topics in executing the agency's mission. With the task of "sustaining the health, productivity and diversity of the nation's forests and grasslands," Chief Kimbell called upon her Forest Service colleagues to address climate change, to connect children – the upcoming generations- more closely to nature, and to better safeguard the nation's water resources. This direction from the Chief hewed to the guidance issued in a 2007 Presidential Executive Order (13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*) as well as the *Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007* and earlier directives. President Obama supplemented these orders with his *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance* Executive Order issued on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Sustainability's fundamental underlying concepts are that it is intergenerational in nature, it connects actions to the land, and it integrates the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental concerns. By this understanding, the incorporation of sustainable operations is the appropriate tool with which the Forest Service can successfully address former Chief Kimbell's focus areas. Sustainable operations ensure the preservation of resources (such as clean water), they engage communities in partnership and educational endeavors (connecting children to nature), and they address issues such as greenhouse gas emissions and a broader consumption ethic (climate change). Indeed, sustainability is a coupling of the traditional resource conservation ethic with a fresh, conscientious consumption ethic "to meet the needs of present and future generations."

This report outlines the first three years of baseline data collection on the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest. It summarizes general consumption information from daily operations and highlights individual and Forest conservation efforts. Accomplishments outlined here detail actions and thought processes, with a focus on work at the grass-roots level. A separate carbon footprint report at the conclusion of the fiscal year will translate the numbers and render more information for understanding actual impacts on the environment. There are other programs on the Forest that connect to the sustainability theme. Those programs (Stewardship Contracting, Environmental Management Systems, Procurement, Green Design of a new LEED-certified Supervisor's Office) track their work and progress separately. Information presented here on those program areas will be highlights rather than in-depth listings.

This sustainability report for fiscal year 2009 is intended for use by Forest Service associates as well as the general public. It is intended to be readable and informative while presenting a "current condition" snapshot of Forest Service consumption during routine operations. This snapshot will give future planners a baseline and a means for comparison; it will likewise give the public a means to measure progress or lack thereof. Directives, orders, and strategies lay out a "desired future condition" for Forest Service operations; periodic reports such as this will track progress toward those goals.

## Introduction

This report is the Sustainability Team's initial attempt to capture data about activities on the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forest (GMFL NF). It contributes to the development of a long-term Sustainability Strategy which will be introduced in fiscal year 2010. The report follows the format outlined in the *2008 Moving Forward National Sustainability Strategy*, identifying six focal areas, up from the original five designated in 2006. The six focal areas break down and categorize Forest Service consumption and operations; they present valid baselines for comparison and allow us to set goals for upcoming years. These concrete figures also enable us to measure our performance, our mission accomplishment. This report completes an initial preliminary report for the fiscal year and includes data for the full twelve month period ending September 30<sup>th</sup>.

There is an inherent challenge to the task of assembling data and then preparing it for presentation, interpretation, and manipulation. All of this requires time and energy; this in an organization that is already operating at full throttle with tight resources and a steady stream of new issues. The Sustainability Team sought to fulfill its reporting tasks in a manner that created no additional work for Forest Service associates. Only a new acronym was created – WCW – “without creating work.” Truly, data and the conclusions that follow are only as valid as the sources from which they arise. Follow-up and follow-through on initiatives and sustainability programs do require effort (i.e. work), and the team recognizes that these aspects of the Sustainability program – the follow-up and the follow-through - are the most difficult to maintain. The team attempted to keep actions and reporting methods as simple as possible, and for the most part, all of the accomplishments in this report were achieved with minimal financial impact on Forest budgets. Finally, the report has attempted to identify gaps or shortcomings in data, and has pointed out figures that are approximate or incomplete.

The Sustainability Team sought not to burden those doing the grass-roots work, but rather to empower them, by replicating good ideas and practices while also proofing programs or reporting procedures before sending them “to the field.” This effort has perhaps contributed to an efficient reporting system, which nonetheless should be bolstered and improved in coming years. The approach also fits in well with the notion of field-based leadership. At some point, however, it is fair to note that grass-roots actions led by on-site champions can only achieve so much; moving the program to the next level will require a commitment of funding at some future critical point.

The year 2009 was a transitional year for the Sustainability Team. While the team has always focused on collecting useful data and supporting local efforts, 2009 brought about several opportunities to report on the data and to highlight actions and accomplishments. The team outlined the successes of the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest in a presentation at the National Sustainability Summit and created table displays for use at internal Forest events. As 2009 came to a close, the team is preparing to roll out a multi-year Sustainability Strategy, a carbon footprint analysis, and a plan to again video-host the Forest Service Sustainability Summit with an enhanced program and broader partner participation.

Finally, the Sustainability Team worked to build on existing relationships. The spirit of cooperation with local organizations, state agencies, fellow federal agencies, and local schools and academic institutions is vital to our mission. These partnerships allow all those involved to learn and grow in continuous fashion while testing new ideas, mentoring one another, and sharing expertise. Relationships center on the internal and the external; the team works continuously to ensure that all Forest associates fully understand the Chief's intent and the President's direction. Additionally, Forest associates work with those outside the agency to fulfill the Forest Service role in communities and to deliver on the long-term conservation vision.

### **Background Information**

Fiscal year 2009 marked the first year of formal existence for the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest Sustainability Team. The team had served during the prior two years as an ad-hoc group of pro-active and forward-thinking associates, but it achieved official recognition in 2009 with a charter, a program of work, and a designated membership. 2009 also marked the formation of a Climate Change team on the Forest; the two subjects are clearly connected, vitally important to our mission of "sustaining health, diversity, and productivity", and therefore significant to our long-term vision and strategy.

The Sustainability Team set about its work with the intention of making sustainability a core component of everything that takes place on the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest, similar in that respect to safety. Sustainability is not an afterthought, nor is it a checklist appendix. With the goal of changing mindsets and empowering Forest Service associates to think and plan with sustainability concepts, the theme would be woven into daily operations, project implementation efforts, and employee interactions within the greater community.

The team is guided by both a set of mandates and policies set forth by the federal government, as well as by a commitment to execute actions on the ground that serve and educate the public while contributing to the "greatest good." Team "direction" therefore comes from two directions – from within the federal government and from the public that the agency serves. This is the connection to place – fostering a mutual sense of stewardship with neighboring communities and local organizations to care for the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest and its resources.

## Accomplishments

The team opened the year by video-hosting a National Sustainability Summit delivered by the United States Forest Service. The purpose of the summit was to share successes and to further the sustainability message while demonstrating that remote participation was a viable option in our efforts to interact. The 76 participants at the Summit were joined by approximately 380 colleagues nationally using reliable technology to participate without the necessity of travel. The Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forests hosted the summit at four sites and assembled a total of 26 participants during the two days. Two partner organizations joined us for a number of sessions. The goal with the upcoming summit (October, 2009) will be to build on the successes while inviting additional partner organizations.

In keeping with the outline established by the Forest Service in its *Moving Forward* strategy of 2008, this report details accomplishments in six program areas. When considered *in toto*, the accomplishments or shortcomings in these areas present a useful summary of Forest operations from a sustainability perspective.

### Energy

A vision outlined in the *Moving Forward* strategy is for the Forests to achieve net-zero energy status, whereby installations on our facilities and lands generate as much renewable energy as we then consume. Net-zero energy status is targeted to be in place by 2015. The Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests have pursued consumption reductions at all district offices and at the Mt. Tabor residential facility. The focus has been to reduce consumption of electricity and propane. The table below illustrates the year-to-year comparison for electrical consumption, with all facilities achieving a reduction in 2009 except the Supervisor's Office.

**Table 1. Annual Electricity Consumption, GMFL Facilities**

Facility	2009 KWH	2008 KWH	2007 KWH
Supervisor's Office	225,425	213,975	218,379
Manchester Office	47,782	54,953	64,865
Middlebury Office	14,806	15,978	17,908
Rochester Office	50,876	52,954	57,959
Hector Office	16,355	28,894	20,564
Mt. Tabor	13,519	14,135	Incomplete data

Note: Figures are for the 12 month periods 1 OCT – 30 SEP based on billing statements from the electric utility. S.O. consumption was 235,382 KWH in 2006.

Only three years ago, GMFL offices had no idea what their consumption was, for any commodity. Bills were paid remotely, and nothing was questioned. With local review of utility bills, Forest associates are now first of all inspired to see the numbers on the charts move (downward), and secondly are empowered to identify problem areas as they unfold. This local “monitoring” of consumption allowed the sustainability team to notice an extremely large uptick in electricity consumption on the Finger Lakes District in 2008. Forest Service associates did an inspection of their facility and took follow-up actions to right the problem in a timely manner.

The second energy commodity that the team tracks for GMFL facilities is the fuel used for heating. In all cases except the Middlebury office, the fuel type is propane. Middlebury uses fuel oil and kerosene to heat the two buildings on site.

**Table 2. Propane Consumption in Gallons, GMFL Facilities**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
Supervisor's Office	9873	10188	10670
Manchester Office	2350	1275	1644
Middlebury Kerosene	363	477	547
Middlebury Fuel Oil	503	167	317
Rochester Office	2944	2784	2754
Hector Office	1433	990	1329
Mt. Tabor Facility	3396	2920	3424

Note: Figures are for the 12 month periods 1 OCT – 30 SEP based on billing statements from the utility.

The table shows that consumption of propane was up for most facilities in 2009. The greatest difficulty in making comparisons with propane lies with the fact that deliveries are much more intermittent versus the regular electrical readings. With that fact and the impact of weather, propane consumption is best reviewed over longer timeframes. Regardless of external factors beyond local control, the numbers above for the Mt. Tabor Facility are impressive. Consider that the number of guests was steady at 24, versus 16 in previous years. Clearly, energy use per person, a measure of intensity, has declined. Again, the important consideration is that the offices now possess useful baseline data.

In addition to conserving energy through actions and raised awareness, the GMFL NF took steps to upgrade two facilities, the Manchester District office and the Rochester District office. The Manchester facility was audited in 2008 with serious deficiencies noted in the roofing and overall insulation. The upgrades in Manchester are scheduled to begin prior to this upcoming winter. Meanwhile, an Efficiency Vermont audit in Rochester revealed several opportunities for facility improvement. Most of the effort centers on replacement of inefficient lighting; the sixteen exit signs alone, when upgraded to LED bulbs at one-sixth the wattage, will save 1.4 tons of carbon emissions annually. This improvement, and the purchasing necessary to effect it, is scheduled to take place in the next couple months. Fluorescent bulbs are another piece of the efficiency drive; bulbs are scheduled for replacement with high performance T8 models and the ballasts will be replaced as well. The potential reduction in energy usage from the fluorescent bulbs is between 20 and 40 percent.

Associates in the Supervisor's Office worked to conserve electricity through individual actions such as reducing the number of overhead lights used in day-to-day activity. The office also participates in the Cow Power program, at an additional cost to the Forest of \$2200 over a twelve month period. The Supervisor's Office is a leased facility, with limitations as to what modifications and improvements are possible; the Cow Power program offers an opportunity to support local working landscapes while extracting

useful energy from methane gas. The Cow Power process also results in cleaner water and a by-product used as bedding material for the farm animals. (See Attachment A) After a review of the electrical consumption data for 2009, Sustainability Team members voted by email to add the Middlebury District administrative office to the Cow Power program. With demonstrated reductions in consumption at Middlebury, this action represents a vote of confidence in renewable energy sources and a commitment by the Forest Service to hold true to its conservation commitment.

Middlebury District and Finger Lakes District associates instituted a test program in July by replacing older surge protector strips with new “smart strips.” These devices eliminate the “vampire” draw on electricity when the primary item, the computer, is shut down. The entire action is automatic, with no thought process involved, and should generate savings of around 5%. Feedback is positive from both offices; if the effort produces results, more smart strips will be phased in over time in additional offices.

One final energy accomplishment salutes the efforts of those who maintain Forest facilities. The Mt. Tabor facility hosted more guests this year than in 2008 but the total consumption of electricity was much reduced. This came about through emphasis and awareness at the site (read that as positive and constructive supervision), and it also reflects positively on the guests in their willingness to take responsibility and make a difference. Forest engineers have also worked tirelessly to ensure that mechanical systems function at optimal efficiency; no small challenge considering the range of different systems.

#### *Water*

Water consumption is the one area where we have made essentially no progress in either tracking consumption or reducing it. Water consumption for all of our offices traces to one primary use – restrooms. Little water is expended on landscaping, cooking, or shower facilities. The one exception to this generality is the Mt. Tabor Residential Facility, where seasonal crews do make use of the showers and kitchen areas on a regular basis. The approach regarding water consumption will be to gather baseline data for the Mt. Tabor facility in 2009, and then to continue that monitoring into FY2010 with an emphasis on educational signage and wise use. The seasonal crews at Mt. Tabor have shown admirable passion for conserving resources and policing their own actions, so there is clearly an open opportunity there.

The second site with a strong potential fit for conservation awareness is the Hapgood campground on the Manchester District. There is baseline data on hand with the state, but with dis-functional meters this year, the usage numbers for FY2009 will be difficult to interpret. Leaks in the system will also challenge the attempt to trace savings to conscious conservation. The intent will be to collect water consumption data as soon as possible and then look for places to make savings in subsequent summers. With bath houses and pumps in the campground, there are logical places for increasing awareness through conservation messages. Funding has been requested in the FY2010 budget to supplement the awareness signage on site.

### *Fleet and Transportation*

Associates on the Forest completed EMS (Environmental Management System) training at the outset of the fiscal year. Vehicle sign-out boards now make note of vehicle mileage and associates make efforts to carpool to events. The best metric in the Fleet and Transportation category is fuel consumption report generated at the end of the fiscal year. There is currently no tracking in place to determine the savings from video-conferencing, but remote participation has certainly impacted travel requirements in a positive manner. The Sustainability Team gave practical input to Mark Twery at the USDA Northern Research Station on crafting a tool for carbon-footprinting national forests. The savings generated by video-conferencing was one of the items identified for potential tracking.

### *Waste Prevention / Recycling*

All Forest facilities pursue an aggressive recycling program. Offices have taken the initiative to tailor their programs to fit the setting. Gardens on the property or native seed nurseries are nourished with compost from the facility. The recycling efforts target Forest Service associates and visitors as well.

One of the goals in the recycling program is to quantify the overall recycling effort. The sustainability team verified a rough number for battery recycling at approximately 200 pounds per year total for all offices. It is perhaps useful to know that only ten percent of the batteries collected were “rechargeables.” The GMFL enrolled this year in a USDA program with the Rechargeable Batteries Recycling Corporation to collect old cell-phones and rechargeable batteries; permission was obtained to extend that effort to partner organizations.

In terms of paper recycling, the district offices reported an estimated weekly quantity picked up for recycling. The unit of measure was the 64 gallon barrel, and based on district feedback, the total amount of paper recycled on the Forests is approximately 200 gallons per week (this figure is an estimate, since feedback was incomplete). This translates into over 10,000 gallons of paper waste recycled annually on the Forest, a figure which impacts not just trees, but water, processing materials, and transportation resources as well. All offices separate out and recycle cardboard.

### *Green Purchasing*

Increased consideration of sustainability in purchasing choices is the greatest accomplishment for green purchasing. There are a great number of success stories, whereby Forest associates support local businesses, choose products without harmful toxins, and search out opportunities to use recycled materials. The Old Job shelter and the Lost Pond shelter, constructed this summer, were both built with local materials, everything from the oak timber pegs to the trees harvested on-site. Non-toxic wood preservatives will ensure that the structures last many years. In discussions on the purchase of new copier machines and even the replacement of two aging snowmobiles, sustainability was included in the conversation. A central printer that enables the office to phase out four or five desktop printers (different models) demonstrates a move in the right direction. Discussions on the snowmobile purchase focused on safety, capability,

mileage, and noise levels. All of these considerations figure into the overall sustainable operations theme.

Again looking to the baseline data issue, Forest offices quantified the purchase of copier paper during 2007 and 2008. With a greater emphasis on electronic documentation and communication, total quantities of paper purchased should conceivably decline versus past years and into upcoming years. For baseline measurements, the Supervisor's Office alone consumed 84 boxes (10 reams per box) of copier paper in 2007 and 89 boxes in 2008. The figures for 2009 came in at 75 boxes, a significant reduction in light of the fact that fewer print jobs were outsourced as well.

A final note on sustainable purchasing concerns the presence of "green language" in Forest contracts, with a switch to green cleaning supplies as a prime example. The procurement office inserted a requirement in janitorial contracts for contractors to use non-toxic or less-toxic cleaning agents in Forest facilities. In fact, the contracts for all of the administrative offices now allow the Forest Service to provide the cleaning materials for the building. Other types of contracts are also eligible for green awareness; twenty contracts (valued at over \$260,000) were issued this year, to this point, with language addressing sustainability. The thirteen contracts that did not contain the green language were frequently emergency contracts or situations where there was no logical fit.

#### *Sustainable Leadership*

Leadership in the realm of sustainability is probably the most difficult of the six focal areas to quantify and measure. It is clear when an organization demonstrates leadership, but this does not always come about via concrete, defined actions. It is rather an openness to new mindsets and ways of doing business; it is dedicated involvement and community engagement. Leadership is partnering and learning, mentoring and encouraging, exploring new ground and taking some risks. Taking the lead on any emerging issue has never been traditionally simple or easy, but the opportunity exists for the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest to role-model stewardship on a large scale without losing the vital sense of place that gives meaning to the work.

Society views leadership as action more than spoken or written words, and with that in mind, GMFL associates intend to demonstrate sustainability every day in work with partners, in the sharing of lessons learned, and by venturing into new territory. The Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest will seek improvement within the organization, and we will actively participate in the conversations on sustainable citizenship.

How is this measured in terms of accomplishments? Again, by actions. The sustainability team on the GMFL video-hosted a national level conference in FY 2009; the team will do the same again in October, 2010, adding a local tour and educational pieces to the program. The team has reached out to potential partners throughout 2009 and will continue to build those relationships. Partnerships are not necessarily formal in nature; they are simply the cumulative effect of organizations, agencies, and individuals synergizing to bring about positive change. To encourage growth and professional

development, the sustainability team has initiated a Forest library with the purchase of several books and has also created the framework for an awards program to recognize important contributions. The team has contacted educational institutions in an effort to join together our energies in the creation of sustainable communities. Community involvement finds forest associates participating in charitable community events such as the Wood Warms program (state of Vermont and United Way) and the Relay for Life (American Cancer Society). Along the lines of “not everything that matters gets counted,” the team of participants in the Relay for Life brought suggestions to the planning committee for the event to institute a recycling effort. With over 1100 participants in the Relay, a move toward recycling is truly significant, without even considering the ripple effects that follow.



**Forest Service colleagues pitch in with state employees and the United Way to stack over 80 cords of firewood for the local Wood Warms program.**

Leadership is modeled by organizations in their management practices and large-scale operations as well as by the individuals who make up the team. The Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest is committed to Green Design principles as evidenced by the preparation and thought going into construction of a new Supervisor’s Office in Mendon, Vermont.

Biomass Energy Resource Center of Montpelier is assessing the wood sources and biomass equipment options that would be appropriate for the new development. Logs, chips and pellet systems are being considered. The selected system will be based on costs, maintenance and the wood products market. Earthbound Services, Inc of

Burlington, VT evaluated a small-scale hydroelectric generator utilizing the small stream that flows through the Mendon site. A small generator was found to have minimal impact to the resource, provide 2000 kwh per year or about 3-4% of the building electrical loads. Currently, EAPC Wind Energy Services, LLC of Norwich, VT is evaluating the wind energy production and costs on the site. The wind power density of this site is considered a Class 1 or marginal wind energy resources. A small to medium sized tower is expected to generate 13000 kwh or 14% of the anticipated electrical energy load for the new facility. Forest planners are evaluating various tower sizes and configurations, with an eye on both the financial costs and the potential as an educational component. Indeed, all of these renewable energy options for the facility will have value simply in the demonstration of the technology and through interpretation opportunities with visitors.

At the individual level, Forest associates have taken the initiative to use alternative transportation where possible. The mass transit subsidy program now supports bus ridership for six associates; others bicycle or walk to work regularly. In 2008, the total number of gallons of fuel saved by this individual focus on greener commuting was 475 gallons. This year the numbers are just as strong. Reporting appears to be more consistent, but is clearly one of the biggest challenges in gathering data. Forest associates have also demonstrated greater awareness of carpooling opportunities, video-conference options, and office lighting needs.

In May, Forest associates participated in Vermont's Way to Go Week, using alternative transportation options for commuting to work.  
Total savings: **296** miles NOT driven.

Throughout 2009, Forest associates utilized alternative transportation, work-at-home options, and carpooling to save **345** gallons of commuting gas.

## Discussion

Accomplishments deserve to be recognized and celebrated, but they also call upon organizations to recognize areas where yet more can be done. That is the forward-looking aspect of this report. Highlighting what the GMFL NF has done allows for a dedication to furthering the mission and spreading the message with even greater energy. This constant push forward must occur both within the organization and beyond the boundaries of the United States Forest Service.

Regarding internal efficiency and progressive decision-making, an important tool for associates on the GMFL NF is the after-action review. Any operation or project can reveal positives and negatives in the planning arena if the effort is objectively analyzed in timely fashion. A review of the operation must actually fit in to the very plan it is destined to review; otherwise it tends to fall by the wayside in the traditional flurry of normal activity. This is a true weakness in GMFL NF operations, not just in terms of sustainability. Great effort has gone into the emphasis on safety throughout the Forest

Service; command emphasis over the years and a steady patience in changing mindsets has focused serious attention on near-misses versus actual accidents. Near misses, once rarely reported, now get deeper review for potential lessons than previously; this is an achievement in the world of safety. The same dedication must apply in terms of sustainability. Associates must search out shortcomings, show no fear in reporting them, and work hard to improve upon them. Frequently, the fixes have already been developed elsewhere; thus the importance of open-mic forums and information exchanges.

Time for professional development on topics such as climate change, green operations, and sustainability is critical to formation of a professional, knowledgeable workforce. In internal discussions and in conversations with community members, it is quite clear that confusion exists regarding sustainability and green operations. It is useful to prepare displays and occasional presentations, but Forest Service associates stand to benefit by taking part in conversations occurring beyond the immediate boundaries of the Forest. This year marked the opening of a sustainability library for use by all Forest associates. This resource and the opportunity to attend local events, workshops and seminars can expose Forest associates to the broader topics and issues vital to our surrounding communities.

The Forest Sustainability Team has also reached out to neighboring USDA agencies within the state of Vermont to share information and to build upon strong ideas. Meeting notes and messages are shared with colleagues on the White Mountain National Forest as well as State and Private Forestry in Durham, NH. A goal for the upcoming year will be to more comprehensively include smaller in-state offices in both Vermont and the Finger Lakes area. Visits with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Rural Development Office have been warmly received and there is room for deepening these relationships. The team has started a list of partners which may evolve or tie in to a larger web listserv next year.

The snowmobile purchase for the northern districts on the Green Mountain National Forest brings to light a noteworthy tug between the concepts of sustainability and safety. Frequently, sustainability adds to the overall health and safety features in a work setting. Fewer toxins, reduced emissions, and greater awareness are all positives that contribute to a safer workplace. Safety and sustainability can pull in opposite directions, however, as illustrated by the reliance on critical machinery to fulfill missions. It is clearly unsafe to send Forest associates alone into areas with unpredictable weather conditions. Communications, no matter what the past performance record is, can also fail at critical junctures. With safety foremost in mind, the Forest elected to purchase two replacement snowmobiles, rather than a single machine, in preparation for missions that might involve dangerous conditions. Usage histories for the two machines may have demonstrated that keeping both on hand was unnecessary, but again the broader picture directed otherwise, and there were no real alternatives as far as partnering on ownership, etc. The challenge for the Forest will be to keep operators certified so that the machines can be maintained in prime condition.

## **Next Steps**

The baseline is near complete; data collected over the past three years has delivered useful information, and the process for collecting that data is efficient and unobtrusive. Now, with a Sustainability Strategy for FY2010 and beyond, the Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest needs to move on the knowns and push toward the “desired future conditions.”

There is room for further action on the sustainability front at all levels. Recognizing that it is individuals that make the difference, the GMFL NF will commit its collective energy to the support of local sustainability champions and grass-roots efforts.

The Sustainability Team will also reach out to sister agencies and offices to include them in conversations and problem-solving. Opportunities to mentor or support community groups will be welcomed and encouraged.

Efforts to reduce consumption will continue; in addition to reductions, Forest associates will look to consume more wisely. In terms of energy specifically, we need to think big and look to improve our situation with regard to renewable energy. With the smaller-scale improvements and upgrades completed, structures like those on the Rochester and Hector districts are prime candidates for a study on solar power feasibility. Forest associates committed themselves to the pursuit of more savings in electricity as a pre-condition for joining the Cow Power program. The Sustainability Team identified the need to review Forest participation annually; with the numbers from 2009 finalized, the Middlebury facility was added to the program to kick off the 2010 fiscal year.

Finally, in moving Forest operations toward ever greater sustainability, Forest Service associates will look to partner organizations to join in that effort. Communities will benefit from such a joint approach, details of which are clearly enunciated in memoranda such as the Sustainable Slopes SMU, signed in 2002 and extended in 2007.

The opportunity to work with partners in visible settings allows the Forest Service to demonstrate its commitment to achieving the goals laid out in the presidential executive orders of 2007 and 2009. Fulfillment of these goals will lead to stronger, more resilient communities, and will contribute to the development of upcoming generations and their sense of resource stewardship.



**Hapgood pond fishing derby, connecting kids to nature**

**Acknowledgments:**

The Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest Sustainability Team would like to thank all those Forest associates who have contributed in ways great and small to the voicing of the sustainability message. Thank you to all partners and friends of the forests as well. The actions you take today are the differences we all see tomorrow. There is yet much to do; know that your work makes a difference and is appreciated.

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