

 <p>Green Mountain National Forest</p>	 <p>Finger Lakes National Forest</p>	<p>Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests</p> <p><b><i>For Immediate Release</i></b></p> <p>Thursday, September 22, 2011</p>
<p><b>News Release</b></p>		<p><b>Contact: Ethan Ready 802-747-6760</b></p>
<p><i>Caring for the Land and Serving People</i></p>		

## GMNF OPEN – FOLIAGE FESTIVAL PLANNED

**RUTLAND, VT.** Forest Service officials announced last Friday that the 400,000 acre Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) had been re-opened except for specific areas that remain posted closed. The GMNF had been officially closed to the public on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> due to extensive damage from Hurricane Irene.

With the fall foliage season fast approaching the Forest Service announced today that several environmental and conservation groups will be sponsoring a foliage festival on Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1:00 – 5:00 PM at Sugarbush Resort (102 Forest Drive) in Warren, Vermont. The event will mark the centennial of the Weeks Act, a landmark environmental law that led to the creation of nearly 20 million acres of national forest system lands in the eastern United States. The free, rain or shine event will feature: live music by the Starline Rhythm Boys; foliage tours (by chairlift); environmental and conservation exhibits; a recognition ceremony; local premiere of “Legacy of the Weeks Act” film; nature tours; a discussion about heritage resources on the Forest; and other kid-friendly outdoor activities. Retail food and beverages will be available.

“This is a special time for our residents, our visitors, our forests and those of us that work to manage our public lands,” said Colleen Madrid, Forest Supervisor for the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests. The GMNF is one of the more heavily recreated national forests in the nation, serving between 3 and 4 million visitors per year. Some recreation activities on the Forest include: hunting, fishing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, hiking, camping, mountain biking, alpine and cross-country skiing. Like many tourist destinations, the GMNF is a major contributor to local economies and is noted for having some of the nation’s most brilliant view-sheds that often glow with shades of red, pink, and orange in early October. Vermonters and visitors are encouraged to contact the Forest Service with specific questions or for help in identifying scenic hot spots. Traveling to view the vibrant fall colors has been a life-long tradition for many people in and around the Green Mountain State.

Forest officials expect that there will be an influx of local and visitor traffic in the coming weeks; motorists are encouraged to be mindful of where they park and to use extra caution when they are driving and recreating on the Forest. For additional information on GMNF closures, please visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/greenmountain>

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