Bristol Plan Revision Meeting January 20, 2004: Management Areas

Questions

1.What is working, or not working, with the existing Management Areas (MAs) in the current Forest Plan?
2.What changes would you like to see in management area descriptions?
3.What uses are compatible, or incompatible, with the current Management Areas and the possible new Management Areas?
4.Do you have any suggestions to improve any of the Management Areas presented tonight?

Public Comments

1.What is working, or not working, with the existing Management Areas (MAs) in the current Forest Plan?

More flexibility to proactively manage the changing needs of citizens recreation wants
More recreation and less conservation/protection focus
The current definition of Management Areas does not allow the Forest to be managed in a way that allows for changing needs of the public-it has been too easy for GMNF to lock up large chunks of land that have useable attributes, like trail beds, for forest users
It is not possible with the 1987 plan to get access to over-classified (and thus protected) areas…even when the area's characteristics would sustain an activity
What has not worked is the inclusion of newer forms of recreation like ATVs and mountain bikes, or sled dogs in a timely fashion to eliminate the need to break laws to recreate.
Wildlife habitat is declining-problem with implementation of management
MAs are fiction because of lawsuits-they don't allow us to implement the MAs
Lack of education-example, wildlife
Working: partnerships, example Moosalamoo
Why no wildlife management units?

2.What changes would you like to see in management area descriptions?

Need more specifics, trails, bridges-add details without tying hands

3.What uses are compatible, or incompatible, with the current Management Areas and the possible new Management Areas?

Do not allow ATVs and snowmobiles in Backcountry motorized!! These are not compatible with the other goals you spell out in the desired future conditions. Animals that require extensive areas of remote, undisturbed forest will not do well with snowmobiles and ATVs.
Motorized recreation in other than winter months can and should have been accommodated in the last Forest Plan. The new Plan must accommodate a system of motorized trails that work with the state trail system-seamlessly integrated, not stand alone

Additional snowmobile trails should be provided-there are 900 miles of hiking trails and only 400 miles of snowmobile trails. Many people enjoy this activity and would balance winter use with summer use.
Catamount Trail Association (CTA) feels trails are not compatible with Wilderness (due to bridges, etc)
CTA may be OK with 6.1 or 6.2-depends on details
Motorized recreation can be compatible with best management techniques-if consolidated or not
Compatibility occurs at two levels: 1) Could it be in this MA (decision occurs in Plan Revision), 2) Trail designation-deciding where activities take place (does not happen during Plan revision)
User groups need to make themselves compatible with each other
Forest Service needs to look at shared trail uses

4.Do you have any suggestions to improve any of the Management Areas presented tonight?

The US Forest Service and the VT Fish and Wildlife need to coordinate their management plans in a more unified objective for deer yard management-with a better understanding of each other's objectives and goals to determine the best type of management to accommodate each other's deer yard management plans
Severely limit ATV and snowmobile use on General Forest MAs-but do allow a few…they are loud, obnoxious, smelly and not compatible with low-impact recreation and wildlife needs
What has been found of Native American artifacts at alpine and subalpine areas?
Restore deer yards and work with VT Fish and Wildlife on the project-use it as a state-wide model to improve and restore other deer yards.
On VT 125-would like to see snowmobile access through Wilderness (from trail that crosses 125 towards Goshen Dam). Also, would like a trail that goes east to Texas Falls, and another trail from the Natural Turnpike (Middlebury to Lincoln-continue it to Starksboro to connect Mt Ames Snowmobile Trail).
Include motorized recreation, using existing infrastructure as the base line-not the statistical enumeration of "area"…an old road bed that has recreational value should be used, even if it bisects a "highly" managed area such as Wilderness

General Forest Area: concern-don't see soil quality or water quality as emphases-this was all we could agree on at one point in the public meetings
General Forest Area: Consider non-commercial vegetation work (ex. girdling) in deer areas-can do some god and keep heavy equipment out of deer yards
General Forest Area: Concern with use of statistics and models to determine MA allocation-desire to get field data to determine them
General Forest Area: Interest in seeing FS work more aggressively with VT Fish and Wildlife deer bios on deer yard management
General Forest Area: Will make lives easier as a consolidated MA
General Forest Area: Allows for flexibility
Remote backcountry: clarify administrative uses
Remote backcountry: are sled dogs allowed or not? Make it clear
Remote backcountry: seems limiting-do we have much "backcountry" really-seems an inappropriate term in New England
Remote backcountry: clarify "remote"
Remote backcountry: description/definition is very vague
Remote backcountry: "remote" is used loosely

Remote backcountry: possible change-call it "Backcountry" not "remote backcountry" or call it "wildlands"-fits Vermont better
Remote backcountry: Need word more appropriate for Vermont size and scale
Backcountry motorized: incompatible use: high road standard conflicts with trail hardening standards for motorized trail uses-need to clarify differences between road and trail standards under compatible/incompatible uses
Backcountry motorized: Need a more consistent way of dealing with trail bridges-language between 6.1 and 6.2-are they different? If so, how? Can use motorized and mechanized to build them in either MA-need to clarify administrative uses
Backcountry motorized: Emphasis: remote needing animals-which animals?
Backcountry motorized: Use term "wildland motorized" instead
Backcountry motorized: backcountry wording concern-areas has long travel route heritage-don't use this wording in New England
Backcountry motorized: What is "backcountry" definition?
Backcountry motorized: Concern with administrative use of motorized/mechanized-but not allowed for public-FS should be limited to same uses that the public has
Alpine/subalpine: clarify cultural use of area for Native Americans
9.2: Opportunity for public comment in Option 1-clarify this
9.2: concern with how we inventory private lands-should avoid using statistical techniques to estimate what is there
9.2: Both options limited by a broad brush
9.2: Option 2: using stats and not on-the-ground surveys is a concern
9.2: Concern: stretched thin mapping and managing what we have-harder to do this with all lands within the proclamation boundary…also, public would not be happy if you surveyed their lands (or designated into a potential MA)
9.2: Option 1 preferred because of the public comment period
9.2: Prefer Option 2-using GIS mapping/modeling is scientific-fact based

9.2: if you found GIS modeling gave incorrect MA designation under option 2-could you later change it when you knew more? Yes-Plan Amendment
9.2: Option 3: no designation until surveys (like existing 9.2 lands but within 2 years)-looser until designation, let it be productive
"B" Lands: delete them!
Escarpment/alpine areas: is this strictly non-commercial timber treatments? Primarily-yes.