

Hancock Local Planning Group Meeting Notes 3-20-03

Goals Public Comments Received at the Meeting

1. Maintain productivity of soils.
2. Restore Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut River watershed.
More of an objective than a goal
Broader than the forest...rewrite to say "contribute to the restoration..."
3. Enhance and maintain riparian and aquatic habitats.
Qualify by adding "pursuant to policies in the 1987 Forest Plan"
4. Maintain and protect wetland areas.
Objective: try using beaver dam bypass manifold system (ex. to protect road culverts from damming by beavers-instead of removing dams and beavers)
5. Maintain adequate quality, amount, and distribution of habitats to produce viable and sustainable populations of plants and animals.
Change to "populations of native species of plants and animals..."
6. Maintain a full range of ecological processes and systems that naturally occur on the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF).
Add: "Maintain unmanaged areas to serve as baseline conditions for study of natural processes"
Include protection from invasive species somewhere in this goal.
7. Increase use of prescribed fire to maintain openings on the GMNF for wildlife and human uses.
More of a tool-isn't the goal more to maintain openings for human and wildlife use-still a valid tool but need to focus on goal
Use timber management instead of prescribed fire to create and maintain a regular supply of openings-this doesn't exclude brush hogging or mowing to maintain just don't need fire
8. Enhance and maintain wildlife corridors and linkages.
Strongly agree!
Objective: conduct ongoing monitoring and tracking of wildlife populations to identify habitat and travel corridors
Eliminate corridors and linkages-change to wildlife populations through timber management
9. Coordinate habitat management with other federal, state and local agencies.
(Requirement?)
If this is a requirement, why aren't other requirements included? Some goals in plan SHOULD be included or they can get lost. Either have all plan requirements as goals, or none at all
If a requirement, why do you need it as a goal?

10. Protect all rare and uncommon or outstanding biological, ecological, or geological areas on the GMNF, including old growth and native flora.

Strongly agree!

11. Provide for and manage a sustainable vegetation and timber management program on the GMNF.

Timber management should be more for watershed management and less for timber harvesting

Unless this goal is rewritten to include why, it is a repeat of Goal #30 under communities

Objective: harvest full net annual growth of timber on suitable lands

12. Provide benefits to other resource areas through coordinated timber harvesting.

Could rewrite this goal to link with Goal #11 Ex. "conduct timber harvesting to provide benefits....: OR really to increase or enhance ecological function

Drop the word "areas"-confusing as it sounds like geographic places-come up with another word or just say "resources"

13. Increase biodiversity by providing a range of vegetative age classes and types from early successional to old growth through sustainable timber harvesting and vegetation

Strongly agree!

Get rid of biodiversity-substitute diversity as defined in the regulations

Biodiversity concept too new-should not be included in new plan

Include even-age management and less wilderness

14. Maintain quality settings for motorized recreational opportunities.

Goals 14 and 16 may be counter to each other

Agree with maintain vs. expand

Append with "within perimeters"

Append: "by keeping all existing roads open and removing gates"

Expand goal to include "as the size of the National Forest expands" (as you acquire more land, more areas are designated for motorized use.

"Adequate" and "quality" are hard to measure

Append: "while maintaining and enhancing ecological health"

15. Maintain quality settings for non-motorized recreational opportunities.

"Adequate" and "quality" are hard to measure

Append: "while maintaining and enhancing ecological health"

16. Maintain and protect Wilderness and primitive areas to provide opportunities for quiet recreation and solitude.

Goals 14 and 16 may be counter to each other

Change maintain to expand through recommendation

Disagree: supports reduction of wilderness and primitive areas

Encourage primitive recreation opportunities especially in traditionally non-primitive sports

17. Provide a high quality and diverse trail system.

Append with "using existing network" (to be identified and catalogued...ex. log roads, abandoned timber harvest roads, skid roads and discontinued roads)

"Adequate" and "quality" are hard to measure

18. Decrease recreational user conflicts.

Like this goal-could be used to combine uses/create partnerships

Don't like this goal-too costly

19. Emphasize dispersed recreation opportunities.

This goal is a combo of 14 and 15

Append: "without expanding them"

20. Provide recreation and relaxation opportunities for the wearied urban masses.

Remark "wearied urban masses" remove and add "diverse" after provide

Delete "wearied urban masses"

Delete last 5 words

Remove "wearied urban masses"

Like "wearied" not "urban"

21. Maintain, not increase, GMNF lands designated as alpine ski areas.

Agree (1-5) 4!

Are ski areas looking to expand?

Encourage primitive recreation opportunities especially in traditionally non-primitive sports

May not be possible: evaluate 9.3 lands

Management Areas could be deleted (take away is area expansion management area 9.3)

22. Continue to provide four season recreational opportunities at alpine ski areas.

Provide?? The National Forest does this?

Include Nordic centers and replace "4 season" with "year round basis"

Append "with due consideration given to erosion caused by mountain biking and other activities"

Drop "four season"

Question the impacts that non-winter ski area use has on the local economy-need to evaluate

Encourage primitive recreation opportunities especially in traditionally non-primitive sports

23. Provide an adequate level of road access to the forest.

Append: "...including 4WD trails"

"Tweak" to be clear a process is needed to determine level of access with no preference for more or less access

Change entire goal to "Increase road access to the forest."

Append "and minimize environmental impacts"

24. Provide adequate access opportunities for a more diverse array of uses.

"Adequate access" could be providing parking (through assessment)

Append: "through more trails and improved bridge railings" (as a safety concern)

25. Improve accessibility opportunities for people with disabilities.

26. Improve control of illegal uses through law enforcement and access controls.

Add education, coop agreement, partnerships, (ex.-VAST mgt)

27. Maintain and enhance visual resources such as viewsheds, vistas, overlooks, and special features.

Areas to add more overlooks and pavilions

28. Protect all uncommon or outstanding recreational and heritage areas on the GMNF.

Do we have these identified?

Need this goal

Agree strongly!

Develop John Deere Homestead Visitors Center (objective) with a trailhead

What does "uncommon" mean?

29. Provide opportunities for renewable energy use and development as long as it does not negatively impact other resources.

Like the sideboards on the goal

Good goal

Agree strongly!

Limit windmills to 192' with no lights (objective)

Minimize negative impacts

What uses fall into this category? No uses will fit it

30. Support regional and local economies through resource production and resource protection.

Needs more sideboards-rewarding so it is not so global

Add word "sustainable"

Promote sugaring on forest including planting new trees

Broaden to include recreational opportunities

31. Maintain and enhance partnerships with community organizations.

32. Protect qualities of the GMNF that contribute to Vermont's uniqueness and culture.

Needs more definition

Sounds difficult to achieve

Vague-what does this goal mean?

May be a redundant goal

33. Provide for a wide range of uses and activities in an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable way.

34. Minimize negative impacts of human activities to forest resources.

35. Improve GMNF sign system.

Agree! Signage to promote education and alleviate misunderstandings of uses

Goes hand in hand with Goal #36 (but keep as separate goals)

Add to the end of the goal: "and how it relates to other sign systems within the forest" (example VAST sign system should comply with same regulations as forest sign system)

36. Provide educational opportunities on silvicultural techniques and sound forest management practices.

Agree! Need more demonstration projects on various fields...biology, archaeology, etc.

Express sound management practices includes "hand's off" to-for example in ecological reserves.

Increase school program cooperation throughout the forest (like the fish program in Manchester!) to educate on timber harvesting practices, biological issues, flora, fauna, and to get kids (and adults) involved in volunteer opportunities (such as trail maintenance)

37. Increase educational opportunities provided by and on the GMNF.

Agree!

Increase opportunities throughout the forest (including fringes) and increase publicity of opportunities

Add after 'increase educational': "and volunteer"

38. Maintain and enhance relationships with local communities.

Agree!

Add "and relationships with non-profit organizations" (ex. Green Mountain Club and Moosalamoo)

Objective: create community days: family outing days spread across the forest with various programs and presentations made by the Forest Service (instead of one fish day or one archaeology day where people have to travel really far or there are too many people to get really involved)

39. Coordinate with federal and state agencies.

Include local governments and non-profits.

Change to "Coordinate or cooperate"

40. Keep the Forest Plan current through an ongoing planning program and amendments.

Agree!

Agree-modification and update process needs to be easier

41. Monitor activities and resources to determine effects, benefits, and conditions on an ongoing basis.

42. Evaluate potential land acquisition parcels for resource conditions before or immediately after purchase.

May already be a requirement

Good goal

43. Place newly acquired lands in a management area immediately after purchase.

Good goal

Why immediately? May need some time to evaluate

Seems like it sets the stage to place areas before we know the best thing to do with the land

44. Identify and mark GMNF boundaries within budgetary constraints.

Question: doesn't understand this goal

Isn't this automatic?

Don't buy more until we can manage what we have

New Goals Suggested at Meeting

Provide ATV use on the National Forest

Expedite permit process for group use (commercial use such as hiking companies)

We will only build what we can maintain

Provide what private land does not-while protecting ecological integrity

Maintain/establish widespread geographic public meetings as well as local

Plan should be responsive to public input process with no predetermined outcomes and no incestuous relationships with private special interest groups (including non-profit groups)

Implement the plan (as opposed to state's plan revision process where old plan stayed in place and new plan was never implemented)

Place a strong emphasis on public use, economic use (including forest/timber products) and heritage uses (hunting, fishing, trapping, and snowmobiling). Failure to meet this goal hurts the cause of conservation and creates opposition to land acquisition

General Comments

Goals need to be prioritized

Add protect "AND ENHANCE" to goals that just say "protect"

One thing to keep plan current-another thing to implement it

Clean Air Act sets bottom line and not top-could build a series of goals that takes the Forest beyond the lower limits

Where enhancement of different resources conflict, use objectives to balance.