

Rutland Local Planning Group Meeting Notes 3-25-03

Goals Public Comments Received at the Meeting

1. Maintain productivity of soils.

Like "enhance and maintain" and would like to see that added to goals 1,4 ,5, 6...etc.

2. Restore Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut River watershed.

Rephrase-our focus is on the White River, not the Connecticut-keep it focused on the Green Mountain National Forest

Add monitoring

Restate as "contribute to the restoration of..."much larger than just the Green Mountain National Forest to accomplish this goal

Spent millions of dollars and not very successful-would be nice but how realistic is this to be a priority, especially for the NF?

Have a hard time with "restore"...how about "assist" or "contribute"

Way too specific-not a very successful or cost effective goal-money better spent on other priorities

3. Enhance and maintain riparian and aquatic habitats.

Like "enhance and maintain" and would like to see that added to goals 1,4 ,5, 6...etc.

Change to "enhance and maintain physiographically diverse riparian and aquatic..."

4. Maintain and protect wetland areas.

Like "enhance and maintain" and would like to see that added to goals 1,4 ,5, 6...etc.

Add "naturally occurring wetland areas"

5. Maintain adequate quality, amount, and distribution of habitats to produce viable and sustainable populations of plants and animals.

Like "enhance and maintain" and would like to see that added to goals 1,4 ,5, 6...etc.

Would like to see "native" added

Concerned with "viable" given our ability to conclude this and the cost

6. Maintain a full range of ecological processes and systems that naturally occur on the Green Mountain National Forest (Green Mountain National Forest).

Like "enhance and maintain" and would like to see that added to goals 1,4 ,5, 6...etc.

7. Increase use of prescribed fire to maintain openings on the GMNF for wildlife and human uses.

Prescribed fire is more of a tool than a goal-maintain and enhance openings should be focus of goal

8. Enhance and maintain wildlife corridors and linkages.

Not sure we need this if we are doing goal #13-if you provide the diversity of habitat and adequately distribute them, then the wildlife will find the habitat

9. Coordinate habitat management with other federal, state and local agencies. (Requirement?)

Would be nice to see us going above and beyond the minimum-not just this one but with other legal requirements

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

Loaded with danger-need definition of what constitutes "rare", "uncommon", "outstanding", as well as "biological", "ecological" or "geological"...also "all"...need good definitions that everyone agrees on as there are lots of different interpretations

Concern that "old growth" is specifically mentioned-implies it is more important...should not pull it out separately

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

More of a cultural goal-like #30-merge the two goals together, they are redundant

Sustainable-what does this mean...ecologically, economically?

Somehow incorporate "enhance" into the goal statements and give a high priority to these goals

"Sustainable"-term is so trite now-needs to be defined in very discrete terms in terms of forest conditions

Qualify-large enough to have an economic benefit to local forest products industry (not just demonstration forestry)

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

Need more detail-what kind of benefits? Resources? Economics? All?

Need to clarify "resources" what does this mean?

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 management.

Add "within a regional context"-with Vermont as a piece of New England

Somehow incorporate "enhance" into the goal statements and give a high priority to these goals

"Sustainable"-term is so trite now-needs to be defined in very discrete terms in terms of forest conditions

Change to "providing a BALANCED representation of vegetation age classes and types across the landscape..."

14. Maintain quality settings for motorized recreational opportunities.

Change to "Maintain for winter recreation..." may not be appropriate if it applies to summer motorized use

Distinguish between winter and summer ; and opinion would discourage increase in summer motorized use

"Quality" is a subjective statement..."maintain" is too open to interpretation-is it status quo or good maintenance?

Change "maintain" to "increase"

Would like to include ATV use in this goal statement

"Quality" needs specific definition...so do "wilderness" and "primitive"

Define "quality"

Change to "maintain and enhance within ecologically sustainable limits..."

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

"Quality" is a subjective statement..."maintain" is too open to interpretation-is it status quo or good maintenance?

Change "maintain" to "increase"

"Quality" needs specific definition...so do "wilderness" and "primitive"

Define "quality"

Change to "maintain and enhance within ecologically sustainable limits..."

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

"Quality" needs specific definition...so do "wilderness" and "primitive"

Add "maintain AND INCREASE..."

Do not include the word "increase"

17. Provide a high quality and diverse trail system.

Define "quality"

18. Decrease recreational user conflicts.

19. Emphasize dispersed recreation opportunities.

Like this goal

Can have undeveloped use without is being dispersed

This goal is not clear-what are "dispersed recreation opportunities"?

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

Remove this goal

Remove this statement

21. Maintain, not increase, Green Mountain National Forest lands designated as alpine ski areas.

Feel current amount of forest land is enough-don't need to purchase more

Not clear why this goal is given...more understanding needed to get any feedback from public

Reduce lands held for future expansion

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

As long as not in competition with local economies...analyze if by the expansion into 4 season use it impacts local services and businesses

Too specific to ski areas

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

Agree because of fire access and rescue

Already think summer access by road is excellent

Include fire control needs as part of this goal

Concerned that some forest roads are over-built "super highways"

What constitutes "adequate" and for which reasons?

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

What constitutes "adequate" and for which reasons?

25. Improve accessibility opportunities for people with disabilities.

Agree strongly

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

Reflects the current lack of opportunities for some recreation uses-law enforcement problems could be lessened by providing for legitimate use

Including special use permits

Remove this as a goal, re-word better to be an objective...new goal statement could be "control illegal uses through law enforcement and access controls"

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

May conflict-especially with wind farms

What about conflicts?-add how conflicts impact a significant number of people

How do Goals 27 and 29 work together? Visuals and wind come in conflict

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

Should be protect and utilize

Needs more definition-what is 'outstanding' or 'uncommon'?

Should also add providing access to heritage areas

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

May conflict-especially with wind farms

No windmills on tops of ridges

How do Goals 27 and 29 work together? Visuals and wind come in conflict

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

Add "sustainably" and eliminate "resource protection"

Like this goal as it is

What does it mean to support local economies?

How does this support economies-most good for the most people?

31. Maintain and enhance partnerships with community organizations.

Include more than local community organizations

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

Could be removed-the Green Mountain National Forest already does this

What are the qualities?

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

Agree basically but needs some rewording-currently no mention of telecommunications or utility use

Define sustainable

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

What does this mean?

What is a negative impact...needs definition

35. Improve Green Mountain National Forest sign system.

Signs are too busy for trailheads-too many words

Objective: make user-friendly signs with more pictures and less words

Lots of areas have too many signs-improve signage to make more concise (including less words and fewer signs!)

Include ADA signs such as signs with Braille and make more accessible

Decrease signs in wilderness areas

Sign system should be on the periphery of the forest-people who don't know how to get into the "deep woods" possibly shouldn't be there or they might not be able to get out

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

We could do this with school visits-we could do a lot more!

Great!

37. Increase educational opportunities provided by and on the Green Mountain National Forest.

Add "educational and informational opportunities..." and have improving website as an objective

Provide educational opportunities for people with handicaps ex. visitor centers with resources for deaf/blind people

We could do this with school visits-we could do a lot more!

Objective: use cooperators and volunteers to help achieve this goal (ex. Use GMC to help distribute trail information or use VAST to distribute snowmobile information)

38. Maintain and enhance relationships with local communities.

Have Forest Service build relationships that allows local communities to achieve their goals

Capture idea of 2-way communication between Forest Service and local/state agencies where Forest Service receives as well as provides information

Forest Service gives foresight and helps to consider ways of dealing with community impacts from various management activities

Not just local, include state and national organizations

We should really focus on this!! 40 towns...we should do more with them

39. Coordinate with federal and state agencies.

Add "local" to the list of agencies

Add to coordinate or work with state organizations/cooperations/associations (ex. VAST, GMC, Moosalamoo, VOGA, VASA, CTA, VMBA)

Change to "coordinate and partner with..."

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

Agree!

Isn't this required?

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

Agree! Make sure objectives define timelines

Busy sentence-perhaps should be split into 2 goals that are less confusing

Change to say "Monitor and evaluate activities, resources, and trends to determine..."

Split this goal-too much in one goal

Isn't this what we do anyways?

Unclear-what does "condition" mean-how does it differ from "effects"?

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

Good idea-do we just buy anything?

Remove the phrase "or immediately after"

Is there a scoping process? Should have public input on land acquisitions

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

Agree

Agree

Lands need to go under NEPA review before designation in an M.A. or have a public process

44. Identify and mark Green Mountain National Forest boundaries within budgetary constraints.

Don't we do that now?

Why "within budgetary constraints"?

Include AT corridor

New Goals Suggested at Meeting

What about the role of the forest?

Need to have a goal that incorporates support for industries that have historically depended on the forest (ex. Timber industry)

Increase multi-use trails

If new ski lift and ski trails developed, consult ANR Guide for state level watershed issues

Hunting has not been addressed in any of the recreation goals that are very specific for all other uses...need to have goal with habitat specifically for hunted species-infrastructure similar to trails, etc. Example "Quality settings for motorized recreation" goal exists so why not "dedicated even-age stands for ruff grouse, deer, etc. habitat..."

Areas limited to outfitter guide use are allowed to be used by non-profit groups for their use. Marketing activities are similar and both should need permits

General Comments

Land adjustment-maintain, do not add more land

Are goals going to be prioritized?

Need something about water quality and significant streams

The laws themselves are subject to change-if rely on laws and then they change-how will goals reflect what we still want-too broad to just rely on laws to protect things and not put attention to objectives

Need to incorporate watersheds-should be a principle we use in governing our management

Define "quality"