

Londonderry Plan Revision Meeting September 10, 2003: Public Comments

Break-Out Session: 6 Question Stations

1. What Kinds of Features are Important to have in Potential Wilderness?
2. What Kinds of Features are a Concern if Included in Potential Wilderness?
3. Which Evaluation Criteria do you Consider Most Important?
4. Which Specific Geographic areas to Include or Exclude from Potential Wilderness?
5. Are there Current Wilderness Mgm't Issues that the Plan Revision should Address.

6. Are there Other Special Areas that are Important to Protect? i.e. Botanical areas, National Recreation areas, Natural Research areas...

Public Comments

Question 1: What Kinds of Features are Important to have in Potential Wilderness?

Species migrational corridors-need continuity provided by Wilderness

Swamps

Cliffs

Special wildlife areas (deer yards, deer winter areas)

Gorges

Water bodies and resources

Meadows

Beaver ponds

Old-growth forest

Non-motorized areas for solitude

Watersheds

Natural viewsheds

Opportunities for solitude

High elevation viewpoints/open summits

Represent a cross section of the terrain (Wilderness should have some high and low elevation areas, North and South facing slopes, stagnant water and well-drained soils, etc)

Complete watersheds to the extent possible-make valleys and ridges boundaries, not streams

Regions that are conducive to low-disturbance habitat

Existing areas of old growth

Enlarge continuity of existing Wilderness into one big "W"

To strict Wilderness standards don't allow for ecological continuity (ex. can't consider where timber harvest was done)...Wilderness islands aren't enough

Question 2: What Kinds of Features are a Concern if Included in Potential Wilderness?

Roads and motorized uses

Open gates (for hunting, fishing and trapping)

Wilderness area should be based on visitor usage (50,000 versus 3.1 million)-there is no need for additional Wilderness

Keep class II roads passable by 4 wd vehicles and open in spring and wet fall

Don't close the access to P(illegible) from Kendall farm to Manchester

I would be concerned if there was a super abundance of low-quality habitat and unsuitable land in Wilderness areas-they should contain the full spectrum of land types

Regular informal trails-ATVS either exclude or make sure to successfully close it

Question 3: Which Evaluation Criteria do you Consider Most Important?

Availability-meeting roadless

Ecological features-more unfragmented Wilderness-enlarge existing areas

Significant stream watersheds

Need-human and ecosystem

Most important evaluation criteria: 1) capability of environment-"solitude and serenity", natural and geologic features, sensitive species, primitive recreation 2) need: sanctuary and preservation of species and ecosystems I.e.-no motorized activity

Environmental criteria: ecological and biological importance

Manageability-I.e.. road conflict, motorized conflict, user conflicts, shelters

Biological features-connectivity

What is the right amount: NEED

Opportunities for recovery from human activities

Biological features-connectivity

Free form disturbance

Need Wilderness that is lightly used

Question 4: Which Specific Geographic areas to Include or Exclude from Potential Wilderness?

Vermont has enough Wilderness

Vermont needs more Wilderness

Vermont has enough Wilderness areas

Areas south of, and contiguous to, existing Lye Brook -add to Wilderness

Add area north of exiting Glastenbury to Wilderness

All inventoried areas that are contiguous to exiting Wilderness should be added

Much more Wilderness (all of Glastenbury)

No more Wilderness

Connect George Aiken and Lye Brook as Wilderness

Roadless land east and west of George Aiken should be Wilderness

VWA proposal should be added to Wilderness as a minimum

All possible areas should be included

All areas should be excluded

More Wilderness decreases our ability to manage the forest

More Wilderness would increase God's (or evolution's) ability to manage the forest

Somerset Reservoir should be included in our thinking about Wilderness

Glastenbury and Romance Mt. Should be in Wilderness

Restore and maintain Glastenbury fire tower

Prefer not to see Wilderness in Glastenbury area
Exclude VWA proposal from Wilderness
Include private land Leahy owns into Wilderness
Recommend VWA proposal for Wilderness

Question 5: Are there Current Wilderness Mgm't Issues that the Plan Revision should Address.

More Wilderness will affect private timber lands-causing overcutting of these private lands
More Wilderness will cause more restrictions on airplane use
Better signing and blazing of Wilderness access trails
Consider only 1% of Vermont land base is Wilderness now-new designation would have very little impact on timber harvest on private land
Signing at intersections (less blazing) is important
Good monitoring and enforcement of motorized uses in areas not allowed
More Wilderness which restricts motorized use
Retain all shelters on AT and LT System (including side trails) which will increase solitude for those that want it by concentrating use by those who don't and are hiking these trails
Plan should address illegal motorized use-especially ATVs
Access: trailheads
Barriers to keep motorized use out
Increase communication with clubs, agency partners (ATC, GMC) to discuss and put together a trail shelter management plan
Consider new areas to connect and protect biodiversity needs
We have enough Wilderness already
Developed shelter areas on high use trails to include picnic table to decrease cooking and food in shelters...developed areas to protect rest of Wilderness from impact of large numbers using the trails
High tech: more people going into the Wilderness unprepared and relying on technology and rescues more

Question 6: Are there Other Special Areas that are Important to Protect? i.e. Botanical areas, National Recreation areas, Natural Research areas...

High altitude areas-ridges
Botanical areas-beech areas and bear habitat
Critical bear habitat
Beaver and moose habitat (high altitude swamps, bird nesting areas)
Lye Brook-important bird area (Bicknell's Audubon Society designation)
Old growth in small areas
Include significant streams
Areas of special botanical significance
Haystack and Mt. Snow for bear habitat
Traditional use areas-hunting, fishing and trapping, timber harvest, recreational
Wildlife travel corridors
Abby Pond-the old growth around

General Comments

The Wilderness designation restricts too heavily-the pro-active management of today's recreation desires. OHV and horse recreation is growing and no management plan is now in place other than "no!" (and that isn't working)

To develop the kind of diversified recreation the Green Mountain National Forest is lacking, less Wilderness is required. Lets be real, these are old, used hills

Too many opportunities already exist to attract the weary urban masses to enter the Wilderness and become lost, or otherwise a search and rescue issue-which impacts the local and state rescue resources more than the feds

Corrections

Base of Frost Mtn. Where North Branch comes off Lincoln Rd.-FS road attached to Robert Frost trail is not improved-classified as rural on ROS

Why south of Lye Brook and north of George Aiken did the roadless area use snowmobile trail as a boundary-couldn't it be a bisected Wilderness with a snowmobile trail excluded like Peru Peak and Big branch?

Southern GM areas around Mt Snow (wooded areas) should be included in candidate roadless areas