

Hancock Plan Revision Meeting September 18, 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?

Lands that have no timber suitability

Component of early successional forest habitat, allow natural disturbances (fire, insects, disease)

Biological diversity

Old growth forests

Healthy wildlife populations

Include all the Wilderness as possible

Areas that would have no effects to surrounding areas economies (such as existing recreation)

No wildlife because they do not populate in unmanaged forests

Lands that don't have harvest value

Include as many ecological land types as possible that represent natural biological and ecological functions-while balancing other uses of the Forest

There is nothing the Forest Service can't manage south side Wilderness as well as, or better than, inside Wilderness

I don't like Wilderness

Diversity of wildlife

allowance of hunting, fishing, and trapping

Flat, productive land

high elevation and highly erodable steep slopes

Mountains with high aesthetic quality

Natural alpine ponds and streams

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

Snowmobile trails should not be eliminated

No Wilderness

Don't take away features that contribute to local and Vermont economy-mainly potential timber harvest areas and snowmobile trails
High quality timber areas should not be in Wilderness
No more land acquisition-town tax base suffers
Loss of habitat for wildlife-dependant on early successional stages
Many, not all, features in Wilderness are a result of timber harvests
Potential loss of jobs in the timber industry
10 year timber harvest requirement is not adequate-previous 50 years should be reviewed due to silvicultural practices
Addison/Windsor-large percent of towns are National Forest and depend on timber receipts
Historic sites need to be protected actively and need access
Lack of forest disturbance-vegetation and wildlife
Multiple use is the best practice-everyone gets something in a working forest
Lack of water in streams-70% of rain caught in canopy and evaporates
Water needs to be protected
Already enough Wilderness
Impact of Wilderness on tourism and contribution to state economy
Scenic vistas will be lost
Don't include areas of high biological diversity-they'll be lost over time
Areas of high biological diversity should be considered for Wilderness designation

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

Biological features (habitat) up the value
Natural appearance-free from disturbances
Need to provide sanctuary for species
Solitude and serenity
Need-demand for Wilderness uses
Value and need compared to not being in Wilderness-economic considerations
Biological-effects on wildlife populations-look at Adirondacks and effects on wildlife
Historical uses-cultural and social needs
Historical traditional uses need to continue
Sound scientific data used to determine need
DO NOT include historic sites
Conservation of biological diversity-highest emphasis
Areas below 1500' specific to GMNF
Presence of pristine larger streams
Biological-availability of lynx habitat
Biodiversity through management
Need for other uses-value and need for Wilderness compared to not being in wilderness (jobs, forest products)

Ecological-water quality
Biological features-timber productivity
Need-Have enough
Examine impact to individual towns-need-distribution
Demand for Wilderness uses and existing ability to provide solitude for those who want it-"no where near capacity of use for solitude in existing Wilderness"

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

Abbey Pond should be included in potential Wilderness (East Middlebury)
Do not exclude historic roads-need to remain open for use
Addison County's remaining National Forest land should not be included in Wilderness
Windsor County's remaining National Forest land should not be included in Wilderness
Existing areas of motorized and traditional use (hunting, fishing, trapping) should be excluded from Wilderness
Economic factors should be considered before including/excluding Wilderness
High elevation areas with erodable soils should be included in Wilderness
Lower half Mt. Ellen to Lincoln Gap should be excluded because of valuable wildlife habitat
Land suitable for timber should be excluded from Wilderness
Low elevation productive soils should be represented in Wilderness

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

Question the use of any motorized use like helicopters and chainsaws in Wilderness
Let the shelters rot away and don't replace them
Keep the shelters and keep them repaired
Breadloaf Wilderness where it connects with the Granville Gulf-cuts off snowmobile access to the north
Create snowmobile access through the Wilderness
Make sure existing snow machine trails and FS roads remain open
Limit expansion of Wilderness areas except in highly ecologically sensitive areas
Insure conservation of biological diversity and significant biological areas and natural communities
Allow natural disturbance to Wilderness including insects, fire-this will create early successional forest
Allow bridal horse trails in Wilderness
How will we manage for biodiversity?
Lack of edge habitat
Maintain pedestrian access to Wilderness areas

Having Wilderness canopy is affecting water volume in streams-causes decline in the quality and quantity of fishing. Also, lack of sunlight-less fish
Why the special treatment of hiking trails?

Accommodate the demand for multi-day backpacking trips
Elimination of the Long Trail through Wilderness areas
Historic roads need to remain open

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

Viable timber program
Ecologically sensitive wildlife habitat
Deer yards
Any area with existing motorized recreational use
Any area that is a boost to Vermont economy
Maintain and perpetuate scenic vistas along all trail and road systems
Create new vistas
Release and maintain apple trees
Natural communities in the Taconics-characteristic of that area
Research Natural Areas
Threatened and Endangered Species habitat
AT/LT outside of Wilderness
Multiple use areas

General Comments

Look at how many acres you already have in Granville, Hancock, and Rochester
VWA was too much
Granville selectboard letter of 2002 to Congressional delegation-said didn't want more Wilderness
Snowmobile club was starting point on petition to Congressional delegation-3081 signed, 215 towns represented (73 people in Granville, 95 people in Hancock, 193 people in Rochester, 72 people in Pittsfield) June 11, 2002
Additional Breadloaf and Romance Mt. Wilderness-net growth 6,000 (\$125,00 to local towns)
Only buy land for multiple use
Search and rescue policy statement to be done by environmental groups
Take revenue out of timber production-not all birdwatchers and skiers-need timber

Corrections

1/3 mile of town road in Granville area needs Wilderness to be pulled back (Stetson Brook Rd)-so the road is out of Wilderness