

Arlington Plan Revision Meeting September 9, 2003: Wilderness

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?

Sense of coherence in scale

Large mountains (example: Freezing Hole)

Restoration of old growth (maintaining ecological conditions)

Preserving features for future generations

Preserving/experiencing diverse wildlife

Wilderness promotes certain habitats and excludes others-this hinders diverse habitat

Wildlife corridors and diverse habitats

Remote areas

Water bodies (trail access only)

Habitat connectivity

Wilderness should meet other Forest Plan goals (reduced activity to support wildlife-bears, moose, other reclusive species)

Preserve/develop large blocks of old-growth habitat (found only in large undisturbed areas)

Access is needed for Wilderness-could be trails

Remote interior is desirable for solitude

Not all man-made features (example: fire towers) should be removed

Solitude/quiet/odorless/noiseless

There are no features important enough to justify Wilderness

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

Loss of existing access (roads, motorized or not) to remote areas

Allow wind farm to expand in Lamb Brook

Exclude ridge tops of Lamb Brook to allow for wind farm

Maintain access to these areas

Forest types that could be managed through, or to, early succession habitat...example: aspen, apple tree release

Maintain a wide variety or diverse forest types inside and outside of Wilderness

Limit snowmobile trails

Leave some semi-primitive, non-motorized area for use by mountain bikes-they are after the same recreation opportunities as hikers

Should be mountain bike trails outside Wilderness

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

How will we determine need-seems nebulous

Vermont cultural and traditional uses

Maintaining working forests

Solitude and serenity

Wildlife areas

Recreation opportunities

Presence of mature forest-vegetation age

Need

Wildlife

Ecological diversity

Feet are a longer standing tradition than wheels

Habitat connectivity

Size of area justifies trade-offs

Manageability: access for motorized uses

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

Include:

Lamb Brook: old turnpike should not be considered a Class 4 Road (re-route back to original rim route)

Glastenbury: most remote sections of Long Trail and AT

Glastenbury: largest area to create a large Wilderness chunk and potential for solitude

Glastenbury roadless area

Small expansion area next to Aiken: important area for uniqueness-beavers allow for open areas and natural succession without timber management

Leahy-owned land

Land between Middlebury gap and Brandon Gap

Exclude:

East Glastenbury

Glastenbury (as a whole) due to possible loss of mountain bike access

Glastenbury Mountain due to motorized fire tower access

VWA proposal areas

Glastenbury due to snowmobile access-need certain amount of trails

Keep FS Roads 10, 30 and 60 open and out of Wilderness

Glastenbury because there is a high potential for timber management

Lamb Brook: good potential for a working forest here

Mt. Tabor due to lack of diversity that could result if forest/timber management is stopped (result: less habitat for wildlife)

Don't have large blocks as "no touch" instead have a "light touch" such as longer rotation between harvests-but don't stop all management

Lye Brook expansion (SW of Winhall)-current Lye Brook Wilderness is lacking the species diversity (deer, rabbit, fisher, etc) that is present in neighboring non-Wilderness, timber managed areas where timber management allows for diverse habitat

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

Access: lower trail standards and marking to make access difficult

Inability to manage vegetation to benefit wildlife limits diversity of essential habitat

May make access limitations

Manage for wildlife-watch for insects/diseases

Inability to use fire for wildlife management-specific areas in Lye Brook are one example

Illegal ATV use is currently happening

Making boundaries more manageable

Wilderness should include a variety of forest and ecological types (important to look at for designation)

Lack of regeneration of growth that benefit some species

Wilderness areas need to be increased and connected to insure ecological values of Wilderness

Better education and signing and enforcement about Wilderness

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

Somerset Reservoir

Areas of old growth (Lamb Brook)

Natural community inventory-protect less common types

Areas of higher altitude-bear clawed beech stands

Wildlife travel corridors

National Recreation Area in Glastenbury-allow motorized recreation (snowmobiles) with increased protection for the area

National recreation Areas actually become a form of Wilderness because there is no active management

General Comments

Please consider making the maps available for public review in electronic form-example shapefiles and/or coverages since that would facilitate the study of them...please don't delay electronic distribution until there are "final" versions

Designating Wilderness is using a blunt instrument-should manage with a light touch to semi-primitive, Wilderness-like without the designation

Designating Wilderness can impact town tax revenues

Vermont Wilderness Association hired a polling firm to determine if public wanted more-people polled said yes

Wilderness management is very stringent and extreme-there may be other options

Monitoring use data shows Wilderness use is lower than anticipated

Management does not have to be as extreme-as Wilderness

Lack of land management is a concern

Would like to see some areas go back to old growth

Evidence that human use and Wilderness are not necessarily incompatible

Motorized use is really the issue

Corrections

On ROS Map in Readsboro, a large recently acquired parcel along the west branch of the Deerfield River is classified as "rural"-this doesn't seem to be right