



Management Area Descriptions

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Diverse Forest Use

Major Emphasis

The Diverse Forest Use Management Area emphasizes a variety of forest uses. Vegetation management emphasis is placed on production of high quality sawtimber and other timber products on a sustained yield basis. Management actions provide a mix of habitats for wildlife species, including deer wintering habitat. Public use is managed to provide a full range of recreation opportunities, from motorized and non-motorized trails to dispersed campsites and developed campgrounds. The mix of vegetation conditions and recreation opportunities across the landscape provides a mosaic of landscape conditions that strives to be visually attractive to people visiting the Forest.

Desired Future Condition

The landscape character will be a mix of deciduous and coniferous forest stands of various types. The stands will vary in size, shape, height, and tree species. Along road and trail corridors, large diameter trees of diverse species will predominate. Vistas of landscapes with a mosaic of vegetative patterns will be provided along roads and trails. All forest communities that would naturally be present, such as aspen and oak, will be retained and enhanced where feasible.

Management practices will include both even-aged and uneven-aged silviculture systems. As a result, two different conditions will occur among the stands: some stands will consist of trees of about the same age and size; the remaining stands will consist of a mix of tree sizes and ages ranging from seedlings to very large mature trees. Silvicultural practices will be used to meet timber, ecological, visual, and recreation objectives.

Suitable habitat will be provided for a variety of wildlife and plant species. Deer wintering habitat will be emphasized within, or adjacent to, identified deer wintering areas. Habitat at the landscape level will include a sustainable mix of young and mature forests. Permanent and temporary openings will occur across the landscape in shapes and sizes that are consistent with visual objectives in the area. Views, ecological processes, and management practices will be interpreted at vista sites.

Recreation opportunities will be diverse in this MA, with pockets of semi-primitive motorized to the more common roaded natural recreation opportunity classes. Forest visitors will be common in developed recreation sites and camping areas along roads in the general forest area. Trail opportunities will be diverse, ranging from hiking and mountain biking to snowmobiles and potentially ATVs. Interaction among visitors will be in moderate to high concentrations in locally popular areas. Impacts from recreation use will be evident.

Wilderness 5.1

Major Emphasis

The Wilderness Management Area emphasizes the management and protection of congressionally designated wilderness areas. The existing wilderness areas include Bristol Cliffs, Breadloaf, Big Branch, Peru Peak, Lye Brook, and George D. Aiken. Lye Brook Wilderness is also a Class I Air Quality Area. These areas are managed to maintain an enduring resource that preserves biotic communities unique to northeastern forests, while providing opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964, and subsequent legislation. Management recognizes the particular importance of maintaining wilderness values, including the character of an untrammelled landscape, within the northeast where population pressures are intense and the overall landscape has been heavily modified.

Desired Future Condition

While eastern wilderness includes lands that have been modified through logging and other human uses over hundreds of years, current natural ecological processes will be allowed to take place. The wilderness management areas will be a product of natural succession where large and small-scale changes occur through natural events such as wind disturbances or ice storms. Vegetation composition will result from natural ecological processes rather than human-caused activities. Vegetation cover will vary based primarily on ecological conditions. Temporary openings, early successional forest, small permanent openings, and the wildlife associated with these areas may be found but will be uncommon and the result of natural processes. Components of the natural disturbance regime will include individual tree throw, infrequent large-scale blow down, very infrequent low-intensity fire, insect damage, and beaver flooding. Parcels previously maintained as early successional units will disappear with the passage of time. Timber harvesting will not occur. Trees and vegetation may be cut for new trail construction or bridges, but will not be cut for wildlife openings or trail vistas.

The desired ROS objectives will be Primitive. The actual inventories for these areas will typically be on the more developed end of the scale, but should still reflect wilderness values.

There will be little evidence of human development in wilderness, with several exceptions. Trails, trail blazes, and limited trail signing will provide onsite guidance to visitors, but skills in map reading will be useful, particularly for off-trail. On-site interpretation through use of signs will not occur. There may be evidence of previous settlement, such as stonewalls, cellar holes, old roads, or other structures or features which will be returning to natural conditions. However, preservation, maintenance, research, and off-site interpretation related to significant historic properties may be done as long as it can be shown to be consistent with the character of the wilderness. Trail bridges necessary for resource protection and visitor safety may be allowed. Structures, facilities, or shelters will occur only where specific exceptions to the Wilderness Act were placed in the enabling legislation, or where such properties are determined historically significant (eligible to the National Register for Historic Places) and consistent with the character of the wilderness. Individual rustic campsites may be noticed, but will not dominate a

landscape. Where resource degradation is occurring due to visitor use, the protection of the natural resource will be the higher goal. If not designated as trails, old roads will be restored to natural conditions.

Each wilderness will be managed for its unique attributes with goals and thresholds in place to prevent degradation of wilderness values. Wilderness areas with high recreation use will be managed to recognize their value as sources of inspiration for the large surrounding populations, while also having standards to prevent unacceptable social or ecological impacts. Low-use wilderness areas will be managed to maintain their low-use; use will not be dispersed from high to low-use areas. Interaction between users will vary by wilderness, specific places within each wilderness, and season of use. In general, use will be concentrated around trail corridors. Away from trails and in low-use wildernesses, evidence of, and interaction with, other users will be low. Facilities and designated campsites may be present when necessary to protect Wilderness values. Managerial controls will be kept to a minimum and used only as necessary to protect ecological and social values.

Areas Designated as Wilderness 5.1:

Designated Wilderness
George D. Aiken
Lye Brook
Peru Peak
Bristol Cliffs
Breadloaf
Big Branch

Remote Backcountry Forest 6.1

Major Emphasis

The Remote Backcountry Forest Management Area emphasizes large expanses of relatively natural landscapes where terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems develop under natural disturbance regimes. Management actions are limited to those that help restore or maintain natural processes, natural communities, and all associated species within their natural ranges of variation in the landscape. Public use is managed at a scale and intensity that either helps keep species or processes within their natural range of variation, or has minimal effect on the area's integrity. Foot trail recreational opportunities will be available that provide a relative sense of isolation and remoteness in a predominantly natural or natural-appearing landscape.

Desired Future Condition

Extensive areas of northern hardwoods and conifers will dominate the landscape. These areas will contain a mix of tree sizes and ages, including very large live and dead trees, young trees, and canopy gaps that will occur as a result of natural disturbances. This management area will typically occur in contiguous parcels of at least 2,500 acres. There will be little evidence of current human development. Historical evidence of human activities that have become overgrown or dilapidated may be present

The Remote Backcountry Forest will be accessible by foot and other non-motorized means of transport, such as skis, snowshoes, horses, and mountain bikes. Such uses will tend to be concentrated around trail corridors; horse and mountain bike use will be restricted to existing closed road and trail travelway corridors. Motorized trails will not be present, unless required by law to provide access to private land. There will be no new roads for motor vehicles or non-recreational facilities. Recreation facilities, such as fire rings, may be present but must complement the desired recreation opportunity of semi-primitive. Away from trails, evidence of, and interaction with, other users will be low. Recreational impacts will be managed to protect natural resources such as water quality and rare plants and animals, to minimize visual disturbance, and to preserve a sense of wildness. The desired ROS objectives will be Semi-Primitive Non-motorized.

Changes in vegetation will be predominantly the result of natural processes. Natural disturbances such as wind, ice storms, or outbreaks of native insects and diseases will be considered part of these natural processes. Under some circumstances, management actions that will further the ecological goals and objectives of this MA may be appropriate. Management activities may be used to conserve and protect populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive (TES) species. Ecological restoration within these areas may occur through control of non-native invasive species, removal of forest plantations, road closures, maintenance of deer wintering areas, soil stabilization, anadromous and native inland fish stocking, and aquatic habitat restoration. The minimum managerial controls necessary will be used to maintain acceptable ecological and social standards.

Backcountry Motorized 6.2

Major Emphasis

The Backcountry Motorized Management Area emphasizes relatively large landscapes that contain low-standard roads and motorized trails. A predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment characterizes the area. Visitors may see occasional stands that have been regenerated, low-standard timber access roads, and motorized trails.

Management actions appropriate in this MA include those suitable in a Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS setting. Therefore, this management area allows timber harvests and new temporary roads to be open for the duration of a project however, new permanent roads will not be built unless required by law to provide access to private land. Timber harvests are on long rotations of 150 years or more, utilizing varied harvest systems to provide a range of vegetation classes.

Public uses include hiking, winter-motorized, and stock use. Concentration of visitors may be moderate to high seasonally on popular trails, and there is often evidence of other users in those locations. Backcountry Motorized Management Areas may potentially contain summer motorized trail use, if it is determined that resource damage would be minimal. Recreation motor vehicle use on roads and trails is designated by trail for each kind of vehicle, and cannot occur off of those designated roads or trails.

Desired Future Condition

This management area will typically occur in contiguous parcels of at least 2,500 acres. Lands in this MA will often occur in a setting with a mixture of tree species, sizes, ages, and appearances. Activities such as timber harvesting may be evident but will be scattered over time and space. When viewed from a distance, human activity will not be evident on some of the upper elevations of the more noticeable peaks and ridges. Some evidence of activity may be noticeable on lower levels, but will blend with the surrounding landscape. While these areas will be predominately natural appearing, evidence of human use may be evident, but will not dominate.

Roads will be of a low maintenance standard and unimproved, but will not degrade the soil and riparian resources. New temporary roads may be built, but will be closed and restored at project completion. Roads will not be built to a high standard for permanent addition as a Forest Service System road. New Forest Service System trails, both motorized and un-motorized, may be built.

Generally these areas will be managed to meet the desired ROS objectives of Semi-Primitive Motorized. A predominately natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size trees will characterize these areas. The settings of these areas will be appropriate for a wide variety of recreational uses. Concentration of users will generally be low, but there will often be evidence of other users.

Both groomed corridor trails and un-groomed secondary snowmobile trails will be in this area. Winter motorized use may include large numbers of users on trail routes and there will be a

potential for regular encounters with other users on busy snowmobile corridor trails. On-site controls and restrictions will be primarily trail signs and trailhead bulletin boards, with law enforcement patrols on busy weekends. There will be a moderate probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of others, especially in the summer months and midweek in the winter.

Recreation facilities may be present and will complement the desired recreation opportunities. Permanent campgrounds, picnic facilities, or boat launches will not be consistent with the remote nature of these areas. Away from trails, evidence of, and interaction with, other users will be moderate to low. To protect the resource, Forest Service provided facilities such as portable restrooms might be in place for periods of high use. Recreation Special Use, non-commercial group use, and outfitter/guide permits may be authorized for this management area.

Timber harvests will occur with constraints such as extended rotations, fewer intermediate treatments, and other modifications to benefit backcountry settings. Some stands will consist of trees of about the same age and size while other stands will have a mix of tree sizes and ages. Some areas of undisturbed forest will have many large, old trees with a few scattered openings created by wind, ice, old age, or other natural forces.

This management area will provide a wider diversity of wildlife habitats than would be expected in areas with no vegetation management. Timber and vegetation management will provide more clearings and early successional habitats in this MA than would occur from natural disturbances. Permanent openings and orchard maintenance for wildlife values will be maintained.

Remote Wildlife Habitat 6.3

Major Emphasis

The major emphasis of the Remote Wildlife Habitat MA is to provide a mix of different-aged forest habitats, from early succession to old forests, for the primary benefit of wildlife, particularly reclusive wildlife species. The Remote Wildlife Habitat MA provides refuge for forest wildlife species that are sensitive to human disturbance and creates diverse habitats, including clearings and brushy openings. This MA complements wildlife habitat management in other management areas. Recreation uses are de-emphasized to minimize continuing disturbance to wildlife.

Desired Future Condition

The Remote Wildlife Habitat MA will create a mix of deciduous and coniferous forest stands of various types. Stands will vary in size, shape, age, height, and tree species composition. Both even-aged and uneven-aged silviculture practices will be used to meet wildlife habitat objectives. As a result, two different conditions will occur among the stands: some stands will consist of trees of similar age and size; the remaining stands will consist of a mix of tree sizes and ages ranging from seedlings to very large, old trees. Forest communities that would naturally be present, including those important to wildlife such as aspen and oak, as well as rare or important communities, will be retained and enhanced where feasible.

This MA will maintain or create suitable habitat for a variety of wildlife and plant species. Habitat at the landscape level will include a sustainable mix ranging from early-succession to old forests. Permanent and temporary openings will occur across the landscape in shapes and sizes that are consistent with wildlife habitat objectives. These openings and regenerating forest habitats will be critically important to many species of wildlife that are dependant on them, but they also will be important to reclusive species. For example, black bears and bobcats will generally avoid humans, as will northern goshawks during the nesting season, but these species will forage and hunt extensively in early-successional habitats. These reclusive species will receive the greatest benefit from this MA. Deer wintering habitat will be emphasized within, or adjacent to, identified deer wintering areas. Disturbance from timber and vegetation management activities will occur infrequently. Follow-up work may occur after several years to maintain openings or deer wintering areas, or it may not occur for many decades.

Continuing human impacts from roads, trails, and other recreational uses, and the resulting recreation-related disturbances to wildlife will be minimal. Disturbance from timber and vegetation management activities will occur infrequently. Forest Service system trails will be retained for access on foot and by other non-motorized means of transport, such as skis and snowshoes. New foot or ski trails will not be established. Existing Forest Service System snowmobile trails will be retained. This MA will avoid inclusion of Forest Service System roads and town roads. New roads will be built only for administrative or designated special uses. Recreation facilities may be present but will be primitive and complement remote recreation opportunities. Away from trails, evidence of, and interaction with, other users will be low.

Alpine Ski Areas 7.1

Major Emphasis

The Alpine Ski Areas Management Area maintains the range of recreation opportunities by recognizing the potential for year-round recreation facilities at the three alpine ski areas managed by the private sector under Special Use permit authority.

Desired Future Condition

These areas will be highly developed. Bromley, Mount Snow, and Sugarbush Ski Areas are in close proximity to substantially urbanized environments on adjacent private lands. Large numbers of users may be present, sights and sounds of human activity will be readily evident, and the interaction between users will be moderate to high. Facilities will be designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities including parking lots, structures, and utilities will be evident, and will be designed to be compatible with the values that make the area attractive to the users.

Management and operating practices will be aimed at enhancing permitted recreation activities of the area while protecting the natural resources and visual characteristics. Vegetation, while generally of native species, will be intensively managed to ensure compatibility with the intended use.

Each of these alpine ski areas will be authorized by Special Use permit. The permit will be a legal document that defines the area, describes management of the full range of recreation activities provided by the area, and incorporates resource protection requirements. Special use permits must be consistent with Forest Plan standards and guidelines, goals and objectives, and management area direction.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail 8.1

Major Emphasis

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) is administered by the Secretary of Interior in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, and managed as a partnership between the National Park Service AT Park Office, USDA Forest Service, local Appalachian Trail Clubs, and the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC). The Appalachian National Scenic Trail includes all trails designated by the National Trails System Act, as amended (P.L. 90-543), that occur on federal lands managed by the Forest. The AT includes spur trails to shelters, overnight-use sites, viewpoints, and water sources.

Within the Proclamation Boundary of the Green Mountain National Forest, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Management Area is the National Forest land mapped as the foreground area visible from the AT footpath and associated trail shelters, overnight use sites, viewpoints, water sources, and spur trails. The management area has a minimum width of 500 feet on either side of the AT footpath for protection from social, aural, and other impacts; minimum width should be considered only when the foreground zone does not extend beyond 500 feet on either side of the AT footpath. Outside the Proclamation Boundary, the AT Management Area includes all the lands acquired by the National Park Service (NPS) for the AT in the State of Vermont and administratively transferred to the USDA Forest Service under a Memorandum of Agreement. They are "... managed for the protection and enhancement of the Appalachian Trail and also in accordance with this agreement" as part of the Green Mountain National Forest, "subject to the National Trails Systems Act and laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to the National Forest System." These NPS-acquired lands are commonly referred to as "transfer lands."

This management area includes the section of the Long Trail which is co-aligned with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. This co-aligned section begins at the Vermont-Massachusetts State border and ends at "Maine Junction," approximately one mile north of US Route 4, a distance of approximately 105 miles.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail has been designated as a special area because of its uncommon and outstanding values. The intent is to protect the qualities of the AT that make it a part of the National Scenic Trail System.

The major emphases of this management area are to:

1. Manage the segments of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail on federal lands that traverse the State of Vermont and the Green Mountain National Forest.
2. Provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities of the land through which the AT passes.
3. Provide opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation experiences, including a sense of "wildness."
4. Recognize and strengthen the level of partnership, cooperation, and volunteer efforts integral to AT management.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail 8.1 Continued...

Desired Future Condition

Because of the linear nature of the AT, this management area will encompass a great variety of physical features. These will range from remote, natural-appearing settings having a mixture of tree sizes and forest types, to agricultural landscapes, to locations where developments are noticeable. The management area will be forested primarily, with openings and grassy areas, particularly in eastern Vermont. The AT will traverse a variety of landscapes, including higher elevation lands along the Green Mountains, and predominantly pastoral lands in the Connecticut River Valley.

This management area will retain a natural, forested, or pastoral appearance shaped by both natural and human processes. Management practices will be modified to recognize the nationally significant aesthetic and recreational values of these lands. Low-intensity vegetation management will be appropriate to maintain the long-term goals and stewardship objectives of the AT Management Area. Management activities needed to preserve or create vistas and desirable open areas will be a high priority.

Facilities will include the AT footpath itself, including trail bridges, and limited recreation facilities such as trail shelters, tent platforms, designated campsites, fire towers, privies, trailhead parking areas, and information boards. The footpath itself, including trail bridges, will be designed, constructed, and maintained for foot travel only, and to wear lightly on the land. Associated structures will be in harmony with the surrounding environment. This management area will traverse a range of ROS classes. Management of the AT setting will either be consistent with, or complement, the Semi-Primitive Non-motorized ROS class.

Recreation management will be designed to provide a variety of opportunities in the most primitive and natural recreation setting possible. Careful acquisition and trail design will allow, and has allowed in the past, an appearance of a more primitive setting than the ROS would predict. Trailheads will be designed with sensitivity to scale and character to set a tone that is consistent with the desired ROS classification. Motorized recreation, bicycles, horses, and pack stock will not be allowed on the AT footpath, although there will be rare exceptions (see AT Standards). Roads within a half mile of the AT will be managed with hiker security, safety, and AT values in mind. Recreation use will be evident although the type and intensity of use may vary by season. Control and information signs may be present. The AT will be accessible only by foot and other non-motorized, pedestrian means, such as skis or snowshoes. Roads and motorized trails will not be present except at designated crossings. Development levels and levels of use will vary by location, but the management area will emphasize a remote backcountry recreation experience in a predominantly natural or natural-appearing landscape.

Recreation impacts will be managed to protect cultural and natural resources and to minimize visual disturbance. The minimum managerial controls necessary will be used to maintain acceptable social and ecological standards.

Long Trail 8.2

Major Emphasis

The Long Trail (LT) is administered by the Forest Service and managed as a partnership with the Green Mountain Club. The Long Trail was designated a National Recreation Trail by the Regional Forest on October 15, 1986. The Long Trail is one of the oldest long-distance hiking trails in the country and is designated as a special area within the Forest Plan to protect the uncommon values associated with the trail and its history.

The Long Trail Management Area includes the Green Mountain National Forest lands within 500 feet either side of the footpath and associated trail shelters, overnight use sites, viewpoints, water sources.

The entire Long Trail extends from the Vermont/Massachusetts border north to the Canadian border. For much of the portion in southern Vermont, the trail is shared with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. This management area includes only the segment of the Long Trail that is not shared with the Appalachian Trail. This segment begins at "Maine Junction," approximately one mile north of US Route 4, and ends as it exits the Green Mountain National Forest near Mt Ellen. This trail portion is approximately a distance of 54 miles. For management direction of the Long Trail in areas coinciding with the AT, see the Appalachian Trail Management Area description and standards and guidelines.

The major emphases of this management area are to:

1. Manage the segments of the Long Trail National Recreation Trail on federal lands within the Green Mountain National Forest.
2. Provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities of the land through which the LT passes.
3. Provide opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation experiences, including a sense of "wildness."
4. Recognize and strengthen the level of partnership, cooperation, and volunteer efforts integral to LT management.

Desired Future Condition

Because of the linear nature of the Long Trail, this special area will encompass a great variety of physical features. These will range from remote, natural-appearing settings having a mixture of tree sizes and forest types, to locations where developments are noticeable. The LT will traverse a variety of landscapes, primarily forested, including higher elevation open lands and peaks along the main Green Mountain Ridge.

This management area will retain a natural, forested appearance shaped by both natural and human processes. Management practices will be modified to recognize the significant aesthetic and recreational values of these lands. Low intensity vegetation management will be appropriate to maintain the long-term goals and stewardship objectives of the LT Management Area. Management activities needed to preserve or create vistas and desirable open areas will be a high priority.

Facilities will include the LT footpath itself, trail shelters, privies, trailhead parking areas, and information boards at road crossings. The footpath itself, including trail bridges, will be designed, constructed, and maintained for foot travel only, and to wear lightly on the land. Associated structures will be in harmony with the surrounding environment. This management area will traverse a range of ROS classes. Management of the LT setting will either be consistent with, or complement, the Semi-Primitive Non-motorized ROS class.

Recreation management will be designed to provide a variety of opportunities in the most primitive and natural recreation setting possible. Careful acquisition and trail design will allow, and has allowed in the past, an appearance of a more primitive setting than the ROS would predict. Trailheads will be designed with sensitivity to scale and character to set a tone that is consistent with the desired ROS classification. Motorized recreation, bicycles, horses and pack stock will not be allowed on the LT footpath, although there will be rare exceptions (See Standards). Recreation use will be evident although the type and intensity of use may vary by season. Control and information signs may be present. The LT will be accessible only by foot and other non-motorized, pedestrian means, such as skis or snowshoes. Roads and motorized trails will not be present except at designated crossings.

Limited recreation facilities, such as trail bridges, trail shelters, tent platforms, designated campsites, toilets, parking areas, information boards, and associated amenities such as spring boxes, registers, and other facilities will be present but will complement the desired recreation opportunities. Development levels and levels of use will vary by location, but the management area will emphasize a remote recreation experience in a predominantly natural or natural-appearing landscape. Recreation impacts will be managed to protect cultural and natural resources and to minimize visual disturbance. The minimum managerial controls necessary will be used to maintain acceptable social and ecological standards.

White Rocks National Recreation Area 8.3

Major Emphasis

The White Rocks National Recreation Area (NRA) was established by Public Law 98-322 for the purpose of preserving and protecting “existing wilderness and wild values and to promote wild forest and aquatic habitat for wildlife, watershed protection, opportunities for primitive and semi-primitive recreation, and scenic, ecological, and scientific values.” The White Rocks National Recreation Area also includes the Big Branch and Peru Peak Wilderness areas. The emphasis of this management area is to attain the purpose of the public law in the lands that are not included in Wilderness.

Desired Future Condition

The White Rocks NRA will provide a predominantly deciduous and coniferous continuous canopy cover dominated by mature to old forest. Small openings will be created by various forms of vegetation management and by natural disturbances. A mix of wildlife habitats will be managed including interior areas for reclusive species and deer wintering areas.

A range of recreational opportunities will be provided in a predominantly roadless setting. These opportunities will include foot and other non-motorized means of transport such as skis, snowshoes, horses, mountain bikes, and winter motorized uses. A number of trails, including the Appalachian Trail, side trails, and the snowmobile trail system will be maintained to provide a range of trail experiences and access to key features. Some recreational facilities may be provided to enhance the visitor experience at specific attractions, such as the White Rocks picnic area. Wallingford Pond and other ponds will provide opportunities for non-motorized, water-oriented activities.

The foreground of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Long Trail (AT/LT) will encompass a portion of this management prescription. Within the foreground of the AT/LT, management practices will be designed to protect the AT/LT experience, preserve and strengthen the role of volunteers and volunteer organizations, provide opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation experiences, and provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities of the land through which the AT/LT passes. Activities within the AT/LT foreground will be planned and carried out in cooperation with the appropriate AT/LT management partner(s).

The outstanding scenic qualities of the White Rocks NRA will be maintained and enhanced through scenic protection and vista creation and maintenance.

Alpine/Subalpine Special Area 8.4

Major Emphasis

The Alpine/Subalpine Special Area emphasizes recognition, conservation, and interpretation of the alpine and subalpine zone, and its associated ecological values, along the northern Green Mountain ridgeline. This habitat is particularly fragile and vulnerable on the National Forest. It represents the southern-most extension of these communities in Vermont, and is of limited extent.

Desired Future Condition

The landscape character will be dominated by low-growing alpine and subalpine plants mixed with bedrock, talus, or gravel. Soils will go through a freeze-thaw cycle and will be subject to landslides. Broad vegetation groupings will include heath barrens and heath-krummholz. Species that are unique to these habitats, such as Bigelow's sedge and Bicknell's thrush, will be found here. The alpine and subalpine areas will occur at elevations greater than 3500 feet. Changes in vegetation will be the result of natural processes primarily. Management of the alpine and subalpine areas will recognize and conserve the cultural values of Native Americans inherent to these lands.

Evidence of human activity will primarily be limited to hiking trails. Recreation and administrative facilities, such as ski trails, lift lines, and towers, will be limited. There will be no new roads built in this management area unless required by law to provide access to private land. The primary recreational uses will include hiking and winter orienteering, and efforts will be made to confine use to designated trails or use areas, in particular when in conflict with protection of alpine and subalpine species and habitat.

Emphasis will be placed on increasing awareness and stewardship of the alpine zone through increased education and interpretation of this special environment. The focus of education and interpretation will be on alpine wildlife, plants, and communities in the Green Mountain National Forest, as well as human behaviors that minimize impacts to the alpine zone. An alpine ethic will be emphasized to promote protection of plants and proper disposal of trash and human waste.

The alpine zone will be managed for unique recreation attributes with goals and thresholds in place to prevent degradation of unique biological, cultural, and aesthetic values. Areas of the alpine zone with high recreation use will be managed to recognize their value as sources of inspiration for the large surrounding populations, while also having standards to mitigate social, biological, cultural, and aesthetic impacts. Low-use areas of the alpine zone and low-use seasons will be managed to maintain their low use. Use will not be dispersed from high to low-use areas. In general, use will be concentrated around trail corridors and facilities. Away from trails and facilities, and in the winter season, evidence of use and interaction with other users will be low.

Green Mountain Escarpment 8.5

Major Emphasis

The Green Mountain Escarpment Management Area emphasizes management of natural communities along the Green Mountain escarpment that forms the western boundary of the Forest. An escarpment is a long cliff or steep slope, resulting from erosion or tectonic faulting, which separates two comparatively level or more-gently sloping surfaces. The Green Mountain escarpment is a landscape that falls between the eastern edge of the Champlain and Vermont Valleys and the crest of the cliffs and steep slopes that form the western edge of the Green Mountains. Several natural communities found in this landscape are rare or uncommon, and provide habitat for trees, herbs, and ferns considered rare or uncommon on the Forest or within the State. Emphasis is on active management to maintain natural community diversity and to maintain or enhance populations of rare or uncommon plant and animal populations.

Desired Future Condition

This management area will provide a diverse array of natural communities and stages of vegetation development. Steep cliffs and outcrops frequently will dominate this management area. Oaks and hemlock mixed with northern hardwoods will form the dominant vegetation. Areas of large older trees will be interspersed with regenerating areas, as well as with small patch communities of forest, woodland, and open types, including such rare and uncommon types as pitch pine-oak-heath-rocky summits, temperate calcareous cliffs and outcrops, natural red pine forests, dry oak forests and woodlands, and dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam forests. The variety of natural communities will be reflective of the diversity in the terrain, and the mix of calcareous and acidic bedrock along the escarpment. As several rare species and uncommon habitats in this area require limited shade, vegetation management to maintain some of these communities will require the use of commercial and non-commercial tree harvesting, and fire. Experimentation with a variety of traditional and experimental silvicultural practices for management of the forested natural communities will be evident.

Both non-motorized and motorized dispersed use will be allowed. Motorized trail use will be limited to the winter months, and will be confined to trail corridors. Management will be towards the desired ROS objectives of Semi-primitive Motorized. Interaction between users will vary by season. There will be obvious evidence of trail signs, grooming, and snowmobiles on motorized trails in the winter. Some evidence of motorized use, such as sound, may go beyond trail corridors. In summer, use will be concentrated on trail corridors. Away from trails and in low-use portions of this management area, evidence of, and interaction with, other users will be low.

The escarpment has areas of high concentration of heritage resources. Such areas may be explored and developed for education and interpretation purposes, so long as the conservation goals of the management area will be met. The escarpment has areas that will be highly visible from offsite vantage points due to the nature of the steep terrain.

Existing and Candidate Research Natural Areas 8.6

Major Emphasis

The emphasis for an existing or candidate Research Natural Area (RNA) is preservation and protection of ecologically significant natural features, representative ecosystems, and/or unique areas. In combination with other RNAs in the nation, these form a national network of ecological areas for research, monitoring, education, and maintenance of biological diversity. A broad representation of natural communities is included in this MA. In this document, the term RNA will refer to both Existing and Candidate Research Natural Areas.

Desired Future Condition

RNAs will be chosen as high-quality representatives of ecological communities found on the Forest. In general, they will exhibit minimal evidence of past human disturbance, and will contain all or most species characteristic of that community in the region. They may range in size from less than 100 acres to thousands of acres. These management areas will be generally well buffered from incompatible activities on nearby lands in order to preserve the integrity of the area for monitoring of baseline ecological conditions. RNAs will aim to include a representation of upland, wetland, and aquatic ecological types across the Forest. Forest composition and structure will primarily be the result of natural ecological processes, rather than human-caused activities. These areas will provide excellent opportunities for many kinds of long-term monitoring and non-manipulative research.

Recreation use will be incidental and will not be encouraged in RNAs. Additional hiking trails will not be added and roads will be absent within RNA boundaries. Camping will be by individual site designation, and campfires will not be permitted.

Areas Designated as Research Natural Areas 8.6:

Research Natural Areas
The Cape
Mount Horrid
Little Pond
Branch Pond
Cranberry Bog

Ecological Special Areas 8.7

Major Emphasis

Ecological Special Areas (ESAs) are characterized by physical or biological features of Forest-wide or regional significance. Areas that may be designated as ESAs include locations that provide examples, or representatives of geological, botanical, zoological, and ecological values. Management emphasizes the protection of these values and opportunities for public use and interpretation. ESAs may also provide opportunities as reference sites for research and monitoring.

Desired Future Condition

ESAs will exemplify the special values for which they were designated. They will display a high level of integrity, while providing opportunities for public use and awareness. ESAs will represent many physical, biological, and cultural conditions across the Forest, and therefore will include a wide variation in vegetative cover and communities. This variety of ecosystems and the quality of special values will make ESAs well suited as benchmarks for research and monitoring. Some of these areas will have important recreation values in addition to their biological values for which they are designated. As a result, evidence of human activity will range from substantially unnoticeable to very evident, and road networks will vary from none to high density.

Natural disturbances and occasional management activities will shape the landscape-level and site-level vegetation composition. Components of the natural disturbance regime will include individual tree throw and infrequent larger scale blowdown, infrequent low-intensity fire, insect damage, and beaver flooding. Management activities will be generally limited to light disturbances such as trail clearing and facility maintenance, as well as habitat maintenance for rare plants and animals or restoration of natural communities.

Areas Designated as Ecological Special Areas 8.7:

Ecological Special Areas	Special Values
Rattlesnake Point	The focus of conservation for Rattlesnake Point includes a high quality example of the rare temperate calcareous cliff habitat with a large number of associated rare species, as well as representative landforms of glacial processes such as quarrying and ice plucking forested with oak forests.
Beaver Meadows and Abbey Pond	The focus of conservation in this area includes an interesting wetland complex and pond with rare plants and great blue heron rookeries.
Grout Pond	The focus of conservation at Grout Pond includes the natural shoreline, warm water fisheries habitat, and habitat for rare or uncommon plant and animal species.

Stamford Stream Wetland Complex	The focus of conservation in this area includes high quality examples of poor fens and rare plants, nested within wetland complexes.
Stamford Meadows	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of a dwarf shrub bog within a wetland complex
Beebe Pond	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality softwater pond with several rare plants.
Stratton Mountain	The focus of conservation in this area includes subalpine vegetation that provides habitat for several uncommon species.
Somerset Fen	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of a poor fen nested within a wetland complex.
Winhall River Headwater Flowage (Alternative B only)	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of an extensive natural shallow emergent marsh complex adjacent to Wilderness with a poor fen and rare or uncommon plants and animals.
French Hollow	The focus of conservation in this area includes high quality but small examples of old northern hardwood and hemlock forests.
Mt. Tabor Work Center Swamp	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of the rare calcareous red maple-tamarack swamp and associated rare or uncommon plants.
Peabody Hill	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of mature northern hardwood forest with uncommon plants.
Dutton Brook Swamp	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of the rare northern white cedar swamp and associated rare or uncommon plants.
Bryant Mountain Hollow	The focus of conservation in this area includes a high quality example of mesic and enriched oak-northern hardwood forest with an abundance of rare or uncommon plants.
Elephant Mountain	The focus of conservation in this area includes high quality examples of cliffs, outcrops, and oak, northern hardwood, and hemlock forests, with associated rare species.

Recreation Special Areas 8.8

Major Emphasis

Recreation Special Areas (RSAs) are characterized by recreational values that require special management prescriptions to sustain. Management emphasizes the protection of these values and opportunities for public use.

Desired Future Condition

Recreation SAs will provide opportunities for public use focused on the specific special value or values identified. The public will use these areas for a variety of recreational activities.

Management activities will focus on maintaining the character of these areas and providing high quality recreation opportunities for the public. Management activities may include: trail and recreation facility construction and maintenance; maintenance of vegetation to provide for both species diversity and a variety of vegetation types via prescribed fire, mowing, limited tree harvesting, or other methods compatible with the character of the area; construction and maintenance of roads, parking areas and other facilities that are compatible with the area; and interpretation and resources for recreational and educational purposes.

Areas Designated as Recreation Special Areas 8.8:

Recreation Special Areas	Special Values
Robert Frost Interpretive Trail	National Recreation Trail that provides a serene, wooded, and open appearance often evoked in Robert Frost's poems. The special area includes 60 acres that preserve the foreground appearance and include a variety of vegetation communities and successional stages.
Texas Falls	Listed on the State's register of Fragile areas, the Texas Falls gorge area includes unique geologic and scenic features
Moosalamoo Recreation Area (Alternative C only)	Characterized by a combination of recreation opportunities and aesthetic attractions. The Moosalamoo Recreation Area includes historical, archaeological, pastoral, and wildlife values.
Blueberry Lake (Alternatives B, C, D, and E)	Opportunity for water-based recreation in an easily accessible area that is largely unimpacted by motorized trail uses or timber harvesting.

Alpine Ski Area Expansion 9.3

Major Emphasis

The Alpine Ski Area Expansion Management Area recognizes the potential need for ski area expansion, and manages the land so as not to preclude future ski area development.

Desired Future Condition

Although adjacent to heavily developed alpine ski areas, these lands will generally appear natural, with little evidence of management. Existing roads and trails may provide access. If specific proposals for ski area expansion were approved consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act, the ultimate desired condition would be the same as for Alpine Ski Areas (Management Area 7.1).

These lands will be contiguous to existing ski areas, and range in size from 40 to 1,000 acres. A variety of land characteristics will occur in ski area expansion lands. In the lower and middle elevations, extensive stands of northern hardwoods will dominate the landscape. Conifers, such as red and white spruce and balsam fir, will be mixed with hardwoods at mid- to lower-elevations and dominate at higher elevations. The stands in this management area will include a mix of tree sizes and ages and will tend to be visually dominated by large mature trees.

Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers 9.4

Major Emphasis

This management area includes river segments and their associated corridors that are eligible for further study to determine if they should be recommended to Congress to be a part of the National Wild and Scenic River System. They are managed to protect and perpetuate the “outstandingly remarkable values” (ORVs) that led to their eligibility status. Once determined eligible, river segments are tentatively classified for study as either wild, scenic, or recreational based on the degree of access and amount of development along the river. Management under this MA retains a river’s eligibility for the stated potential classification. The Forest Service manages eligible river segments in a manner that will not change their status until future “suitability” studies can be performed. A river may be recommended to Congress for designation into the national river system only after such suitability studies are completed.

Wild rivers are not necessarily fast-moving whitewater rivers, scenic rivers may not be noted for scenic values, and recreational rivers may not receive heavy public use. These labels refer to the degree of development along the river. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides the following definitions:

Wild River Classification- Rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watershed or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic River Classification- Rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational River Classification- Rivers, or sections of rivers, that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundments or diversions in the past.

Desired Future Condition

The primary emphasis for management of the river and river corridor will be to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values found on that river or river segment. Management will protect the potential classification for which the river segment qualifies, so that a lowering of classification does not occur. For instance, ongoing management activities cannot change any potential eligible wild river segment to a scenic classification or a scenic river segment to a recreational river classification.

The National System is often referred to as “wild and scenic rivers,” without regard to actual classification. The actual potential classification will be an important distinction as it will have a direct effect on how the eligible river is administered and whether certain activities on federally owned lands within the boundaries will be permissible. Regardless of potential classification, each eligible river will be administered with the goal of non-degradation and enhancement of the values that caused it to be eligible. A river may have more than one, non-overlapping,

classification. All eligible rivers will be essentially free flowing. It will be noted that any rivers that are actually designated by Congress must be administered in such a way as to protect and enhance the values that made it eligible for the National System, but not to limit other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values.

Wild Segments

On this National Forest, all eligible rivers with a potential classification of wild are found within an existing wilderness. Eligible rivers in wild segments will be primarily managed to the same values and management actions that are allowable within designated wilderness. Wild segments will be undeveloped and will show little sign of human activity.

Areas within this Management Area may contain a few campsites or trail shelters, but these will be limited. Natural forces will dominate. The natural range of flooding, beaver dams, wind throw, and meandering stream channels will occur. Vegetation will be influenced only by natural processes and existing ecological components. The desired ROS for these areas will be Semi-Primitive, Non-Motorized. Visitors will normally encounter few other people, and the setting will provide habitat for wildlife needing remote areas.

Scenic Segments

These rivers, or sections of rivers, usually will be more developed than wild and less developed than recreational. This classification may or may not include scenery as an ORV. Scenic rivers will be accessible by road, but they generally will not include long stretches of conspicuous and well-traveled roads closely paralleling the riverbank.

The desired ROS for these areas will be Semi-Primitive, Non-Motorized or Semi-Primitive Motorized, or some portions in Roaded Natural, depending on current conditions. Trails in the MA may include motorized use, but all transportation proposals will use criteria to protect the values for which the river is managed. Visitors may see sights and sounds of human activities, but these will not dominate the area. Encounters with others will be higher on weekends, but few encounters will be expected mid-week, off-season, or away from trails. The landscape character will be "natural appearing" with high scenic integrity for the most part. Facilities will be minimal and primarily for visitor safety and access, and to protect river resources. Facilities may include parking areas, trailheads, rustic campgrounds, interpretive kiosks, rest rooms, trails, and signs. Facilities will be understated in appearance and will be designed to complement the natural environment in scale, character, and color.

Management of vegetation will be permitted within the river corridor. Prescribed fire, commercial timber harvest, and noncommercial felling of trees may be used for scenic or recreation facility enhancement, improvement of threatened, endangered, sensitive, and locally rare species habitat, restoration of native vegetative communities or riparian ecosystems, reduction of unnatural fuel buildups, or control of non-native invasive vegetation or forest pests. There will be no specific objective to manage for early-successional forest habitats. Existing fields or openings for wildlife may be present and maintained, but no expansion of openings or creation of new permanent openings of this type will be encouraged. Density of open roads will remain near the current level throughout the planning period with only small increases or decreases.

Recreational Segments

These rivers, or sections of rivers, usually will be more developed than scenic segments. This classification may or may not include recreation as an ORV, nor must the segment be managed

or developed for recreational activities. Recreational rivers may have parallel or crossing roads, and railroad access. Transportation facilities may parallel the river for long stretches.

The desired ROS objectives for these areas will be Roded Natural or Rural, depending on current conditions. The sights and sounds of others will be evident, and opportunities to encounter other visitors will be moderate to high. Visitors seeking solitude may find that difficult to achieve, particularly in peak-use seasons. Trails may be highly developed, including hardened trails surfaces.

The landscape character may range from natural appearing to transitional-mixed use. There may be substantial evidence of human activity along the shores of these rivers. Visitors will enjoy a natural-appearing setting with a range of human-made developments. Utility transmission corridors, electronic or communication facilities, or signs of mineral development activity may be seen within the river corridors, although the goal will be to blend these facilities into the background so that they will remain visually subordinate to the natural landscape.

Visitors will be encouraged to practice minimum impact techniques while visiting. Trash receptacles may be provided in parking areas and high-use areas. Facilities of a modern nature may be present to provide for visitor safety and comfort and to protect the river resources. Facilities will be designed to fit the character of the specific sites where they are located. Facilities may include campgrounds, parking areas, trailheads, bulletin boards, interpretive kiosks, signs, restrooms, trails, canoe launches, fishing platforms, and picnic sites.

These linear river corridors will provide for a diversity of habitats and successional stages for a wide variety of species that favor, or are tolerant of, habitat edges and human disturbances.

Vegetation will be influenced by both natural processes and humans. Management of vegetation will be permitted within the river corridor. Prescribed fire, commercial timber harvest, and noncommercial felling of trees may be used for scenic enhancement or rehabilitation, improvement of wildlife-viewing, nature study, or wildlife hunting opportunities, maintenance of developed recreation facilities, improvement of threatened, endangered, sensitive, and locally rare species habitat, restoration of native vegetative communities or riparian ecosystems, reduction of unnatural fuel buildups, or control of non-native invasive vegetation or forest pests. There will be no specific objective to manage for early-successional forest habitats. Existing fields or openings for wildlife may be present and maintained. Density of open roads will remain near the current level throughout the planning period with only small increases or decreases.

Rivers Eligible as Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers

Name	Potential Classification	Description
Battenkill River	Recreational	From NY/VT state line to Manchester
Big Branch	Scenic	From confluence of Otter Creek to Ten Kilns Brook
Bolles Brook	Scenic	From last bridge to headwaters
Bolles Brook	Recreational	From Wallomsac Brook to last bridge crossing
Bourn Brook	Wild	From wilderness boundary to headwaters
Bourn Brook	Recreational	From confluence of Otter Ck to wilderness boundary

City Stream	Recreational	Confluence Roaring Branch Wallomsac Brook to Woodford
Deerfield River	Scenic	Searsburg Reservoir to headwaters
Leicester Hollow Brook	Scenic	End of FS Rd 243 to headwaters
Leicester Hollow Brook	Recreational	Neshobe River to end of FS Rd. 243
Lye Brook	Wild	From wilderness boundary to headwaters
Lye Brook	Recreational	Confluence of Battenkill to wilderness boundary
Mad River	Recreational	From Folsom Brook to headwaters
Middlebury No. Branch	Recreational	From confluence of Middlebury River to confluence of Alder Brook
New Haven River	Recreational	Within proclamation boundary
Ottauquechee River	Recreational	From Woodstock to the headwaters
Otter Creek	Recreational	From Emerald Lake to East Ck in Rutland

Wilderness Study Areas 9.5

Major Emphasis

This management area provides for the management and protection of Wilderness Study areas. The draft alternatives propose (insert number of range of areas) for wilderness study status: The focus would be on managing these areas to protect wilderness characteristics pending legislation as to their classification, and providing existing uses where compatible with protecting wilderness character.

Desired Future Condition

Roadless characteristics will not be adversely changed. These areas will be managed to allow current activities to continue only where they do not adversely impact the potential for future wilderness designation. Timber harvests will not occur. Vegetation composition will result from natural ecological processes rather than human-caused activities. Temporary openings, early successional forest, and small permanent openings may be found, but will not be maintained. Components of the natural disturbance regime will include individual wind throw and infrequent large-scale blow down, very infrequent low-intensity fire, insect damage, and beaver flooding. Parcels previously maintained as early successional units will disappear with the passage of time. New trail construction will not be encouraged but existing trails may be maintained at the current standards. Vegetation will not be cut for trail vistas.

Existing roads may remain open and receive routine maintenance. Major repairs or improvements that require significant investments will not be made and rehabilitation will not occur. Existing Forest Service system snowmobile trails will remain in use, with routine maintenance allowed. No expansion of corridor widths or re-routes of trails will be permitted and no new motorized uses will be authorized. Existing recreational special permits may continue.

Existing research projects will be able to continue. Unless required by law or regulation, no new discretionary non-recreational special use permits will be issued. Wildfires will be suppressed favoring methods that cause the least disturbance possible.

The removal of human influences may occur. However, the evidence of human development will be noted still. There may be evidence of previous settlement such as stonewalls, cellar holes, old roads, and other structures and features. Trails, trail blazes, and limited trail signing will provide onsite guidance to visitors. On-site interpretation, through use of signs, will not occur. Trail bridges necessary for resource protection and visitor safety may be allowed following wilderness national policy. Existing structures, facilities, or shelters may remain and be maintained, especially where such properties are determined historically significant (eligible to the National Register for Historic Places) and are consistent with the character of the Wilderness. Individual rustic campsites may be noted, but will not dominate a landscape. Where resource degradation is occurring due to visitor use, the protection of the natural resource will be the higher goal. If not designated as trails, unclassified (non-system) roads or travelways will be restored to natural conditions.