

Wilderness Management and Roadless Inventory Process

Forest Plan Revision 2003

Green Mountain
National Forest



Agenda

- **Overview of Plan Revision**

- **What is Wilderness**

 - Brief History of Wilderness

 - Situation on GMNF

 - Current Wilderness Issues

- **Roadless Inventory**

 - Why does the FS do an Inventory

 - What is the Process

- **Questions- Open House Format**

- **Regroup for Sharing Comments**

Announcements

Meeting notes

Past issues

Missed previous meetings?

Public input meetings – No
Decisions

What is in a Forest Plan?

- Goals and Objectives
- Standards and Guidelines
- Management Areas
- Land suitable for timber harvesting and upper limits on timber sales
- Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements

Forest Plan Revision

Why are we revising the plan?

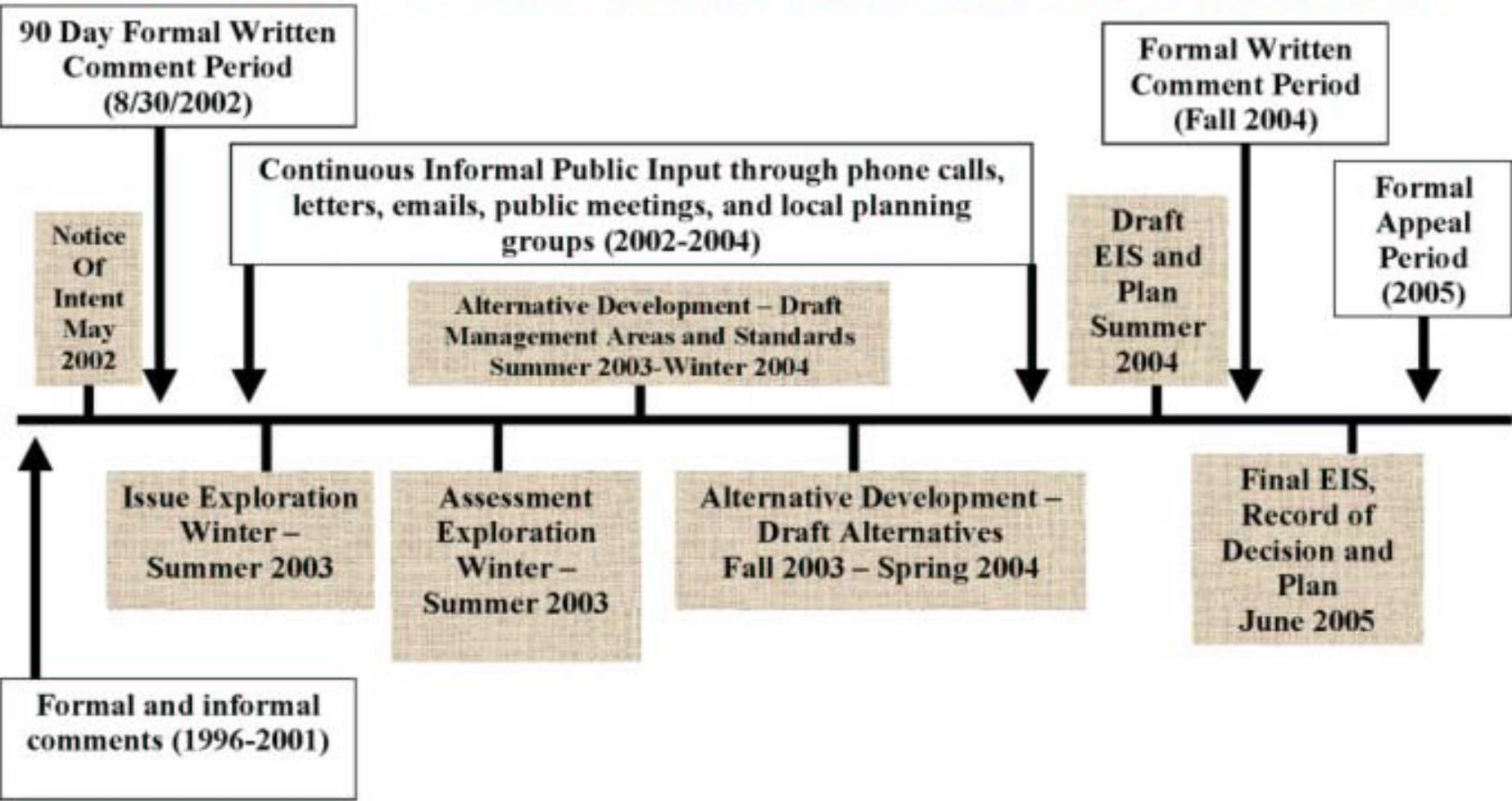
Updating a 1987 Mgm't Plan

Regulations, new science, issues and trends, good planning

How can you get involved?

Meetings, phone calls, emails, letters

Public Involvement Timeline GMNF Forest Plan Revision



Issue Exploration: Spring-Summer 2003

- Role of the GMNF
- Desired Future
- Goals and Objectives
- Land Acquisition Priorities
- Mgt. Of Newly Acquired Lands
- Developed Recreation
- Undeveloped Recreation
- Road Management
- Trail Management
- Ecosystems/Biodiversity
- Wilderness
- Timber/Vegetation Management

Wilderness With a Capital "W"!

Where: Federal Lands

- US Forest Service,
- Bureau of Land Management,
- National Park Service,
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

How: Act(s) of Congress

1964 Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act – Sec. 2 (a)

... it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.

1964 Wilderness Act

... has Outstanding
Opportunities for Solitude or a
Primitive and Unconfined Type of
Recreation...

1964 Wilderness Act

... may also Contain Ecological, Geological, or Other Features of Scientific, Educational, Scenic, or Historic Value.

1964 Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act ...
generally appears to have
been affected primarily by
the forces of nature, with the
imprint of man's work
substantially unnoticeable.

Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975

The Congress finds that--

(1) in the more populous eastern half of the US there is an urgent need to identify, study, designate, and preserve areas for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System

Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975

Eastern half of the US...

- Increasingly threatened by the pressure of a growing and more mobile population,
- Large-scale industrial & economic growth,
- Development & uses inconsistent with the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the areas' wilderness character...

Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975

To promote and perpetuate the wilderness character of the land & specific values of...

- Solitude,
- Physical and mental challenge,
- Scientific study,
- Inspiration,
- Primitive recreation...

History of Wilderness on the GMNF

1964 Wilderness Act

- Signed after 9 Years and 63 Versions
- 9.1 Million Acres Nationally
- No Effect on Green Mountain NF
- Only NE Wilderness was Great Gulf Wilderness on the White Mountain NF

1975- Eastern Wilderness Act



Created 6,500 acre **Bristol Cliffs** Wilderness, included authority to purchase over 2,000 private lands acres.

Designated approx. 14,300 Acres **Lye Brook** Wilderness.

1976 Bristol Cliffs Bill



Law
Adjusted
Boundaries
to Exclude
Private Land.
Now 3,738
Acres.

1984 Vermont Wilderness Act



Acres added in 1984

Breadloaf = 21,480

Big Branch = 6,720

Peru Peak = 6,920

George D. Aiken = 5,060

Addition to Lye Brook = 1,080

Currently



**Wilderness Acres
Current Total
59,598**

**White Rocks
National
Recreation Area
22,760 Non-
Wilderness Acres**

Allowed in Wilderness



Primitive, non-motorized recreation, hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, x-c skiing.



Trail construction and maintenance, with reduced standards.

Allowed in Wilderness

**Search and Rescue, Fire Control, Research
with Restrictions**



**Access to Existing
Private Rights
and In-holdings**

Prohibitions in Wilderness

- **Commercial Timber Harvest,**
- **Wildlife Openings created by Harvest,**
- **Viewpoint Openings along Trails,**
- **Motorized Vehicles,**
- **Motorized Equipment,**
- **Mechanical Transport, (Except Wheelchairs)**



Prohibitions in Wilderness



- **Facilities, permanent improvements or roads.**
- **Commercial enterprises, except for wilderness oriented outfitter guides, under permit.**

Exceptions

Fire Control

Search and Rescue

Exceptions

**Specific Wilderness
Legislation May Allow
Certain Activities, that are
Normally Prohibited under
National Regulations.**

Exceptions

Local Management Plans may have Additional Prohibitions or Restrictions.

Need to know both the National Laws and Regulations and Local Requirements.

Current Mgm't Issues

Existing Trail Shelters
Maintenance & Replacement



Current Mgm't Issues



Level of Trail
Maintenance
Standards
for Brushing,
Blazing, &
Signage

Current Mgm't Issues



Outfitter
Guides and
Group Size

Current Mgm't Issues



- Boundary Trespass- Motorized Use
- Technology- Cell Phones, GPS, Geo-Caching, Off-trail Travel Impacts
- Education Awareness of Wilderness Differences and Values

QUESTIONS SO FAR?



Inventoried Roadless Areas

Areas with the Potential to
be Wilderness

Potential Wilderness??

Roadless Inventory

Why Does the FS Do an Inventory?

- **Each National Forest Must Conduct a Roadless Inventory During Plan Revision.**
- **The 1984 Vermont Wilderness Act directed the FS to conduct a Roadless Inventory during the next Plan Revision.**

Roadless → Potential Wilderness

What Are the Steps?

- An **INVENTORY** of Roadless Areas
- An **EVALUATION** of Roadless Areas for their **WILDERNESS POTENTIAL**
- A **RECOMMENDATION** to **CONGRESS** on **NEW WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS.**

Roadless → Potential Wilderness

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Roadless → Potential Wilderness

When is the Process Complete?

- Roadless Inventory
- Evaluation for Potential Wilderness
- Recommendation To Congress

June 2005 Target Date for
“Record of Decision”

Roadless Inventory

What is the Process for an Inventory?

- **FS Nationwide Direction**
- **FS Eastern Region Direction**
- **Initial Steps Conducted by Contractor**
- **Tonight's Maps are Drafts**

Roadless Inventory- *National Criteria*

1. 5,000 Acres or More
2. Can be 5,000 Acres or Less if,
 - a. Manageable due to Physical Features or Vegetation
 - b. Self Contained Ecosystems such as an Island
 - c. Contiguous to Existing Wilderness...Regardless of Size

Roadless Inventory- *Eastern US Criteria*

1. Land is Regaining a Natural Appearance.
2. Existing Improvements are Affected by Forces of Nature, Rather than Humans, and are Disappearing or Muted.

Roadless Inventory- *Eastern US Criteria*

**3. Existing or Attainable FS
Ownership, both Surface and
Subsurface, could Ensure
Perpetuation of Identified
Wilderness Values.**

Roadless Inventory- *Eastern US Criteria*

4. Location is Conducive to Perpetuation of Wilderness Values. Consider Relative to Sources:

- **Noise, Air and Water Pollution**
- **Unsightly Conditions**
- **Amount and Pattern of Federal Ownership**

Roadless Inventory- *Eastern US Criteria*

5. No More Than ½ Mile of Improved Road for Each 1,000 Acres, Road is Under Forest Service Jurisdiction.

Example- 20,000 Acre Roadless Area could perhaps have up to 10 Miles of Improved Roads.

Roadless Inventory- *Eastern US Criteria*

6. No More Than 15% of Area is in Non-Native, Planted Vegetation.

7. 20% or Less of the Area has been Harvested Within Past 10 Years.

Roadless Inventory- *Eastern US Criteria*

8. Area Contains only a Few Dwellings on Private Land, and Location of Dwellings and their Access Needs Insulate Their Effects on the Natural Conditions of Federal Lands.

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

- ✓ Previously Inventoried Areas must still meet Criteria. GMNF has 16 of these areas, about 10,000 acres.
- ✓ If Contiguous to Wilderness, No Barriers such as Roads or Utility Corridors; Must be "Logically" Attached.

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

- ✓ "Harvest" in 20% Rule Refers to:
 - Clear cuts,
 - Seed-tree harvest,
 - Shelter-wood harvest,
 - Thinning or individual/group tree selection are not included.

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Criteria

- ✓ "Improved Road" Defined as:
"...for the purpose of travel by passenger vehicle (four-wheeled, 2-wheel drive) ...legally allowed on forest or public roads...and vehicles are greater than 50" in width...will have area for vehicles to travel on, and some manner of disposal of surface runoff..."

Roadless Inventory- *1997 Regional Guidance*

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

Urban---Rural-----Roaded Natural
Semi-Primitive Motorized--- Semi-
Primitive Non-Motorized---Primitive

Semi-Primitive Non Motorized &
Primitive Provide Opportunities for
Solitude, An Important Wilderness
Characteristic

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

Inventory of Solitude Criteria:

- ✓ To Inventory for Solitude:
 - Criteria uses Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Maps
 - "Semi-Primitive" Core of Around 2,500 Acres, for Areas not Attached to Existing Wilderness

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

Delineating Roadless Area Boundaries

- Use Natural Features- ridges, streams
- Use Constructed features- roads, trails
- Don't Cross power lines, major roads

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

Delineating Roadless Area Boundaries

- No “cherry-stemming” boundaries
- No narrow, elongated, gerrymandered lines
- Where possible, conform with terrain or other features that constitute a barrier to regulate uses and external influences

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

Delineating Roadless Area Boundaries

- Locate boundaries to avoid conflict with important existing or potential public uses outside the boundary which could result in non-conforming demands on the area if it became Wilderness.

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

Delineating Roadless Area Boundaries

- Provide reasonable and appropriate access for wilderness trailhead facilities.
- Roadless can contain less than 70% Federal ownership only if it is realistic to manage the Federal lands as Wilderness and still provide traditional access to private lands.

Roadless Inventory- 1997 Regional Guidance

Delineating Roadless Area Boundaries

- Roads Under State, or Town Jurisdiction Cannot be Included in a Roadless Area, as the Forest Service does NOT have the Authority to Regulate Use on Those Roads.

Roadless Inventory Process

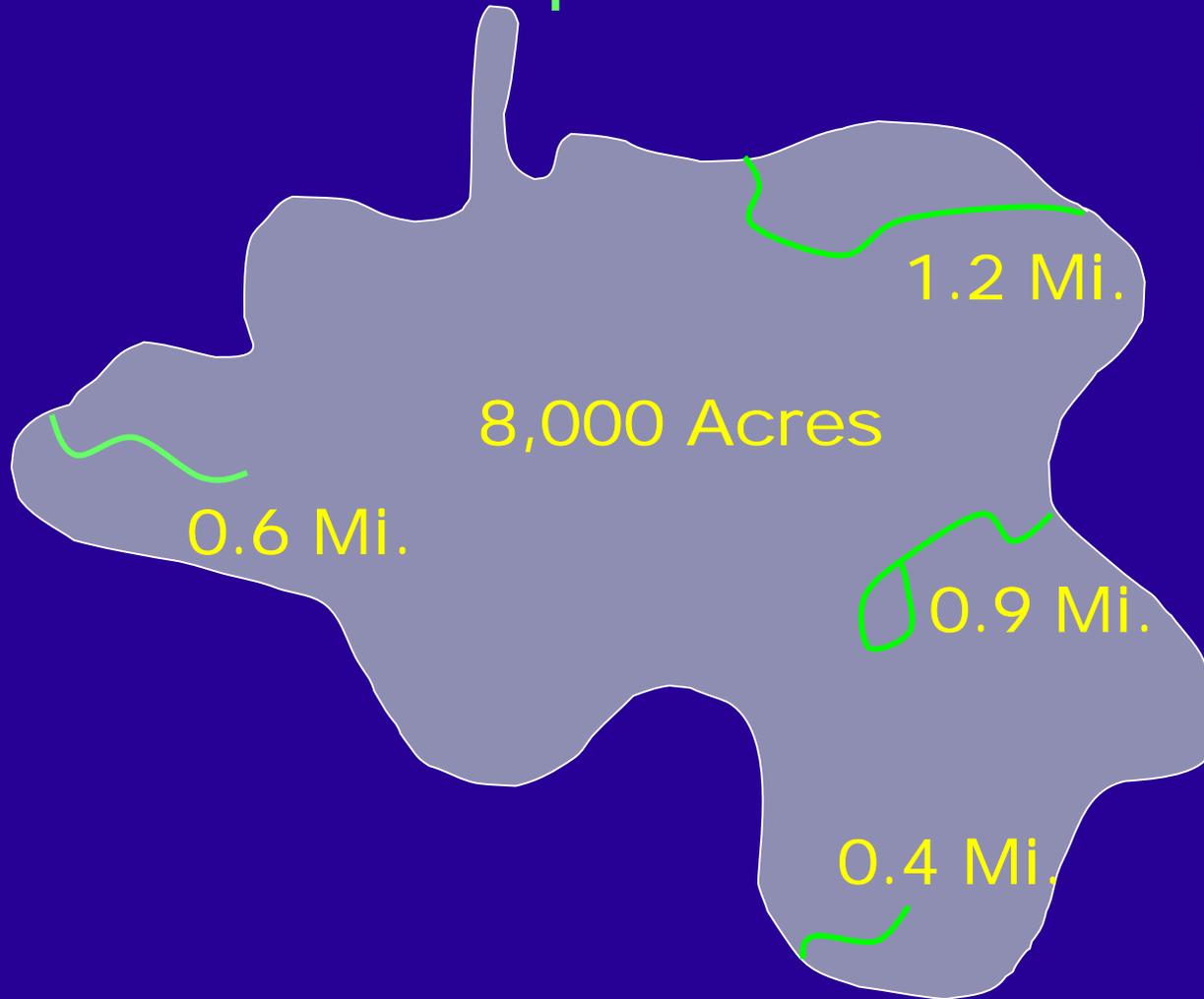
Area's size is 5,000
acres or more...



25
acres

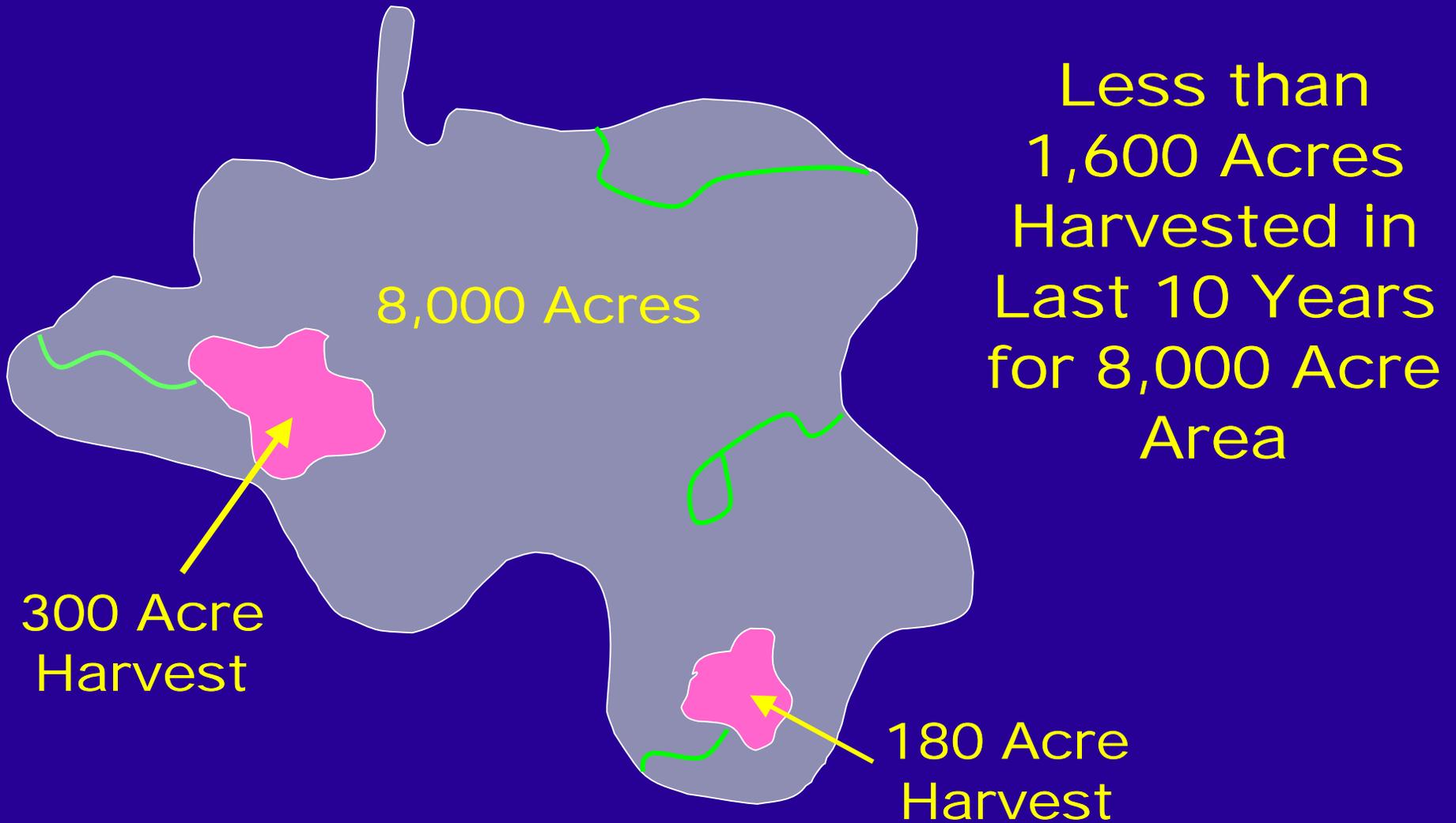
Or, smaller and attached
to existing Wilderness

Improved Roads: Maximum ½ Mile per 1000 Acres

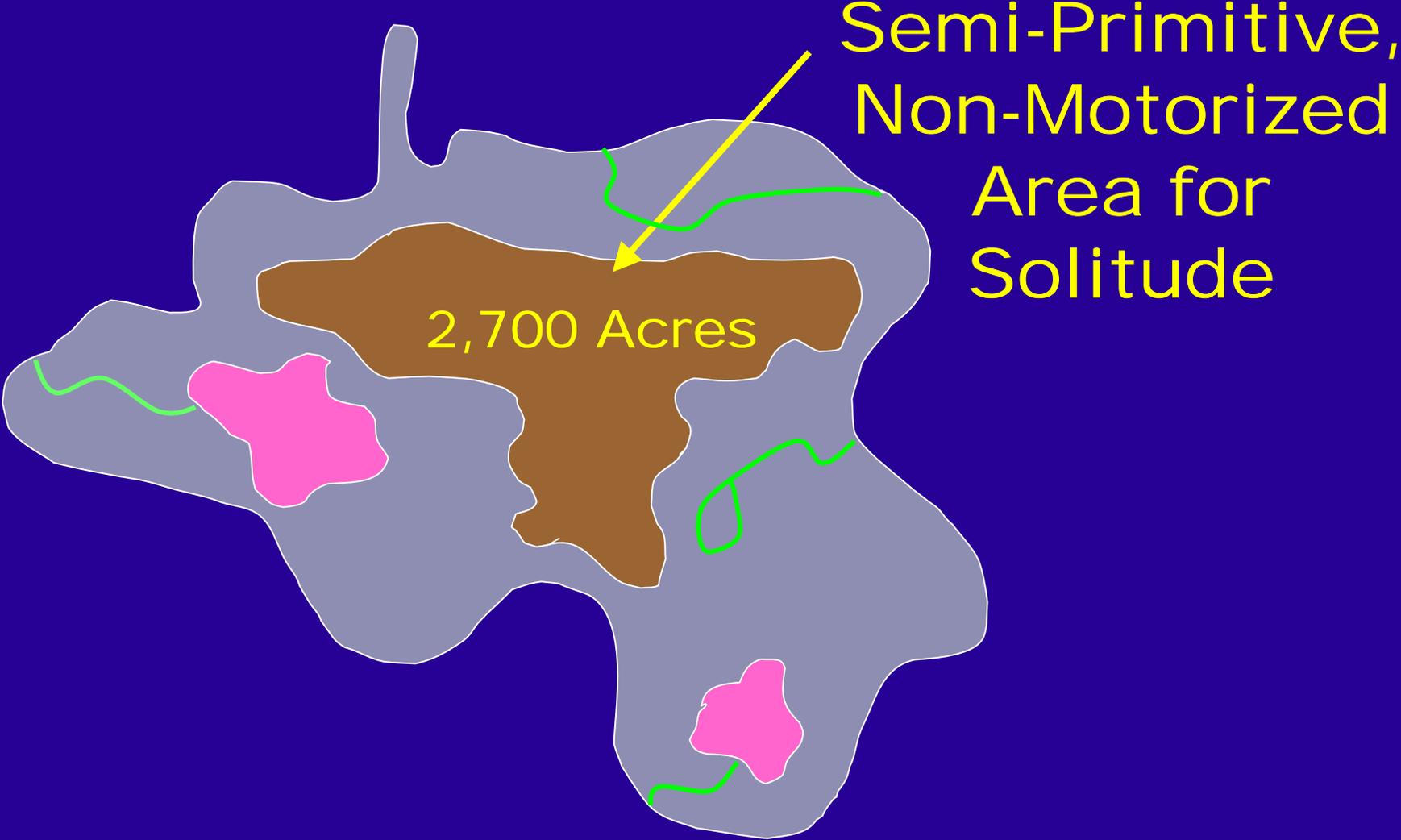


No more than
4 Miles
Within 8,000
Acre
Boundary

Harvests: < 20% of Area in Past 10 Years

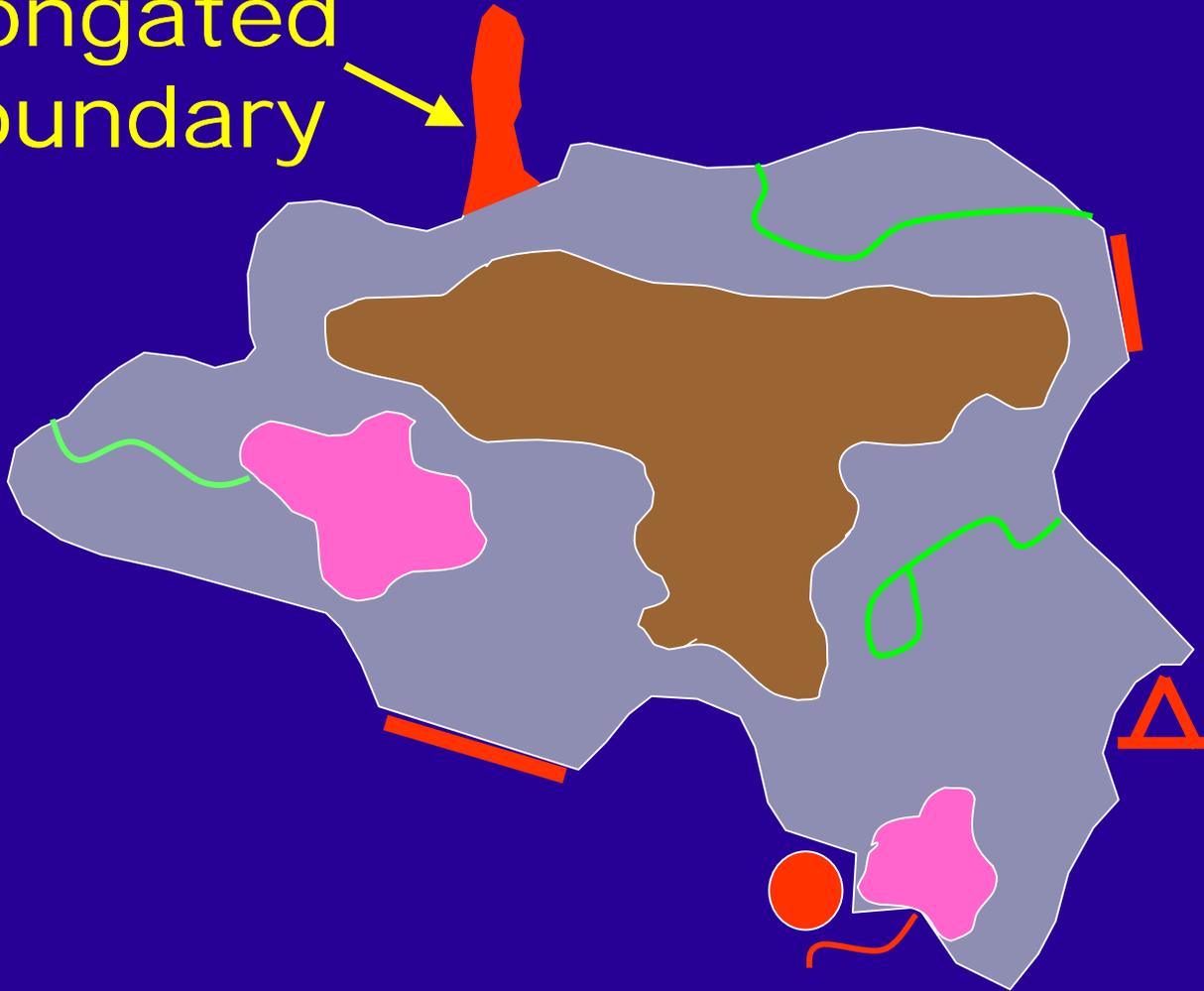


Semi-Primitive Core: Approximately 2,500 Acres

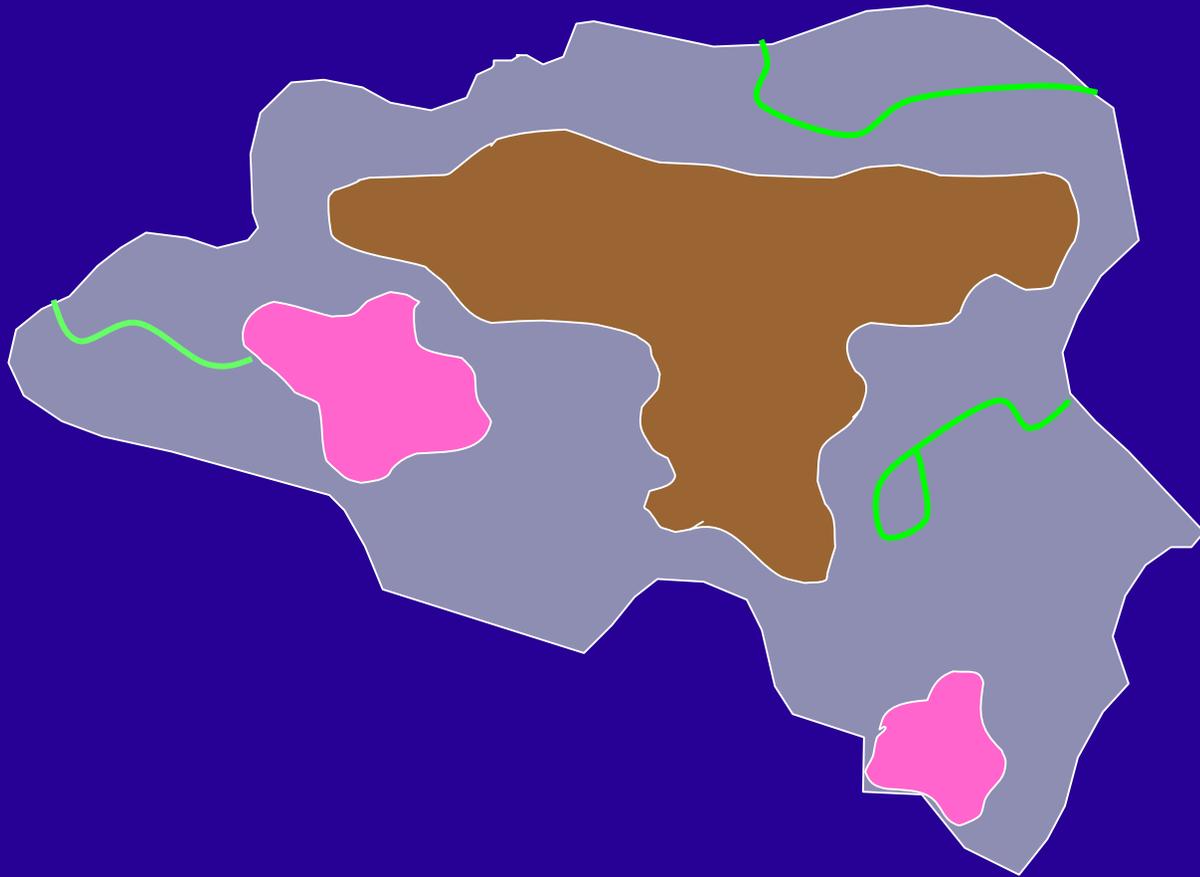


Avoid Cherry-Stemming and Elongated Boundaries

Elongated
Boundary



Draft Candidate Roadless Area



National Evaluation of Potential Wilderness

Criteria- "Capability"

- Environment- Solitude, serenity, adventure
- Challenge
- Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
- Special Features- Scenery, wildlife
- Manageability- Ability to manage as a Wilderness

National Evaluation of Potential Wilderness

Criteria- "Availability"

- Value and Need for Wilderness compared to not recommending for designation.
- Constraints and Encumbrances-easements.
- Determine effects on adjacent lands.

National Evaluation of Potential Wilderness

Criteria- "Need"

- Is there clear evidence of current or future public need for additional designated Wilderness.

Questions for Tonight Open House 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?

Questions for Tonight Open House Stations

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...