



## WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB

Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892

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Forest Planning Team:

I am writing to you as president of the Wonalancet Out Door Club (WODC), which maintains over 50 miles of trails in the Sandwich Range Wilderness (SRW) in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. The WODC has been caring for the Sandwich Range for 112 years, fostering good environmental practices and educating the public about responsible usage. The WODC was a strong advocate, testifying before Congress for the creation of the Sandwich Range Wilderness.

First, we want to compliment the work of the team and all those who contributed to this thorough guide for the management of the WMNF. WODC is by nature focused on the stewardship of trails, ecology, aesthetics, and recreation, thus being especially interested in how Wilderness and other management areas affect the Sandwich Range. In this light we recommend the proposal of your preferred Alternative 2 subject to the following comments and recommendations for modification.

### **ATV's**

We wholeheartedly agree with your analysis of the impact of the use of ATVs within the White Mountain National Forest and your related proposals. The use of ATVs almost always leaves long lasting scars on the landscape.

### **More Wilderness for Old Mast Road, Kelley Trail, Cabin Trail**

WODC proposes moving the Wilderness boundary as shown in **Figure 1** which was scanned from the included WODC map. toward the south to approximately the 2000' contour. This would put about 1/3 mile more of each of Old Mast Road, Kelley Trail, and Cabin Trail into Wilderness. It would also offer protection to the upper gully of Cold Brook (Kelley Trail), which has a decidedly wild character and numerous spruce trees well over 200 years old; and it would widen the narrow "wasp waist" of the Sandwich Range Wilderness.

The Wilderness boundary shown in **Figure 1** keeps the boundary north of the inventoried roads (fire road 337, a haul road used during harvesting on the south west slopes of Whittin Ridge, and

a road between Old Mast Road and Kelley Trail). Thus the proposed new boundary would transfer a small amount of land that could reasonably be considered as roadless to Wilderness status. We do not believe this proposal would effect mountain bike use or any grooming the Tamworth Outing Club may desire to do in the future.

### **Part of “Sandwich 1” should be Wilderness**

"Sandwich 1", the east slopes of Mt. Mexico, is currently proposed as FMA 2.1 (general forest management). The draft EIS gives the following reason for not recommending it: "Ecological land types favoring oak forest exist in this area. The oak type is desirable for wildlife habitat, but is more easily maintained in young first generation stands. The ability to use forest management tools to retain oak in this area may be advisable." WODC believes that since oak-favoring habitat is confined to the southern end of "Sandwich 1", the area bounded by the top of the southeastern spur of Mt. Mexico and Bickford Trail could be added to Wilderness with negligible effect on the oaks.

At present, the Wilderness boundary is 66' east of Big Rock Cave Trail as the trail descends toward Whittin Brook. This means that Big Rock Cave itself is bisected by the boundary. If this area is designated FMA 2.1, it could be clearcut or there could be motorized access to the cave. This would be a shame.

Including this area in Wilderness can also be argued from a watershed viewpoint. The Whittin Brook watershed is entirely within the Wilderness except for the northeasterly portion of "Sandwich 1." Preventing logging / road building in this area will protect the pristine quality of Whittin Brook. And even though the Forest Service says it doesn't consider viewsheds when determining Wilderness boundaries, WODC feels it is relevant to point out that this area constitutes the nearest and most prominent viewshed of all the outlooks on Lawrence Trail, including the ledge on the top of the south "peak" of Paugus. Similarly, this area is in the is viewable from the Great Hill Fire Tower in Hemenway State Forest.

### **Flat Mountain Pond Roadless Area (Sandwich-3)**

Some well spoken WODC members propose that this entire area should be added to Wilderness, with one of their goals as preventing snowmobile access. Whether or not we participate in snowmobiling, most of us acknowledge that it is a legitimate and popular pastime that conforms to the Forest Service's concept of multiple use. Inclusion of this area in the FMA 9.1 category would effectively block any options for using national forest land as an arguably needed trail corridor in this area. Thus WODC favors a compromise solution for Sandwich-3: provide for a snowmobile corridor, but incorporate much of this area into Wilderness. See **Figure 2** below which was scanned from the included WODC map.

Sincerely,

Richard Daniels,  
President, WODC

Figure 1

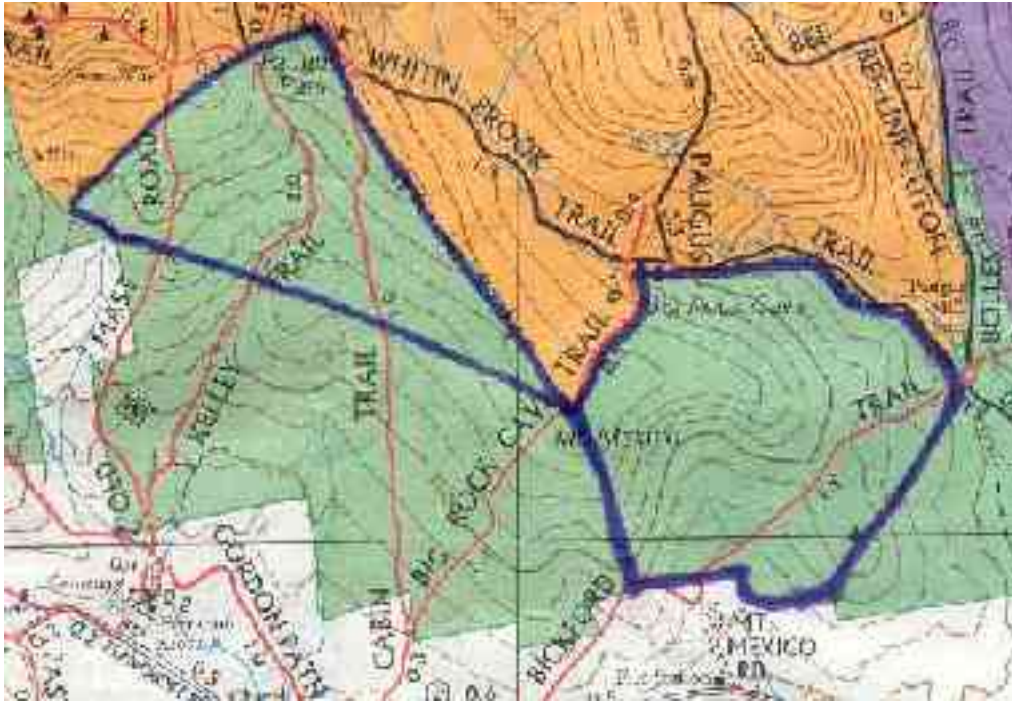
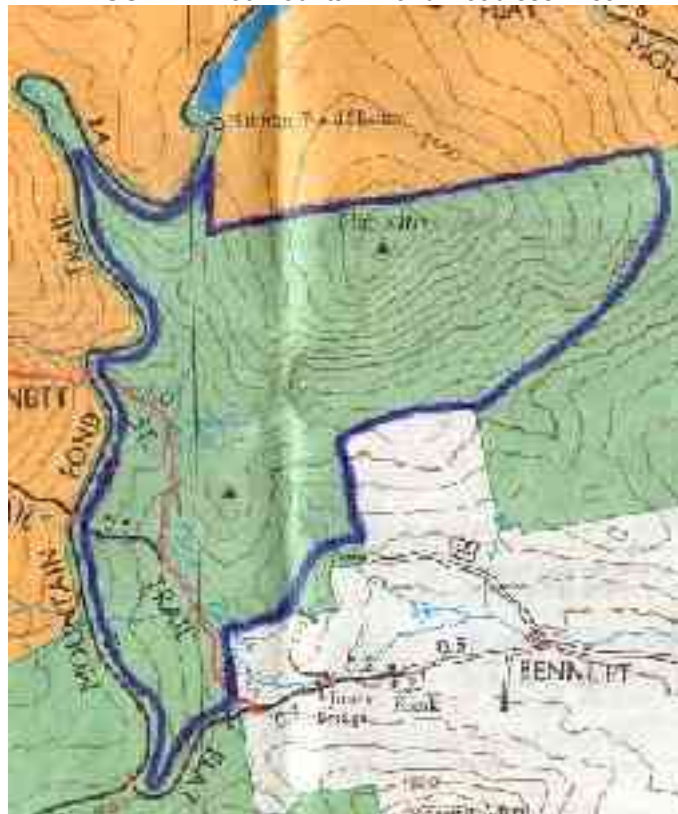


FIGURE 2 Flat Mountain Pond Roadless Area



WODC proposes moving the Wilderness boundary toward the south to approximately the 2000' contour.

A Wilderness boundary following approximately the 2000' contour keeps the boundary north of the inventoried roads (fire road 337, a haul road used during harvesting on the south west slopes of Whittin Ridge, and a road between Old Mast Road and Kelley Trail).