

FOREST PLAN REVISION

The "Forest Plan," or more accurately the **Land and Resource Management Plan of the White Mountain National Forest**, is a lengthy document describing: the present condition of the Forest and the activities thereon, the desired future condition of the Forest, and the program of actions to achieve that future condition. Although planning processes have been used on National Forests for many decades, it was not until 1976 that Congress enacted legislation formalizing preparation of forest plans and periodic revisions. The current WMNF Forest Plan dates from 1986. A process to revise that plan by the year 2000 is now under way.

This article is a brief summary of the early phases of the WMNF revision process as seen through the eyes of a participant.

Phase One of the revision process took place during January and February of 1997 at public listening sessions held in several New England cities: Concord and Berlin, NH, and Boston, MA. Among WODC members attending the Concord meeting were David Bowles, Fred Lavigne, Evelyn McKinnon, and George Zink.

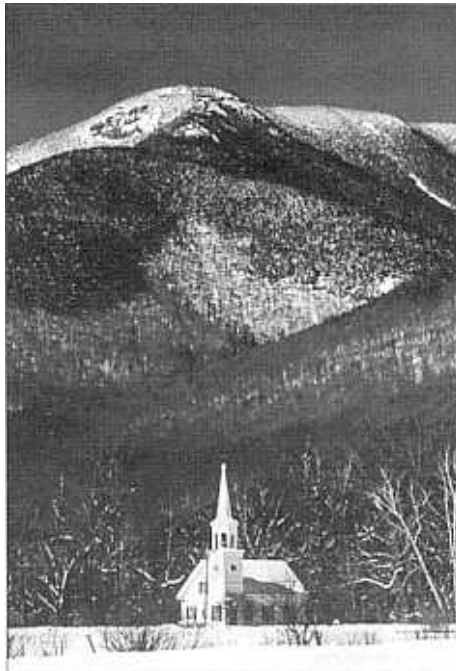
The objective of these early meetings was to obtain opinions from the public on the need to change the present Plan. To facilitate the expression and recording of ideas, the large group of attendees separated into 13 smaller groups, each led by a group facilitator. Group leaders kept comments focused by not allowing the rebuttal of opinions expressed by others. As a result, the meetings ran smoothly and without rancor. Following the three listening sessions, additional comments were received through letters, faxes, and conversations.

Staff members of WMNF then studied all comments received, and sorted the many comments into 33 different categories or "issues." As an example, "Information/Education" is an issue and includes dozens of opinions such as: "People need direction on dispersed use"; "Role of education in mitigating adverse impacts and instilling a sense of

stewardship ethics"; "Develop and implement an interpretive plan for WMNF"; "I want to see the F/S become more public oriented"; "Increase outreach to rural kids."

Phase Two involved three all-day meetings of Public Planning Groups (PPG) held monthly during the summer and fall of 1997. All participants were volunteers. The first was held in Plymouth, NH, the second in Concord, NH, and the third in Bethel, ME. The following WODC members attended these meetings: Pierce Beij, David Bowles, Susan Bryant, David Eastman, Chip Kimball, Fred Lavigne, Evelyn McKinnon, Ted Sidley, and George Zink. Meetings required long days, long drives, and homework study. Leaders divided the participants into three groups of approximately 20 each, since fewer people took part in these PPGs.

The objectives of these PPG meetings were: to study the 33 issues identified during Phase One, and determine whether the Forest Service personnel described the issues accurately; to add to the list any aspects of the issues thought to be relevant; and to discover how strongly PPG participants feel about the importance
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Season's Greetings
Photo: Andy Thompson

ANNUAL MEETING

The warm sunny afternoon of August 24 proved to be ideal weather for a picnic supper, and a chance to meet old and new members. Each year the number of members attending the picnic grows, as does their participation in WODC affairs.

Following the potluck supper in the Grove, we went inside the Wonalancet Chapel for the Annual Meeting, led by Vice President Judith Reardon. One would never suspect the busy life she leads as she guides us through the meeting unrushed and at ease.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were read. Several of the articles in this November *Newsletter* are taken from special reports or discussions at the Annual Meeting.

There is a need for increasing the 1998 budget, so an increase in dues has become essential. Please refer to the **1997 Trails Report and Levels of Member Support** articles for further information.

Membership is down this year. So far, there have been 19 new memberships; 1996 was a banner year with 66 new members. Current membership numbers listed by category are: 152 family, 251 individual, 8 organizational, and 39 complimentary or special. Several suggestions were made on ways to increase the number. The kiosk plays a vital role in drawing attention to the Club and some of its functions. Other suggestions are welcomed.

There was a discussion about the items we sell. There was agreement to continue as previously, but to change the design, color, and style of T-Shirts to encourage sales; see the article **T-Shirt Design Contest**. Maps will continue to be sold to individuals at \$5, and \$4 to stores that order maps in quantity.

The condition of Camp Heermance is poor. If it is to be saved, exterior repairs must be made. After much discussion, it was moved to have the Executive Committee take up the matter with the Forest Service and begin monitoring its use. A vote was taken on the opinions of those at the meeting: 8 wishing to see



Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892

The *Newsletter* is published twice each year by the Wonalancet Out Door Club. The mailing address is:

WODC
Newsletter Editor
Wonalancet, NH 03897

The Editor encourages members and interested readers to submit material for use in future issues. Articles, poems, drawings, comments, criticisms, suggestions, are welcomed.

ANNUAL MEETING

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Heermance preserved for use; 9 preserving Heermance for emergencies and historical reasons only, with a sign informing people that it is not to be used; and 6 favoring its removal. There were 2 abstentions in the non-binding vote.

Election of 1998 Officers:

President:	Dick Daniels
Vice President:	Judith Reardon
Secretary:	Sharon Nothnagle
Treasurer:	Tom Rogers

Elected members of the Executive Committee:

Bill Braman	Barbara Sidley
Susan Bryant	Ted Sidley
Frank Kelley	Peter Smart
Roger Korpi	Shannon Spencer
John Mersfelder	George Zink
Howard Nordeen	Sally Zink

David Bowles and Nat Steele are maintaining some ski trails on private land in the interval. They could use assistance and would appreciate help. They would also like contributions for gas. Many agree that their trail breaking with snowmobiles has improved cross-country skiing conditions.

We all appreciate the time and effort Judith Reardon has spent as Acting President this year when she was too busy to serve as President. Thank you, Judy.

We also wish to extend thanks to Barbara Sidley who is retiring as Secretary of WODC after completing 20 years of

service in this position. During the period she has been writing reports for both the Annual Meetings and all meetings of the Executive Committee. Barbara has in addition sent publicity items to local newspapers, made posters, written and mailed reminder postcards to members, written articles for the *Newsletter*, and assisted with the Club library. She has been a loyal and conscientious officer of the Club. Many are the times she has travelled from Concord, NH or Lincoln, MA to take notes at an Executive Committee meeting, to help plan a cookout, or to warm the Sidley house for a winter meeting. Perhaps many of you are not familiar with her work, but she is truly an unsung hero who began as Secretary in 1976, took a year off in 1980, and since then has continued to fill this important role. We thank you, Barbara, for your 20 years of service. We will continue to look forward to your tasty lasagna at picnics!

Sally Y. Zink

Levels of Member Support

At the WODC Annual Meeting, the trails budget for 1998 was increased from \$3,975 to \$6,975. As explained in greater detail in the article entitled **Fall Trail Report** on page 2, the increase of \$3,000 was deemed necessary.

To assist in meeting the budget item for trails, members voted to change the dues structure. Starting in 1998, there will be three voluntary levels of membership support: **Path Finder**, **Steward**, and **Trail Blazer**, with dues payments of \$15, \$25, and \$50 respectively. In order to make this change without amending the existing Club By-Laws, membership categories of Individual, Family, and Organizational will be retained. As an example, an individual member may pay dues at any one of the three levels. All members, regardless of category, may choose the level with which they are most comfortable.

Please do not make your 1998 dues payment at this time unless you plan to prepay your 1998 dues and thus obtain a 1997 tax deduction.

In early 1998 there will be the regular dues mailing.

Richard Daniels

FALL TRAIL REPORT

On October 18th we celebrated the close of another successful trail season, sharing a pizza dinner with Trailwrights and other volunteers who joined us on the Square Ledge Trail. This was one of seven scheduled trips in 1997, all met their objectives and provided a great time for everyone who joined in. Our volunteer program was somewhat less ambitious than last year's, concentrated primarily on routine maintenance rather than major restoration efforts. However, it did leave everyone ready for more.

Major restoration was the target for our Sandwich Range Conservation Association (SRCA) trail crew. Led by Nat Scrimshaw, the crew built 28 rock steps and eight water bars on the Walden trail, concentrated on the first 1/4 mile of the trail immediately above Old Mast Road. Funding consisted of \$3150 from the WODC and \$1600 from the USFS Saco District.

Problems Ahead

Unfortunately, the completed work addresses only a fraction of the problems on Walden Trail. There is still a major gully above the "four way", plus a long section of erosion in the middle section. The last mile of the trail on Passaconaway needs major work, since the log steps installed by the USFS in 1994 are coming loose and being undermined.

There are other WODC trails on the "critical list": The exceeding steepness of Wiggin Trail, combined with loose soils and increasing use, have caused a marked increase in erosion. Wiggin has virtually no erosion control structures, and will require a considerable investment to stabilize the trail. The Lawrence trail has similar conditions, but the lighter traffic make those problems somewhat less urgent.

1998 Trail Budget

At the current rate of progress it could take five to ten years to address all these problems. In the mean time these problems will continue to worsen, and therefore more expensive to repair. It was the presentation of these facts at the

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FOOTLOOSE IN THE FLATLANDS

Author Steve Smith is a WODC member who lives in Lincoln, NH. As well as an avid hiker, he is Marketing Director of The Mill at Loon Mountain, author of the guidebook 'Ponds and Lakes of the White Mountains,' edits the 'White Mountain Notes' section of AMC's *Appalachia Journal*, and serves on the AMC's 4000-Footer Committee.

The country in the vicinity of Flat Mountain Pond and the two Flat Mountains is one of the most remote and interesting regions in the Sandwich Range Wilderness. This area is roughly bounded by Sandwich Dome, the northern Flat Mt., Snow's Mt., Sleeper Ridge, Mt. Whiteface, and the southern Flat Mt. It is drained by various branches of Pond Brook and Whiteface River.

In the heart of this area is a high plateau holding Flat Mountain Pond and several beaver meadows. Surrounding these openings is a white birch forest that has recloaked the land desolated by the great 1923 forest fire. The only maintained trail in the interior is the Flat Mountain Pond Trail, a 10.5 mile horseshoe with two trailheads to the south.

Only a few views of this isolated upland are available from neighboring trailed summits. From the South Slide of Tripyramid there is a fine vista over the northern part including Lost Pass, the remote cut between Snows Mt., the northern Flat Mt. and Sleeper Ridge. The Blueberry Ledge Trail on Whiteface offers some dramatic views of the area. A more distant perspective can be gained from Mt. Israel to the south.

For years Flat Mountain Pond has been one of my favorite haunts in the White Mountains. My hiking friends and I have extended our explorations off-trail in this area in search of unique interior views. With the aid of the USGS Mount Tripyramid quadrangle and the WODC TRAIL MAP AND GUIDE, we have visited a number of interesting places in recent years. Some of these are briefly described below.

Lost Pass, 12/10/95

Since the 1860's this mysterious gap has, at times, been accessible by trail. At present an obscure winter-only trail (too wet for summer use) can be followed with

care, to the vicinity of the Pass. I had visited the lovely beaver pond and meadow in the heart of the Pass three Decembers earlier, and wanted to show it to longtime bushwhacking companions Cathy Goodwin of Thornton and Creston Ruter of Whitefield.

The winter of 1995-96 brought deep, powdery snow. We approached from Waterville Valley via the Snow's Mountain Road. Once on the X-C trail up Cascade Brook we were plowing through 18 inches of unbroken powder. The snow was even deeper on the old trail to the Pass, which continues up the Cascade Brook valley.

On the plateau between Snows Mt. and Sleeper Ridge I steered us left too soon. We floundered on the side of the latter until finally wending our way down to the pond/meadow, which is at the head of a brook draining into Flat Mountain Pond.



Flat Mt. Pond region from the air
Photo: Andy Thompson

We arrived at quarter to three after 4.5 hours of nearly nonstop snowshoeing. Working southward along the W edge of the meadow, away from suspect ice in the middle, we found a picturesque view of a sunlit South Tripyramid and the tip of its slide rising above the shadowed, snowy

opening. It was a scene of supreme wintery remoteness.

Flat Mt., SW Peak, 1/14/96

By mid-January the dry powder was three feet deep in the woods. Our threesome approached the base of the ledgy SW knob of the northern Flat Mt. over a track someone had broken out on the Fletcher Cascade Trail from Waterville Valley. We then took turns breaking trail up the broad, trailless ridge SW of the Cascades. Cathy did double her share of breaking, as we had come to expect of someone who has climbed all the White Mountain 4000-footers in a single winter.

For some time the going was steep through open woods. At 2600 feet the grade eased only to lead us into an extensive thicket of young, snow-covered conifers. We followed a moose track through the dense growth, then continued our laborious plod upward through the deep snow. The last rise to the 3220-foot peak led through beautiful open firs.

The conifer scrub atop the summit was very dense. After a strenuous tussle we made our way out to a ledgy spot with an unusual view over this Wilderness area. Sandwich Dome loomed close by on the right. The basin that encloses the hairpin turn on Flat Mountain Pond Trail sprawled below. The southern Flat Mt., a birch-clad dome, rose to the SE beyond a slice of the pond.

To the NE, past the next knob of the northern Flat Mt., was a fine vista of Mt. Whiteface emerging from the clouds, with Passaconaway peering over its shoulder. These views from Flat Mt. brought us special pleasure as it had taken us five hours to cover a mere three miles to the summit. Snowy openings glimpsed on the West Spur of Whiteface and along a NE ridge of Sandwich Dome beckoned for future explorations.

NE Ridge of Sandwich Dome, 3/1/96

Cathy Goodwin and I returned to the area on the first of March to investigate the ledges we had spotted on the 3000-foot NE shoulder of Sandwich Dome. By now a series of thaws and freezes had created boilerplate snow conditions in the woods. Our snowshoes stayed strapped to our packs all day.

We made our approach up the hardpacked Flat Mountain Pond Trail from Bennett St. Beyond the brook crossing by the Bennett St. Trail junction we headed west up the trailless ridge, first through open hardwoods, then in a scrubby growth of birch and conifers. As the grade steepened we found a ledge facing Lake Winnepesaukee and the Ossipee Range.

Where the ridge leveled out we swung north through scrub and over ledges to an outlook at about 2900 ft., consisting of a small area of open rock and an erratic boulder to climb up on for the best view.

Though partly restricted by the scrub, the vista northward was captivating. Ice-locked Flat Mountain Pond stretched across its birch-wooded plateau, with Whiteface rising beyond. To the L were the West Spur of Whiteface, the Sleeper Ridge with its hidden ravines, South Tripyramid, and the northern Flat Mt., including a good look at the ledgy SW peak we had ascended in January. On the R was the southern Flat Mt., with Chocorua far to the NE.

On the way out we reflected that on this sunny midweek day we had the entire wild area to ourselves — no car at either trailhead nor a snowmobile to be seen or heard.

Flat Mountain Pond, 7/20/96

It was not a propitious day for a 10-mile hike. It rained all day and dangerous gusty winds knocked trees down around the mountains. Trees were swaying wildly along Rt. 113 from Holderness, but as I climbed up Bennett St. Trail from Josés Bridge, the valley of Pond Brook seemed somewhat protected. Up on Flat Mt. Pond Trail I came across a group of hikers and llamas trudging up through the rain. At the leader's request, I closed my umbrella so as not to spook the animals.

A momentary lull in the rain lured me into a short bushwhack in search of a west-facing ledge above the trail, located on a little ridge beyond the hairpin turn. I found it, gaining a misty view up to Sandwich Dome and the SW peak of Flat, but by that point I was more concerned with the birches that were bending almost at right angles in the wind. Seeking refuge from the relentless gusts, I headed E over

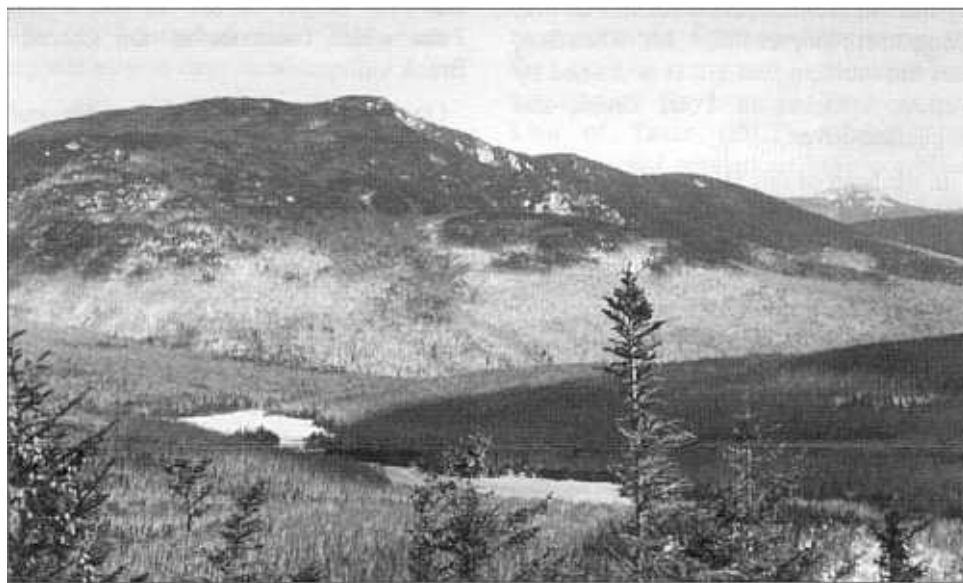
the low ridge to Flat Mountain Pond Trail near the shelter, getting thoroughly soaked by the undergrowth. The winds weren't as strong on this side, so I made a partial tour N along the shore, clambering up a big boulder for a momentary view of Whiteface.

West Spur, Mt. Whiteface, 8/14/96

Two objectives on the West Spur of Whiteface — a set of cliffs on its S ridge

Continuing above the cliffs I came upon a rusting logging implement amidst the scrub and ledge. Beyond a slight col the ridge rose gradually, and by weaving around blowdown areas I was able to stay in mostly open firs.

At 3400 feet I traversed westward across the slope and eventually found the talus slope and perhaps the finest view yet of the Flat Mountain region. Flat Mountain Pond stretched across the light-green



View from NE ridge of Sandwich Dome. Photo: Cathy Goodwin

and a small, scrubby talus opening at the SW corner of its broad summit — promised unusual views on this hot sunny day. After scouting the route from Whiteface Intervale I set off on that leg of Flat Mountain Pond Trail.

Several miles in I bushwhacked N up a ridge through a beautiful open hardwood forest that rose to 2500 feet. Above here I floundered amidst small conifers in steep terrain, then emerged atop the E-facing cliffs at 2900 feet. The view to Mt. Whiteface over the deep ravine of the East Branch of Whiteface River was exceptional. Directly across were cliffs and talus slopes on the W face of the McCrillis Trail ridge. To the S was an expansive panorama over the Intervale and the Lakes Region. Behind the ledges there were delicious blueberries.

upland, with Sandwich Dome beyond. On the L were the southern Flat Mt. and the upper ravine of Whiteface River. To the R of the pond sprawled the long, rolling ridge of the northern Flat, with beaver meadows at its base and several ledges evident on its SE slopes. On the far R were spurs of Sleeper Ridge with Tecumseh and Osceola beyond.

Flat Mt., SE Ridge, 8/24/96

Today's goal was to explore the area N and NW of Flat Mountain Pond. On a gray morning I sauntered up the delightful trail from Whiteface Intervale and enjoyed blueberries and views at the N end of the pond. From the NW corner of the pond where the trail turns L to follow along the shore, a spur of the old Beebe River logging railroad led to an open beaver meadow abloom with goldenrod and steeplebush. Here was an open view up to

the northern Flat Mt. The sun emerged as I studied ledges on the mountain's SE ridge.

I skirted this meadow and another to the N, crossing the pond's inlet brook, then headed upward through mixed woods and birch. A scramble over ledges brought me to the top of a cliff at 2750 feet. To the E and NE was a fine interior view across the plateau to the high, wooded ridges of Whiteface and the Sleepers. To the L (N) up the valley were Lost Pass and South Tripyramid. Below to the SE were the beaver meadows and the N pool of Flat Mountain Pond, with the southern Flat Mt. beyond.

A brief shower cut short a search for other ledges in the spruce woods above the cliff. Birch-glade ferns soaked my boots on the way back down to the railroad spur. Before heading home I followed the spur N to its end at a brushy beaver opening with a view ahead to the ridges framing Lost Pass, bathed in golden evening light.

Flat Mt., SW Peak, 9/4/96

On a sunny and sultry day I returned to this rocky peak in search of some open ledges that had eluded us in the deep snows of January. A couple of miles in from Waterville Valley on Drakes Brook Trail I started bushwhacking up towards the Flat-Sandwich col. A dry rocky brookbed provided a route up through some very steep and rough terrain. The conifers in the flat col were dense and strewn with blowdowns.

By keeping L of some blowdown and scrub areas, I found reasonably good going to Flat's SW peak. After some thrashing through thick scrub I found open ledges a bit S of where we had emerged on our winter trip. Here I gazed across the valley to the southern Flat Mt., out to Winnepesaukee, and up to the immense wooded mass of Sandwich Dome. On the R the Dome's ridgcrest trailed out to the knob and cliffs of Jennings Peak.

After basking in the sun I probed NE along the ridge and found a remarkable ledge perch separated from its backing cliff by a crack twenty feet deep. I scrambled S along the cliff edge and down to a rock slab that bridged the chasm. This

roomy ledge commanded a good view over a remote birch-clad basin to the Tripyramids, the next knob of the northern Flat, Whiteface, and the southern Flat.

I descended back to Waterville along an approximation of our January route, wrestling through an extensive area of young evergreens and making a short side trip to the tiers of ledge at the top of Fletcher's Cascade.

This is a region that beckons some of us back again and again. There are more ledges to explore on the northern Flat Mt., an old slide glimpsed in the ravine between East Sleeper and the West Spur of Whiteface, a pair of beaver ponds beneath the Sleepers, and perhaps a birch-and-fernwhack with some slim hope of a view at the crest of the southern Flat. Described as a desolate, barren waste just seventy years ago, this remote area is today an alluring green haven for those who love to explore untrammelled backcountry.

NOTE: If exploring off-trail, please use low-impact bushwhacking techniques. Keep your group small (no more than 4 persons); spread out where feasible; place your steps for the lowest impact, avoiding fragile vegetation and steep erodible slopes; use special care on summit and ledge areas; and do not mark off-trail routes.

Steve Smith

FOREST PLAN REVISION

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of each issue. Since a total of three full days was devoted to reviewing the 33 issues, discussions were in considerable detail and breadth. Some sense of the intensity of feeling will be apparent when I tell you that participants considered most of the 33 revision issues to have a high level of interest. That is, the issues are very significant to them.

Phases Three, Four, and Five:

Where the revision process goes from here is uncertain. The later phases are not fully defined. With certainty, Phase Five will involve asking the public for

comment on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This is the opportunity for the public to make comments on the draft Plan. All WODC members will be encouraged to file responses, and the Club will assist by mailing members copies of the Club's positions.

Impressions and Comments:

A. Leaders organized and ran these PPG meetings well. A trained professional facilitator headed each group, assisted by two Forest Service (FS) officials. One official maintained a list of participant comments on view to everyone in the room. The other official answered questions relating to FS regulations and practices. These three kept the process on track and on time.

The presence of professional facilitators was critical to an efficient process. They never allowed participants to state anything other than personal opinions, nor to make negative comments about the opinions of others.

B. Many issues facing the FS will require difficult decisions. A prime example concerns demands by many members of the public that the FS open backcountry areas to off-road vehicles. These 4-wheel drive vehicles are equipped with devices (e.g., powered winches) that allow the vehicles to operate on unmaintained skidder roads, abandoned timber roads, and in swampy, bouldery, and forested terrain. Users demand that these vehicles be allowed on WMNF, and their interest is supported financially by corporations that make and sell the vehicles.

C. Do the local, regional, and national conservation organizations have the will and courage to forego their own agendas and work together for the protection of the Forest's natural resources?

D. An encouraging article in *Forest Notes*, the magazine of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, lists the six major goals for which SPNHF will work.

"Recreation: Provide a range of recreation opportunities for residents and visitors while respecting the limits

of the land and preventing resource degradation.

Scenery: Protect and enhance the region's unique scenery, which is the foundation of our quality of life and tourism industry.

Timber: Demonstrate exemplary forest management, contribute to the local timber economy, and test new forestry techniques.

Water: Provide standards and guides that ensure the quality and quantity of water supplies for human use and for wildlife.

Wilderness: Protect wilderness areas for special habitat, ecological research, and backcountry recreation.

Wildlife: Provide a diversity of wildlife and wildlife habitat, especially those species uniquely dependent on the White Mountain environment." (Permission to quote given by the Editor of *Forest Notes*.)

These are worthy goals that WODC members will support. As we know from experience, however, "the devil is in the details." A final Plan will be a product of compromise, a political decision. There will be no Plan to satisfy everyone. The issue of 4-wheel drive off road vehicles mentioned earlier is not a question of good or evil, right or wrong. Four-wheel drive advocates pay taxes to manage WMNF, and they want backcountry sites for their recreation activity. Their activity does damage sensitive forest lands. Does the building and use of access roads for logging damage the forest? A major issue of contention at the Loon Mountain Ski area expansion was that of water for snowmaking, as opposed to an adequate supply for restoration of salmon in the Merrimack and Pemigewasset rivers.

We share the SPNHF goals. Nevertheless, the Society and the WODC will find themselves on opposite sides of specific issues addressed in the Plan.

George Zink

PARKING LOT

This short article appeared in the Calendar Section of the Boston Globe on May 9, 1996. The heading of the topic is "27 Favorite Places in New England." The author is Alex Beam. Please let me know his address, should you know him. Editor.

My favorite place in New England is a parking lot, and I'll thank you not to leave your car there. It is the narrow, grassy Ferncroft parking area, operated by the Wonalancet (N.H.) Out Door Club, and it sits just below a network of artfully maintained trails that open the "back door" to the southernmost ridge of the White Mountains.

Most hikers approach these classic day-hike peaks — Sandwich Dome, Whiteface, Passaconaway, and Chocorua — from the north, starting from the Kancamagus Highway (Route 112), where the US Forest Service has created an outdoors person's mecca along the shores of the aptly named Swift River.

And I would urge you to be one of them. You might find the gray-green alfalfa fields rolling up to the stark, white clapboard church at Wonalancet too quaint. You might never find the one general store that sells the club's fantastic trail guide. You might find the club's perfectly marked trails lonely, as they are not overhiked.

It may be my favorite place, but I have eccentric tastes. Please — stay away.

Alex Beam

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Bowl Research Natural Area

On Saturday, June 28, nineteen WODC members and guests took advantage of a rare opportunity for a field trip into The Bowl Research Natural Area led by scientists from the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station and the Hubbard Brook Experiment Station. Following Wilderness Area restrictions, they split into two groups for an easy hike into The Bowl.

One group was led by Chris Costello, a wildlife biologist. An expert on identifying birds by their calls, she was able to "see"

the hidden presence of oven birds, hermit thrush, and several warblers. In describing her own research on bats and birds in The Bowl, she spoke of the territorial behavior of birds in a canopy forest and the diminishing habitat for neotropical birds.

The second group was led by Dr. Scott Bailey, a soil scientist, who demonstrated the differences in color and texture of soil strata by digging down several feet and carefully separating samples of the layers. These included first, the organic materials from the forest floor formed by decomposition, then the B-Horizon, which is the one most altered by soil formation processes, and finally the C-Horizon of glacial deposits, which is the least altered.

After lunch, the leaders exchanged groups and repeated the morning format. This field trip took place on one of those perfect days in June when even the mosquitoes cooperated by their absence — a result of perfect planning on the part of the WODC Executive Committee that made the arrangements!

Barbara Nordeen

Karl Roenke Illustrated Lecture

On Sunday, July 13, Karl Roenke, Cultural Resource Specialist for the WMNF, presented an illustrated lecture on the "Cultural Resource Heritage in Wilderness." Karl had previously led a WODC group on a field trip to cellar holes and other archeological sites along the McCrillis Path.

He noted that the Forest Service has not accomplished much in resource evaluation, a significant result of decreased funding. Sites remain to be evaluated on the Forest, including some in the Wonalancet area, as well as the Sandwich Range Wilderness, e.g., numerous sites along the logging railroad.

Those attending were very enthusiastic about Karl's presentation.

Barbara Sidley

Ned Beecher Illustrated Talk

On August 2, Ned Beecher spoke in the Chapel to members and guests on *Ecological Stories of the Wonalancet Area*, illustrated by slides he had taken in nearby fields and woods. Each story was a dramatic event interpreted by a

knowledgeable observer. One story was a verbal reenactment of a porcupine's activities at a site on Great Hill. Another story was a lively description of the life cycle of the red-backed salamander, locally very common in moist areas beneath logs, rotting leaves, and rocks. Ned brought and displayed live specimens of several salamander species.

We were interested to learn about common animals found in this area but seldom observed due to their rather solitary, quiet, and unobtrusive behavior.

George Zink

Geology hike with Bob Newton

For the second year in a row Bob Newton, Professor of Geology at Smith College, led a geological field trip in the Intervale. On August 23, Bob led a group of about 25 people from the Ferncroft Kiosk along the Gordon Path and return.

A portion of this trail runs on top of a high terrace with a steep south-facing slope. The portion is different from the typical topography along most WODC trails in that there are no boulders or even small rocks showing. Paul King brought along an auger and he took soil samples at two different locations. The topsoil was 6 inches thick, then a thin podzol where the nutrients had been leached out by humic acid, then fine sand for almost 4 feet.

Based on topography and soil samples, Bob concludes there once was a meltwater stream where the terrace now lies. The deposits of fine sand are the conclusive evidence of an active stream.

Later, a shallow lake formed in the Intervale after the ice block melted. In spite of a lake having been there, the ground is not flat, due to the presence of kettle holes. Kettles are depressions where pieces of ice were once covered by glacial sediments. When the kettle ice melted, a depression remained.

Many thanks to Bob Newton for making the field trip both entertaining and educational. Maybe we will be fortunate enough to have him with us next year too!

Dick Daniels

FALL TRAIL REPORT

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WODC Annual Meeting that led to the substantial increase in the trails budget for 1998. The 1997 budget totaled \$3975, of which \$3150 was used to fund the SRCA trail crew. A 1998 trails budget of \$6975 was approved by members, with about \$6000 planned for restoration projects. This will allow us to independently fund an SRCA crew for four weeks; we hope that additional USFS funding, partly from

such as cleaning the increasing number of water bars. The volunteer work of planning, coordinating, and reviewing the crew's progress will also continue to grow.

This is also the time to begin planning our volunteer projects for 1998. If you are an adopter with a specific project in mind, or would just like some company on a brushing trip, please let us know by January 1st. Although we can usually accommodate short-notice requests during the season, our published calendar will be established early in the new year. We are



NH Trails Day volunteers on Blueberry Ledge Trail enjoying the view across The Bowl from Mt. Whiteface. A considerable effort by adopters and other volunteers is required to protect WODC trails from the ravages of nature and thousands of hikers each year. Photo: Peter Smart.

the new user fees, will permit further restoration.

This expanded effort will give us a good shot at restoring these trails in the near future. While it will require several years to complete, we will be able to restore these trails to a stable, usable condition in a reasonable period of time.

Expanded Volunteer Role

While an expanded trails budget might seem to reduce the importance of volunteers, it will actually make our efforts more important than ever. Adopters and other volunteers will continue to perform all ongoing trail maintenance,

also happy to hear from anyone with comments or suggestions regarding WODC trails. Please call Peter Smart at 603-323-8666 (work) or 603-323-8827 (home), or any member of the Trails Committee.

Excuse me for closing with a popular slogan, but there is one I try to live by: **Think globally and act locally.** I wish you all a great winter.

Peter Smart, Trails Committee Chairman

Remembering Edna

I will conjure sprites to help
Relive the thrill
Of the afternoon her song
Caressed this hill.

So the cliffs will echo vows
That came to pass,
And the wind will strum her
rhythm
In the grass.

And the first faint star to peek
Through evening skies
Will reflect the quiet comfort
In her eyes.

"Sore-Ass"

This poem was submitted by Chris Conrod, active member of the Trails Committee. He writes under the pen-name "Sore Ass." You may recall his delightful poem in the Nov. 1995 issue.

1998 WINTER EVENTS

Three Club activities are scheduled for the winter of 1998, one each in January, February, and March. One will be a potluck supper followed by a slide show; the other two will be cross-country ski outings.

On **January 17, 1998** WODC will host a potluck supper in the Doris Benz Center, Center Sandwich. Please arrive before 6:00 PM with your offering; supper will begin at 6:00 PM sharp. For further information phone one of: Susan Bryant-Kimball at 284-6506, or Sally Zink at 323-8693.

Following the supper Peter Smart will show slides of various mountain hiking trips he has made in Australia. Those of us who have heard Peter speak are looking forward to another interesting program.

A WODC sponsored cross country trip for beginning and intermediate skiers will take place on **Saturday February 14**. Skiers will meet on Helen and Nat Steele's

field in front of the Wonalancet Chapel by 10:00 AM.

From the Chapel participants will ski along a groomed trail to Great Hill Pond. They will then ski to Great Hill, mostly on a trail system maintained by the Tamworth Outing Club. From there skiers may choose to reverse course and return to Wonalancet, continue on other trails in the Heminway State Forest, or terminate the trip at the Great Hill parking lot. This guided trip will end at 1:00 PM. Bring a lunch, and picnic with friends. The contact person for this trip is Howard Nordeen, who may be reached at 323-7610. Please register several days in advance.

Saturday March 14 is the date for a full day cross-country trip, planned for intermediate skiers. This trip, led by Peter Smart, will start at the Lily Pond parking lot close to the height of land on the Kancamagus Highway at 10:00 AM. The current plan is to ski from Lily Pond through Livermore Pass, and return to the Kancamagus Highway by way of the Greeley Ponds. The estimated total distance is 8 miles.

Reservations for this trip are required. To make a reservation and/or for further information, phone Peter at 603-323-8666 (work) or 603-323-8827 (home).

PARKING PERMITS

In the May 1997 issue of the *Newsletter* there was an article on the proposed parking permit issue. In May the proposal became effective; as of November 1 it has been operating for six months, and now is an opportune time to evaluate some of what has been learned from the test.

To date over \$400,000 has been generated by the program. Of this amount, \$211,262 has already been spent, enabling a number of recreation projects to be completed. Over 1,000 miles of trail were maintained or reconstructed, 14 shelters were maintained and repaired, 12 bridges were repaired or replaced, the Kearsarge Lookout Tower was repaired, and the Russell Colbath Homestead and the adjacent Rail and River Trail maintained. From an economic viewpoint the

experiment has been a limited success. Limited, because the backlog of recreation projects remaining to be completed has a price tag of \$6,000,000. Only 1/8th of the amount needed has come from parking permits purchased to date, and the list of needs increases daily.

Although 70% of recreation users who have purchased parking permits support the program, and 73% think the fees are reasonable, there has been loud and vigorous opposition from some local townspeople and elected officials including selectmen, State, and Congressional representatives. Some, perhaps many, of the specific criticisms are fair but misdirected. For example, Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) mandated in Congressional regulations have not been fully paid for several years to towns on which WMNF is located, and payments per acre (75 cents/acre) have not been increased annually at the rate of inflation. In addition, towns with land in the Forest are not reimbursed for services provided by them (e.g. police protection, fire fighting, and ambulance services). Towns with land within the Forest are not reimbursed at reasonable levels. These criticisms are valid, and must be fairly addressed. Nevertheless, these criticisms are being leveled at the Forest Service and not the US Congress, the responsible entity. Congress has reduced the operating budget of the Forest Service such that it is unable to adequately protect the Forest resources.

On October 20, 1997, the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the US House of Representatives met in Conway, NH for a field hearing on "Management Practices of the U.S. Forest Service: Review of the User Pilot Program." The objective of the hearing was to gather information from the general public on the impact, costs, and benefits of the pilot program in the WMNF. Approximately 100 people gathered at Kennett High School, including several WODC members. Presentations were made by approximately 25 people representing 10 different organizations, or giving personal opinions.

A writer for the *MountainEar*, a Conway newspaper, gives the following summary of the hearing:

"A common theme ran through all the commentary at this week's forum on the White Mountain National Forest's controversial passport parking permit program — regardless of their opinions about the flawed passport program, people love the WMNF and consider it a treasure.

Also clear was the realization that the WMNF is underfunded. Ironically, the WMNF budget is being reduced at a time when use of the WMNF is on the increase.

The culprit here, most contend, is not the Forest Service — it's the Congress that has cut the budget within which the Forest Service must do its job.

As speaker after speaker noted, while the overall effort to downsize government is praiseworthy, the cutting of the forest budget is pennywise and pound foolish.

True, the Forest Service needs to look at its operations and see where any fat can be cut. But adequate funding for its recreational budget needs to be insured.

The passport program — which at best may raise some \$300,000 to \$500,000 a year — is not going to solve the funding problem. It's up to Congress to adequately fund the WMNF — a forest used by 7 million visitors a year....."

In light of the fact that the User Fee Pilot Program is not permanent, but a four year test that can be altered or expanded as inadequacies are detected, many suggestions are offered. Among those we have heard and consider workable are:

- The Forest Service must work with and listen to the public. The present parking fee system is poorly designed, planned with too little public involvement, and without adequate consultation with political entities: Federal, State, and Town. The WMNF must effect changes rapidly in order to recoup public good will that has been squandered by the parking fee decision.

- Ways must be found to establish user fees, and not simply parking fees. Under the present program too few users of the Forest are obliged to pay fees. As examples: parking fees are not required at the Ferncroft, Bennett Street, and Whiteface parking lots, because the lots are not located on public land; motorists on the Kancamagus Highway, Bear Notch Road, Routes 16 and 302 passing through Pinkham Notch and Crawford Notch do not pay fees; the same fee is paid by one passenger as by a carful.

- Ways must be found to obtain user fees from all the 7 million people who utilize the Forest: Alpine skiers, cross-country skiers, hunters, snowmobilers, motorists, hikers, canoeists, fishermen, residents and visitors alike. To get willing support from all users, they must be treated equally.

We hope and expect the WMNF to make genuine efforts to improve the fee system, and to establish quickly a program of public involvement. WODC members are willing to assist in making user fees fair and friendly.

George Zink

A FUN YEAR

Another productive and fun year of trail maintenance has come to an end. This has been the fourth year of joining maintenance trips for Larry and me. Our first trip was a full day of rebuilding a badly eroded part of the Kelley Trail. I remember thinking this was one of the hardest days of physical labor I had ever put in, but I now know what a grip hoist is and how to use it. It was quite exhilarating to be moving large rocks down the side of a trail, especially one of my petite size and physical ability. The results were tremendous. What I had experienced and learned that first day was exciting. I was hooked. It was not only fun, I had also made many new friends.

After a few more trips, some of which were a lot easier than the first experience, Larry and I adopted the Dacey's Mill Trail. This has given us the opportunity to contribute more to WODC and our National Forest. We have enjoyed watching the seasons change this year on our trail, and have had the pleasure of exploring it further. Dacey's Mill Trail is one of my favorites and I feel privileged to watch over it. I would like to encourage other members to join future trail work events, possibly a casual day out with an

T-Shirt Design Contest

Do you think the basic midnight blue **WODC** T-Shirt with the AMC look-a-like logo discreetly perched above the left breast like some oversized sweetheart pin is maybe a little bit too fiftyish?

Are your creative juices simmering and surging in contemplation of a 90's kind of **WODC** T-Shirt statement?

Then get busy. On an 8x11" sheet of paper, draw your design of the front of the shirt. On a separate sheet draw your design of the back of the shirt (if you want a back design). Color the design as you think effective, including the background. Send to:

WODC T-Shirt Design Contest

HC 64 Box 5

Wonalancet, NH 03897

All designs become the property of the Committee, the composition of which is a closely guarded secret.

If your design is selected, you will receive great notoriety in a future **WODC Newsletter**, the groveling adulation of **WODC** members, and two complimentary newly designed **WODC** T-Shirts. One for you and one for your significant other, in the true 90's spirit.

John Mersfelder

adopter to brush or clean waterbars. There are many levels of work for all abilities from digging, brushing, just carrying in an extra tool, or giving words of encouragement.

It's a great learning experience for children, and what could be better than spending a day outside with a fellow hiker? Our dogs Abby and Hecker join us on most trips. They have happily carried trash in their packs from a Spring cleanup at Camp Rich. They have also been on the overnight to the Sleepers, and have made new canine friends. So bring the children and the dog next year. We'd love having you along.

A Trailwrights member said to me on our last trip out, "many hands make for lighter work," a quote from an Indian Chief. I thought this comment appropriate as we were cleaning water bars on the Dicey's Mill Trail to Passaconaway. I thought Chief Passaconaway would be pleased.

Hope to see you next year.

Sandy Labrie



One of eight large trees apparently cut to maintain the view from the Blueberry Ledge Trail. Unauthorized tree cutting is not allowed anywhere within the WMNF and is contrary to the spirit of Wilderness areas. Letting "natural forces prevail" will ultimately result in the loss of many traditional outlooks, but storms and other natural events will occasionally create new ones.

Wonalancet Out Door Club
HC 64 Box 5
Wonalancet, NH 03897

The logo of the Wonalancet Out Door Club features a stylized mountain range with jagged peaks and a winding path or stream at the base, rendered in a simple, graphic style.