

SCOPING? WHAT IS SCOPING?

In mid-July 1999 the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) issued a "scoping letter" reporting that it had received a proposal to remove three shelters from the Sandwich Range Wilderness (SRW). Issuance of a scoping letter is required when a proposal is made at the project level. In response to this announcement, the WMNF received approximately 25 letters from interested individuals and organizations.

Some WODC members, as well as the general public, heard of a scoping letter for the first time. That such is the case, is evident from responses. People expressed interest and personal opinions on shelter removal that WMNF was pleased to hear; too few, however, answered the specific questions and concerns that a scoping letter is designed to stimulate — questions that the Forest Service must hear to conduct a complete analysis of the issue.

The questions that the WMNF posed in the letter, and to which it needs to find answers, begin on page 4 of the scoping letter.

"We would like to begin our analysis of this proposal. Please consider and respond to the following specific questions:

1) Is there any information about the project area which you believe is important in the context of the proposed activities which the Forest Service might have overlooked?

2) Are you or the group you represent concerned about any potential effects from this proposal?

3) Are there alternative ways to meet the purpose and need (the rationale for conducting activities) for which you would like the Forest Service to develop and analyze the environmental impacts?

4) Are there environmental impacts you feel are important and would like to have displayed in the environmental documentation? If so, please include your rationale for why they should be analyzed."

At the scoping letter stage, the public is not specifically asked whether it favors or opposes the proposal, though such input may be one of many criteria used in the final decision. The initial scoping letter is required by the NEPA process.

The NEPA process:

The Forest Service is required to go through specific processes when some action affecting Federal land is undertaken. The process, known to Service personnel as "the NEPA process" is regulated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Regulations vary somewhat for each undertaking, depending upon its significance and size. For example, a very large project such as the proposal to expand the Loon Mountain Ski Area demands a more extensive and detailed process than that of removing a shelter. A large process requires preparation of an **Environmental Impact Statement**.

A less complex project that nevertheless significantly affects the physical, biological, or social environment may require an **Environmental Assessment**, entailing further public involvement, and a second comment period. A yet less complex project, such as the SWR shelter removal, may require a simpler **Environmental Analysis**. Whether large or small, regulations require an analysis of the impact of the proposed action upon the environment.

An Environmental Analysis prior to any decision with respect to a minor project, is conducted to determine the nature and extent of the present Forest environment influenced by the proposed action, and how that environment would be affected by proposed changes, both negative and positive. The analysis includes consideration of how possible negative affects would be mitigated, and positive affects enhanced. As noted in the accompanying *Newsletter* article "FINDING COMPATIBILITIES," the analysis also requires compliance with many other applicable regulations such as

(Continued on Page 2)

FALL 1999

TRAILS REPORT

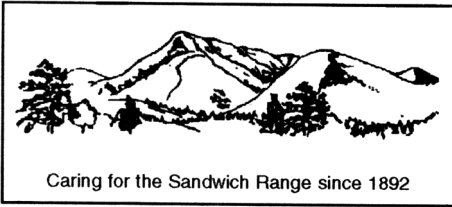
1999 has been a record year for the WODC trails program. Our primary focus has been restoration work on Walden Trail. This was a great success due largely to the efforts of four fulltime volunteers recruited through the Student Conservation Association. Over a ten week season the SCA crew, a paid crew leader, and devoted volunteers, completed all necessary restoration from the beginning of Walden Trail to the deep col between Wonalancet, Hedgehog, and Nanamocomuck.

This work entailed the placement of 182 rock steps, 20 rock waterbars, over 32 rock scree, and the construction of 42 feet of sidehill trail. The single most difficult section, a deep gully just below the Mount Paugus outlook, required the construction of 62 rock steps and took nearly three weeks for an average crew of 6. By restoring the existing trail we've avoided the adverse effects of a major trail relocation, and helped to protect the fragile terrain from the hikers that come to enjoy it.

Many arrangements were necessary to make the program possible. Most important was the great "crew house" provided by Doug McVicar and Frumie Selchen, located opposite the Ferncroft parking lot. For accommodations during the work week, a low impact base camp was located near the top of Old Mast Road, and equipped for efficient use over the 10 week project. This site provided convenient access from Wonalancet, while placing the crew close to the work site.

Our crew was a diverse group consisting of Zachary Hasse (PA), Olivia Lester (MT), Daesha Ramachandran (NJ), and Jonathan Segev (CA). Upon arrival they were welcomed by WODC members at a potluck supper hosted by the Mersfelders. The next day the crew got the "grand tour," hiking over Mount Passaconaway and along the full length of Walden Trail, viewing the planned work sites along the way. The next several days were devoted

(Continued on Page 2)



Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892

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

The WODC Web site address is <http://www.wodc.org>

(Continued from Page 1)

TRAILS REPORT

to intensive training including a tool workshop, grip hoist workshop, map and compass program, low-impact camping workshop, and an evening of wilderness first aid training.

After a three day rest the crew began its first full week on Walden Trail. Following onsite training, the crew was able to set over 20 rock steps each week. More important than quantity was the high quality work. By midseason it became clear that the crew was as committed to the project as the WODC "trail lunatics" — volunteers working alongside: Chris Conrod, Fred Lavigne, Evelyn MacKinnon, Larry Labrie, Pierce Beij, Judith Reardon, and Peter Smart.

More than 3,200 hours of work was accomplished on Walden Trail, for an average of approximately 15 person hours for each rock step and waterbar constructed. Using an average value of \$10 per hour yields an approximate cost of \$150 per structure, and a total value of \$32,000 for the entire season. Adding the cost of housing, tools, and SCA expenses brings this total to over \$38,000, yet the cash cost to WODC was only about \$5,000 after reimbursement of \$9,700 for the 1998 NRTA grant. While the grant application proposed that the WODC would cover 55 percent of total project

value, the increased volunteer effort resulted in a final contribution of 75 percent.

Our SCA crew departed from Wonalancet on August 23rd, the day after Annual Meeting. It was both a relief and a disappointment to have the hectic summer of 1999 behind us. In the following weeks WODC volunteers resumed a more normal schedule including an annual weekend on the Kate Sleeper Trail, and an annual trip with Trailwrights, this year on the Bennett Street Trail. The latter trip was notable in that it entailed the first wetlands application filed by WODC, required under State law for the stepping stones placed where the trail crosses a muddy drainage near Great Falls.

In addition to serving as crew leader for the second half of the season, Chris Conrod has continued his activities as WODC sign maker. Chris has made and installed 24 signs this year, most of the fivesided Wilderness format. The most unusual signs were those placed at the top and bottom of the Wiggin Trail. In an effort to minimize use, these signs include the wording "Steep and erodible-not recommended." WODC is fortunate to have Chris's services — a cabinet maker — as a sign-maker, for which the Club pays an average of \$12 per sign to cover shop expenses.

While this has been a busy year, it has also been exceptionally rewarding. In addition to the work and fun times we've shared with our SCA crew, there have been great rewards in teaching our skills and understandings of wilderness trail maintenance. Motivated by this experience, plans are already underway to organize a similar effort for the summer of 2000. We have placed our request for four SCA volunteers to serve with a fulltime crew leader. We expect to spend most of the season restoring the next section of Walden Trail, reaching a point somewhere above East Loop. A finance subcommittee has been formed for the purpose of applying for NRTA funding for the next two years, that will allow the Club to continue a trails program of this magnitude on a sustainable budget.

While major restoration projects such as Walden Trail are essential undertakings,

we must remain diligent in the care of all WODC trails. Of special note are trails that still suffer from the 1998 ice storm. The storm had a major impact on many trails, and required a full season effort to open all trails. This work was recently acknowledged by the US Forest Service, by an award to WODC of a "Certificate of Recognition...For a significant contribution of service in preserving America's Wilderness Heritage by using and promoting primitive skills in managing our Wilderness resource." However, trails will require additional erosion control work over the coming years.

Finally, we must consider the major erosion problems on the Lawrence and Wiggin Trails. In addition to considering options for repair or relocation, we should not overlook the possibility of closing a poorly located trail such as Tom Wiggin. Because of the time required for the USFS to study the environmental effects of any solution, we must plan this work at least a year in advance. I invite your participation in this process, as well as on the trail.

Peter Smart
Trails Chairman

(Continued from Page 1)

SCOPING?

the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. A well conducted Environmental Analysis is time consuming and demanding of personnel.

Depending upon the findings of the Analysis, one or more further steps may be required. For a minor project, the next and final step is the **Decision Memo**, that states the action to be taken, and is sent out to news media, organizations, and individuals who responded to the scoping letter. Further input is not required nor anticipated. However, there is an appeal process by which the Decision Memo may be challenged.

I wish to thank Saco District Ranger Terry Miller and Assistant Ranger in Charge of Recreation, Rick Young, for their reading of this review, and their helpful comments and suggestions with respect to the NEPA process.

George Zink

WHEN A TREE FALLS IN THE FOREST

Editor's Note: In the May 1998 *Newsletter* a letter by Rev. Frederick B. Noss was printed entitled "1938 hurricane." In it the author wrote "I could have sworn that the sound trees enjoyed their struggle and I could swear now that they will be all the better, for Nature is ever kind at heart, though sometimes a bit boisterous." The following article, reprinted by permission of the author and magazine, is from the September/October 1999 issue of *Nature Conservancy* (Copyright 1999 The Nature Conservancy. All rights reserved). In the article the author echoes Noss, in the words of an contemporary ecologist.

In the reserved and measured language of the ecologist, it is termed a "disturbance" — an event that disrupts and alters nature, reshaping wild populations and their surroundings. It may measure so small as a gopher's burrow, or span counties as the path of a Category 4 hurricane. It may strike a given spot with a recurrence figured in decades, or millennia, its legacy the thin, jagged cut of the tornado, the umbrella fallout of the volcano. Of varied form and frequency, the disturbance's only constant is its inevitability.

In the hardwood forests of the northeast United States, the reigning disturbance is the blowdown. Winds ranging from hat-tipping gusts to 100-mile-per-hour microbursts, have shaped the northeastern forests into a revolving patchwork of trees and openings in varying sizes and states of renewal.

Despite the initial bomblike aftermath, life soon rebounds in the blown-down forest. Seeds drifting from surrounding woods now spring for sunlight pouring through the gaps. Drooping twigs and branches bring a canopy's bonanza of cover and browse to the ground-dwelling mice and deer.

Many trees may indeed die, though none in vain. In the dead and dying wood, an intertwined succession of beetles, wasps, microbes, fungi and mosses passes through, boring, digesting and returning wood to the soil of coming generations. On the tails of the flourishing micro-fauna come woodpeckers, creepers and nuthatches, probing the broken limbs

and peeling bark. "To an awful lot of organisms," says forest ecologist Charles Canham, "the best tree is a dead tree."

Caveat: The fallen woods' regeneration requires nearby forest to be standing ready, as a source of seed and temporary harbor for displaced residents — qualities otherwise lacking in pavement and plantations. But for forests yet spared of constricting developments, the blowdown likens to a fresh start on life. However hellish its immediate appearance, there's ultimately something more heavenly arising from the windblown forest.

William Stolzenburg

ANNUAL MEETING

Following a delectable potluck supper in the Grove, the WODC Annual Meeting was held on August 22, 1999 with 44 people in attendance.

Tom Rogers, Treasurer, related that the 1998-1999 fundraiser was successfully completed in July. \$20,000 was raised: \$10,000 for general trail work and \$10,000 for the Edgar J. Rich Fund.

Tom informed members that the



Trail crew members Jonathan Segev, Zachary Hasse, Daesha Ramachandran, and Olivia Lester take a break

Executive Committee has adopted an investment policy for Rich Fund assets. Under the policy assets will be allocated as follows: 30% to a money market fund (Vanguard Federal), 30% to a short-term fund (Vanguard Short-term Bond Index), and 40% to a stock mutual fund (Domini Social Equity). Previously, Rich Fund assets were invested solely in cash equivalents. The change is designed to improve the Fund's long-term investment performance.

Tom also gave the Treasurer's report. As of 07/31/99 there was income of \$13,253 versus expenses of \$9,830. The major income items were: membership \$7,271, contributions \$2,377, maps \$510, T-shirts \$689, and trails \$1,786. Major expense items were: newsletter \$1,232, clerical \$515, T-shirts \$1,672, and trails \$9,830. Net assets of the WODC were \$36,222.

A motion passed authorizing the EC to purchase a general liability insurance policy to protect the Club's financial assets, with an annual premium not to exceed \$550.

In the membership report, Shannon Spencer reported there are 295 renewals and 20 new members to date this year. Activities for the year included a cross-country ski trip to Great Hill Pond and three summer presentations: the Friends of the Sandwich Range, the NH Audubon Society, and by Peter Pohl, Carroll County Forester.

The proposed budget for the year 2000 was passed unanimously, as follows: trails \$16,500, newsletter \$1,300, clerical \$1,400, T-shirts \$1,000, dues/facility fees \$250, miscellaneous \$200, contingency \$500, library \$250. The total amount, \$21,400, is \$7,000 more than last year's budget. This increase anticipates income as a result of grant applications.

The following officers were elected for the year 2000: President, Dick Daniels; Vice Presidents, John Boettiger and Ann Rogers; Secretary, Sharon Nothnagle. Tom Rogers was thanked for his outstanding performance as Treasurer. He will

continue until January, when it is hoped there will be a volunteer available.

Fred Lavigne gave a brief description of the efforts by the Friends of the Sandwich Range. A motion was made to support recommendations by the Friends to extend the boundaries of the Sandwich Range Wilderness, and to designate Sandwich Notch as an Historical Area. The following motion was passed: "The WODC supports the Friends of the Sandwich Range in general, in its quest to enlarge the Sandwich Range Wilderness, and specifically, in its efforts to designate the Sandwich Notch area an Historic Area."

In response to a Forest Service scoping letter, a motion was passed that "The WODC send a letter to the Forest Service indicating that the Club favors retaining and restoring the Rich and Heermance shelters." See related articles in this *Newsletter* for further details.

A "Club House Motion" was debated. The motion designated a procedure to be followed, and money to be spent, should land be donated for use as a Club House. Questions were raised about the need for a Club House, and the wisdom of encouraging further building in Wonalancet. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to withdraw the motion.

Dick Daniels

HOUSING FOR TRAIL CREW

Planning has already begun for trail work in the summer of 2000, with many important projects to be completed. However, successful trail work means finding a crew, and essential to having a crew is providing housing for them. The closer that housing is to trailheads, the easier transportation becomes. If anyone has a house or cabin that could be rented, or knows of someone who does, the Trails Committee would be very grateful. You may call Peter Smart at 603-323-8827.

FOREST LEGACY

This article appeared as an editorial in the *New York Times*. The *Times* editor must have attended meetings of the Friends of the Sandwich Range!

The Editor

If he were to walk away from the conservation issue right now, President Clinton would already have achieved a respectable legacy, including his considerable efforts to restore the Everglades, preserve Utah's red rock wilderness, save California's redwoods and protect Yellowstone National Park from destructive mining. But in terms of scope and political audacity, nothing quite matches the proposal he announced last week to protect more than 40 million acres of national forest from commercial development. If his scheme survives legal and congressional challenges, no sure thing, it will almost surely be recorded as a signature environmental achievement of his Administration.

Politically, Mr. Clinton's announcement could not have been more timely. Even as he spoke, a House-Senate conference committee was finishing work on an Interior Department appropriations bill that reduces by two-thirds his modest \$495 million open-space request for the current fiscal year, threatening not only the Everglades program but wilderness initiatives from California to New England. The bill, which Mr. Clinton has rightly threatened to veto, also includes a half dozen anti-environmental riders. Mr. Clinton's forest proposal is bold enough in its own right. Set against the stinginess of this Congress, it is positively breathtaking.

The President's proposal would not actually expand the national forests, which consist of 192 million acres. Of these, 34 million acres have already been designated as protected wilderness by Congress, and thus placed off limits to logging, mining and other forms of development. What the proposal would do is create an additional 40 million acres of near-wilderness — areas with only slightly less protection than Congressionally designated wilderness — by preventing roads from being built in those parts of the national forests that do not have them now.

Without roads, commercial development is virtually impossible.

The tactical genius of the plan is that it can be done administratively, under the National Forest Management Act, circumnavigating a potentially hostile Congress. Congress may try to cause mischief along the way with legislative maneuvers designed to delay or derail the plan. But Mr. Clinton has a far better chance this way than if he had simply asked the Republicans to give him 40 million acres of new wilderness.

The plan is also designed to survive the vagaries of Presidential politics. The entire process of public comment, hearings and the writing of new regulations could last until next December, after the election but before Mr. Clinton leaves office. At that point, a final rule would be issued making the 40 million acres off limits to roads.

Under the law, a new President would have to go through the same laborious public process to undo the plan. That could prove to be politically impossible, given strong public sentiment in favor of protecting public lands.

This plan is the culmination of a long effort by James Lyons, the Under Secretary of Agriculture for natural resources, Mike Dombeck, the Forest Service chief, and George Frampton, the President's chief environmental adviser, to impress upon Congress and indeed the Forest Service itself the notion that the national forests are more than tree farms. The plan's most glaring flaw is that it does not include the Tongass National Forest, which Alaska's powerful congressional delegation — which effectively controls the Forest Service's budget — is determined to keep open for logging. However, the Tongass is not explicitly excluded, and in the end its two million roadless acres could be added. That would make a very good plan even better.

FINDING COMPATIBILITIES

Note: If the reader is not already aware of the shelter removal issue and the NEPA process, it may be wise to read the article in this issue entitled "Scoping? What is Scoping?" before proceeding.

Editor

The inability of WODC members to reach consensus on the shelter issue is not due to basic disagreement or uncompromising positions, but rather the lack of sufficient opportunity to have dispassionate discussions. There are three principal concerns of members: protecting and preserving mountaintop environments on Whiteface and Passaconaway consistent with Wilderness; retaining overnight camping on two mountain peaks; and restoring several shelters that are historic in age and constructed by individuals and organizations historically significant.

In this article an effort is made to seek compatibilities among these three concerns so that each is respected. Individual concerns can be achieved provided there is flexibility and understanding on the part of all. To accomplish this it will be necessary to share some background information.

Mountaintop environment. Although the scoping letter gives excellent descriptions of the history of the three shelters, there is no mention of environmental protection. That lack of information is not an oversight, for the process of decision making by WMNF requires full analysis of the mountaintop ecosystems. Federal regulations require analysis; what the environment is today, and what its desired future condition should be. This analysis requires comprehensive study of the vegetation, soils, water and air resources, as well as the wildlife inhabiting and using the areas.

Each resource raises problems related to human use. To what degree is human use affecting the ecosystem, by both day hikers and campers? Is there soil compaction and degradation of forest litter and duff? How is woodfire burning at campsites affecting the timber environment? What are the effects of a multitude of tenting sites and the lack of adequate human waste disposal facilities?

In what ways do the presence or absence of shelters affect the environment differently than the presence of many individual camp sites?

All WODC members agree that protecting the natural environment on both peaks is essential. There is complete agreement on this concern.

Historic shelters. Two of the shelters, Heermance and Shehadi, are at the peak of Whiteface, while Rich is located ½ mile below the peak of Passaconaway. Both Shehadi and Heermance are beyond repair and in need of full restoration. Overuse and abuse by campers are evident at the peak of Whiteface. Since WMNF managers are required by Wilderness regulations to preserve and/or enhance the Wilderness resource, inaction is not an acceptable alternative. Something will be done.

The situation on Mt. Passaconaway is quite different. Few people camp at the peak. In addition, the Rich shelter is greater than ½ mile below the peak, there is spring water nearby, sufficient soil depth is present allowing limited human waste disposal, and adequate clear space to permit some tenting. Dead trees for firewood is not easy to find though the area is better stocked with dead trees than is Whiteface. Were the area near the shelter as heavily used as the peak of Whiteface, overuse and abuse would be a

problem. As with the shelters of Whiteface, Camp Rich is in need of full restoration.

Prior to making any decision with respect to removal of the shelters, Federal legislation requires that the NH State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) decide whether the shelters are eligible for listing as national historic structures or sites. Based on the SHPO judgement, WMNF decision makers must balance the value of preserving the shelters as cultural resources with the value of protecting the natural resources by their removal. These two objectives are not necessarily exclusive. In several other Wilderness structures have been retained in order to protect natural resources. Shelters act as hardened areas where use is concentrated. The objective is similar to that obtained by installing tent platforms.

Each shelter will be studied individually. The environment of each is unique, their histories are different, and their designers and builders were not of equal historical significance. Histories of the three shelters may be found in earlier *Newsletter* issues (May, 1992; November 1995; April 1996).

Overnight camping. Since the SRW is within a National Forest, removal of a shelter requires analysis of present conditions and the desires and needs of campers. There is no doubt about the wishes of those who do camp on our

FRIENDS OF THE SANDWICH RANGE

Members of the "Friends of Sandwich Range" are participating in WMNF local planning group meetings on the topic of the Forest Plan. Planning groups meeting in Concord, Conway, Woodstock, and Gorham as well as those meeting in neighboring states have not taken to date specific proposals from attendees. The Friends want to propose changes in Management Area (MA) designations, and the policies followed in particular MA's. A goal of the Friends is to change MA designations in sections of the Forest adjacent to, and critical to, protecting the Sandwich Range Wilderness (SRW). These changes would protect them from timbering and motorized recreation, and keep them eligible for Wilderness designation.

The WMNF has put on their web site (www.fs.fed.us/r9/white) a first draft of the Forest Plan and are accepting preliminary comments until December 10, before issuing the official first draft and beginning a formal public comment period in January 2000.

WODC members who support the goal of expanding the SRW are urged to comment on the first draft. In addition, write to members of your NH State representatives. WODC members from all states should write their US Senators and Representatives to support the Clinton administration proposal to safeguard roadless areas in all National Forests from roadbuilding, since that proposal is presently in its public comment phase. (See article "A Forest Legacy" beginning on page 4 in this issue.)

Anyone wishing further information on the Friends' proposals and activities, or addresses of public officials, may reach Fred Lavigne and Evelyn MacKinnon at 603-284-6919, Chris Conrod at 603-284-6686, or Judith Reardon at jreardon@jnlaw.com.

mountains. Strong support for having and maintaining shelters is evident as judged by surveys conducted by the WMNF. Here is what campers have written:

"To many people who hike and camp in the White Mountains the Adirondack Shelter fulfills or comes as close to meeting their idyllic image of the wilderness cabin as they will ever come."

"Others have written of the unique characteristics of the three-sided shelter. Unlike the tent, which is confining and separates the camper from directly confronting the elements, the shelter allows protection and, at the same time, the opportunity to feel, see, and smell the surroundings."

"The Adirondack leanto is aesthetically pleasing. Favorably located it seems almost an emanation of the forest floor. As a shelter, its marginal protection against wind, rain, and cold enables you to revel in all the minor inconveniences and discomforts of camp life. You confront, in the precise meaning of that verb, the essential facts of life, more truly than Thoreau did in the Walden hut. The open front invites big thoughts. Out there, unscreened after the fire dies down, is the untamed wilderness of our ancestors on the continent."

No surprise then that many users of WODC trails, including some members, support restoration of shelters.

Misunderstandings. There is an impression among members that the WODC "owns" the three shelters, and the cost of restoration would be borne by the Club. Neither impression is accurate. The FS purchased the shelters when it purchased the land, and all responsibility for decision making and cost of shelter removal or restoration rests with the FS.

Some support for removal of shelters in the SRW is found in a clause of the 1964 Wilderness Act. It reads, "An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to protect



First day of work on Walden Trail: (clockwise from left) Judith Reardon, Fred Lavigne, Olivia Lester, Evelyn MacKinnon, Eric Flood, Zachary Hasse, Jonathan Segev, and Daesha Ramachandran

its natural conditions and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable...."

Beautiful and compelling language, and many would wish that the SRW fit the definition. However, is this restrictive definition fitting for a forest in New Hampshire that has felt man's presence for over 200 years? Does the SRW "retain its primeval character...with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable?" SRW is a section of Forest where there are: a brass commemorative plaque, hiking trails, trail signs, stone steps and water bars, railroad embankments, railroad ties, a railroad switch, lumbercamp bed springs, cellar holes, stone walls, water wells, and grave markers, as well as shelters. Man's work is very noticeable.

To quote a FS official, "These cultural resources existed on the land prior to its designation. They are not intrusions, additions, or encroachments on the Wilderness; they are the Wilderness, as much as the plants, animals, soil, water, and other members of the natural resources component. Wise management of the total Wilderness resource must include informed decisions about both cultural and natural resource components, and not one-sided management at the expense of the other."

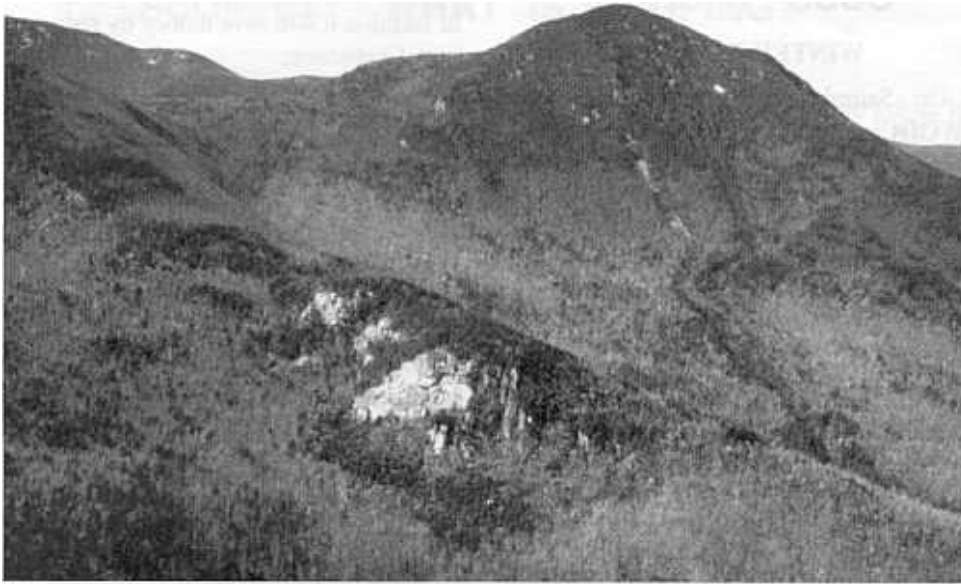
Finding Compatibilities:

Following are brief descriptions of some compatibilities that would preserve and protect the Wilderness resources on the mountain peaks of Whiteface and Passaconaway, allow a limited number of hikers to camp overnight at or near the peaks, and preserve two of the three historic shelters. The compromises make no attempt to deal with all the issues.

To protect the peak of Mt. Whiteface it is necessary to restrict the number of campers who can stay overnight, the areas in which camping is allowed, and the availability of facilities. Although it may be necessary in the future to limit the number of hikers allowed on any one day, regulation is not necessary at this time.

Limit the number of overnight campers to the capacity of the shelters that are available — perhaps no more than 6 people in each. A shelter is a "hardened site" where the soil is well compacted and vegetation unprotected. No other camping allowed.

Require that cooking be done on small portable backpacking stoves, and that open fires be discouraged. "Carry In - Carry Out" will be the ethic. Human waste is a major problem. As suggested by the "Leave No Trace" policies of the National



Square Ledge and Mt. Passaconaway as viewed from the air

Outdoor Leadership School, the ideal is also that of carrying out human waste. However, the digging of individual "cat-holes" at a distance of 50+ yards from the shelter is a reasonable compromise.

These camping restrictions on Whiteface will require restoration of at least one of the two shelters. Most campers prefer to use Camp Heermance when both are available. This preference may be due to the location of Heermance — a few yards from the open ledges —, the nearby unreliable water source, and a heat-reflecting boulder at the shelter opening. From the viewpoint of historic relevance, the original Shehadi is the oldest, while Heermance was designed and constructed by the more noted person.

Under present conditions, make no changes with respect to camping at the peak of Mt. Passaconaway. Since topsoil, dead wood, and water availability near Rich are less critical issues than at the peak of Whiteface, human induced degradation is not as evident. Restore Camp Rich on its present site, having in mind that limited overnight camping on Whiteface will increase the number of campers at and near Camp Rich. In future years camping might need to be further restricted.

By these few compromises there can be protection of Wilderness values, limited

overnight camping, and restoration of historic shelters. The opinions expressed are those of the writer, and not policy of the Executive Committee of WODC or Club members. Suggestions are provided as food for thought. I would appreciate receiving the thoughts of Club members.

George Zink

WINTER ON THE TRAILS

November brings a range of feelings: sadness at the end of summer and even the end of the bright, crisp days of autumn; some shivering at the cold winds and colder rains, while pushing to get a few more hikes in; a nesting urge to get the firewood in and the yard cleaned up and the snow shovel close to hand. But a certain group of people feel an eager anticipation for...the SNOW! Some are buying their downhill ski (or snowboard) passes and are dreaming of speed and daring. Others are dreaming of striding or skating and gliding on groomed cross-country trails. And some are sharpening their skates, perhaps the most realistic about the quantity of ice we've been receiving in recent winters. All these are fine ways to get out and enjoy the frosty air, the peace, and the lack of insects. Backcountry adventures make the winter pass even faster.

Backcountry winter adventures are available everywhere. Frozen ground and water allow one to explore anywhere on snowshoes: the impenetrable bogs, the secret ponds, the overgrown paths, and over hills and dales. Current snowshoes are all-terrain travellers because they are shorter, lighter, and have claws that are great on hills. Some devotees are climbing all the 4000-footers in winter (winter boots with crampons are needed for some of those peaks) and are even embellishing such feats by climbing them at night, or from all four compass directions. Our WODC mapmaker, Mike Bromberg, is experienced in this realm.

Other winter enthusiasts are skiers hooked on that gliding feeling, and have found many old logging roads, hiking trails, and even some bushwhacking terrain that can be explored on skis. Climbing skins that can be stuck to the undersides of the skis prevent sliding backward, and make climbing and descending steep sections much more fun. Fred Lavigne and Evelyn MacKinnon often lead the way in this regard, and they and Peter Smart and I collaborate and compete on designing outdoor adventures for every weekend that there is snow. We welcome anyone else who is interested in joining us anytime this winter!

A sample of interesting things that have been done: skiing on and between Old Mast Road and Kelley Trail; there are bear dens out there, as we found when the snow was receding; skiing the Bickford Trail or Cabin Trail to Whiten Brook Trail and returning via the Big Rock Cave Trail; skiing the McCrillis Path, as well as the Tilton Spring Trail and Red Path; skiing up the Downes Brook Trail to the Sleeper Trail in very deep snow; finding a pair of moose bedded down beside the trail near Sleeper; leaving the Sleeper Trail between East and West Sleeper and skiing (mainly sliding down in the dense and steep areas) down to the Sabbaday Brook Trail; skiing the Flat Mountain Pond Trail from Whiteface Intervale and bushwhacking to the Flat Mountains or to the West Spur of Whiteface or to the old logging camp called Hedgehog Camp; Flat Mountain Pond Trail from Bennett Street is also very interesting — it's challenging

and requires good snow depth — and if snow conditions are fast enough, there is time in the day to go to Lost Pass, an amazing experience. In the same area, before Lost Pass, one can take the Old Woodbury Trail to Sleeper Trail to the top of Mount Whiteface. These adventures are more feasible if one is camping out, which Fred and Evelyn do often, and we do occasionally when we can. With thermal underwear and good hats and gloves it is very comfortable, as long as one stays fairly dry. Camping leaves even more leisure to observe the numerous animal tracks and the various textures of ice and snow on the trees and brooks. Everything looks so different than during other seasons, and the photography opportunities are marvelous.

On most Saturdays or Sundays there are WODC members planning snowshoeing or skiing trips in the Wonalancet area. Call Peter and Judy (at 323-8827 or 323-7165) or Fred and Evelyn (at 284-6919, not after 8 pm) if you are interested.

Judith Reardon

ODDS & ENDS

WINTER POTLUCK

On Saturday January 29, 2000 the WODC will be holding a potluck supper at Runnells Hall in Chocorua beginning at 5:30 P.M. All are welcome, whether or not they are WODC members. After supper attendees will share items and memories of historical interest about WODC people, places, and activities.. Please bring items and stories of your own.

Potluck food items can be anything you wish. Usually a varied distribution of foods is brought without planning., but if you have any questions or ideas, please phone Judith Reardon at 323-8827 or 323-7165.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

In order to serve members with computers more efficiently, the WODC is adding E-mail addresses to our database. E-mail addresses will enable us to more easily and quickly notify members about

events such as talks, annual meeting, etc. In addition it will save money by reducing postal expenses.

The year 2000 membership renewal form will include an entry for E-mail addresses. Or, you may notify us by sending E-mail to membership@wodc.org.

CHANGES

Sally and George Zink have edited the *Newsletter* since October 1984. On January 1, 2000 they will leave the editorship to someone else.

They have enjoyed the work, and thank the many people who have helped, especially Judy and Peter Smart, Dick Daniels, Andy Thompson, and Chris Conrod, and the many who have shared the mailing tasks.

We are pleased to announce that Chris Conrod has volunteered to become editor. We do intend to submit to him an occasional article.

Sally and George Zink

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