

# Wonalancet Out Door Club Newsletter

November



2018

## Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892

Hello WODC members! It's been a year since I've been at the helm of the beloved White Mountain National Forest, and I'm glad to have this chance to address one of our most respected constituencies. What a great year for me to step up to the plate. It was our Centennial and we rang it in with a spectacular exhibit at the Museum of the White Mountains. It was a chance not only to "reflect" on the last 100 years and what it took to restore the landscape (from denuded and burned over) to the iconic wonder it is today, but also to "engage" both our stakeholders and visiting public to "create" a healthy, sustainable landscape for future generations.

Let me tell you...it's not easy to hold it all together! It takes *active management*. For years invasive species, forest insect and disease epidemics, increased recreation activity, and catastrophic storm damage have threatened the health of New Hampshire's forests. The White Mountain National Forest is excited to pause and rethink our land management approach. Often, our treatments have not been at the right scale, or have been isolated from similar efforts conducted by our partners. Although we accomplished a great deal in certain areas, we seldom succeeded at

the scale needed to have a lasting impact across broad landscapes.

Moving forward, the White Mountain National Forest would like to work more closely with our state and local colleagues in what we call a "shared stewardship" approach. This means coordinating our land management decisions to align with state and other conservation partners. Doing this will require shared decision making on both which areas to target and what actions to take. Instead of aiming for outputs, we must shift our focus to broad based outcomes that provide the highest payoffs for conservation.

We already have an exceptional foundation for working together across boundaries, but there are some important changes I see for the future. Instead of random acts of restoration, we will aim to prioritize landscape-scale stewardship actions that can produce significant outcomes at a truly impactful scale. It means we will capitalize on all of our tools to get things done such as new authorities provided in the farm bill that helps us partner effectively with the State.. We are also

focused on improving the efficiency of our environmental analysis processes under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Clare Mendelsohn

What this means for the WODC is now, more than ever, we need you at the table. Together we need to think about how we can expand our impact by leveraging our work. The White Mountain Trail Collective is a model of how we can make this a reality. Developing solutions for parking, alternative transportation, and increased hiker visitation is a form of shared stewardship. When various conservation organizations come together to do the right work, in the right place, at the right time we can get to a landscape-scale outcome that will move the needle. We realize that what we envision will require experimentation, co-learning, and adaptation. We also recognize that to reach our goals we can't afford not to do this.

Over the next year we'll be coordinating with the state to develop a sense of our shared priorities. At times we may be reaching out to organizations like the WODC and asking you to stretch yourselves to achieve the results needed. My hope is that the changes we make today will pay off with a healthy sustainable landscape in the future.

The White Mountain National Forest contemplates the path ahead with optimism. As we retool our approach to forest management, we commit to working closely with our partners to set landscape-scale forest management priorities that will yield the highest payoffs for both present and future generations. It is with gratitude that I know I can count on experienced organizations like the WODC to join us in creating more strategic investments in conservation of the White Mountains.

*Clare Mendelsohn is the Forest Supervisor of the White Mountain National Forest. In 2013, Clare fulfilled her long-time dream to work for the Forest Service with her first position as Public Services Team Leader on the Hiawatha National Forest in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where she grew up. She next served in a 4-month Detail as the Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor at the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests in AZ in the winter of 2015, and then was immediately hired as the Deputy Forest Supervisor on the White Mountain National Forest in July 2015. Before joining the USDA Forest Service Clare spent 25 years as an environmental professional in various capacities as a civilian working for the U.S. Air Force. The last 11 of those years she spent in San Francisco, CA as the director of the Western Regional Environmental*

*Office where she gained much experience in partnering for landscape scale conservation and natural resources management. Clare has a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Michigan Technological University, a M.S. in Environmental & Engineering Management from the Air Force Institute of Technology and an M.B.A. through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan Fellows Program.*

## **Scenic Areas of the White Mountain National Forest**

David Govatski

*“Scenic Areas are places of outstanding or unique beauty that require special management to preserve their qualities. This type area will be maintained as nearly as possible in an undisturbed condition.”* Secretary of Agriculture Rules and Regulations from 1960.

### Scenery in the Era of Tourism, Railroads and Logging: 1880-1911

Few people know much about the designation of scenic areas on the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). Even fewer can identify all ten designated scenic areas even though they may have visited them or saw the boundaries marked on trail maps. The purpose of this article is to tell the fascinating story of designated scenic areas and to encourage the reader to visit and appreciate these special areas.

Scenery played an important role in the early tourist history of the White Mountains. Artists and vacationers came in large numbers to enjoy the majestic views, clear streams and green forests starting in the 1880's as the passenger railroads reached the mountains. The White Mountain School of Art played an important role in heralding the beauty of these mountains.

The coming of the railroads brought more than tourists and artists. It brought the lumber barons who had previously skipped the White Mountain forests because of their inaccessibility. Most White Mountain rivers were unsuitable for driving logs but the technological advances of the steam engine made railroad logging practical. The huge demand for

lumber for a growing America attracted investment and large-scale removal of the lush mountainsides covered with spruce forests.

New Hampshire led the nation in spruce production for the decade of 1890-1900 with production peaking in 1907. This level of harvesting was both unsustainable and a cause of concern for the paper mills who needed a steady and reliable supply of wood fiber. Hotel owners and tourists alike bemoaned the loss of forest cover. Business owners and industry often relied upon waterpower that became more erratic as a result of widespread deforestation causing fluctuations in flow. Forest fires in 1903 alone burned 85,000 acres or 10% of the White Mountain region.

The extensive devastation of White Mountain and Southern Appalachian forests from overharvesting and forest fires led to the development of the forest conservation movement around 1900. A coalition of business owners, conservation organizations, citizens and politicians joined together to call for protecting the White Mountains and Southern Appalachians. This movement succeeded, after many attempts, to pass legislation known as the Weeks Act in 1911. The Weeks Act was named for Congressman John W. Weeks of Massachusetts who served as the floor manager for the legislation. Congressman Weeks had a White Mountain connection having been born in Lancaster, NH in 1860 and growing up on a farm. Weeks originally tried to use scenery protection for justifying the protection of these mountains. Speaker of the House Joseph Cannon said “Not One Cent for Scenery” causing Weeks to go back to the drawing board. Weeks came up with a better reason that also met the constitutional objections that some had expressed.

The wording in the preamble describes the Weeks Act as *“An act to enable any State to cooperate with any other State or States, or with the United States, for the protection of the watersheds of navigable streams and to appoint a commission for the acquisition of lands for the purpose of conserving the navigability of navigable rivers.”* This was certainly an interesting choice of words but it met the intent of the coalition supporting the preservation of the mountain forests and scenery. The result today is that we have 41 National Forests in 24 eastern states that protect 20 million acres of forest.

The White Mountains in 1911 looked far different than they do today. Many of the hillsides had been cut over and burned over. Very little of the virgin forest remained. The first land acquired for what was then the White Mountain Forest Reserve was the Pike Tract in Benton, NH, acquired on January 2, 1914, followed a few weeks later by a large swath of land on the Northern Presidential Range and the Wild River region. By 1918 enough land had been acquired so that President Woodrow Wilson designated the White Mountain Forest Reserve a national forest (WMNF).

The early foresters recognized the importance of acquiring not just “the lands that no one wanted” that were barren of trees but areas in the mountains that had not been cutover and had a good forest cover.

In 1919 Forester William Logan Hall writing to the Chief of the U. S. Forest Service described his efforts. *“Acting under your instructions, I have endeavored to work out a practical plan for retaining the original forest growth on the crucial area of privately owned land in the White Mountain Purchase Unit. On the remaining private lands in the White Mountain Purchase Area, in view of the probability of their subsequent acquisition by the Federal Government, in view of the essential nature of their forest as watershed cover, and in view of their recreational importance, a determined effort should be made to retain the original forest growth on areas of considerable size.”* What Hall was describing was his strategy to acquire lands that had retained a forest cover.

In the 1920’s informal agreements were made by the government foresters to prevent logging or road building on several especially scenic areas that had been acquired for the WMNF. These informal agreements worked for four decades until official designations and formal management plans were made starting in 1961.

#### Early Efforts to Conserve Areas of Scenic Beauty

The WMNF has a long history of citizen and conservation organization engagement in land protection. Two examples directly related to future scenic areas are noteworthy.

Snyder Brook in Randolph Case Study: The Boston and Maine Railroad completed the railroad between Whitefield and Gorham in 1892. Soon the trains that brought the tourists in were hauling the logs out as logging companies moved in and started cutting off the rich spruce forests of the Northern Peaks. The residents of Randolph, a major center for hiking, were concerned. The residents looked on with horror as the clear cutting extended two miles up the steep slopes. Many of their favorite trails became impassable due to slash.

The Appalachian Mountain Club acted in 1895 to save a small patch of primeval forest next to several popular waterfalls along Snyder Brook. The club purchased a strip of land from Laban Watson that was 600 feet wide and a little over a half mile long. The price was \$400 for 36 acres of old growth hemlock, spruce and hardwoods. The AMC donated the land to the WMNF in 1937. Today as you walk toward Snyder Brook the change from regenerating hardwood forest to old growth hemlock and spruce is abrupt and dramatic. These ancient trees tower up to 90 feet in height and with a measured age of 370 years give us a picture of what much of this area would have looked like before the extensive cutting began. Snyder Brook was designated as a Scenic Area in 1961.

Mad River Notch near Waterville Valley Case Study: Another noteworthy area preserved was in the Greeley Ponds area near Waterville Valley. This area retained its old growth forest and was about to be reached by a logging railroad when public pressure under the leadership of Philip Ayres and Allen Chamberlain convinced the U. S. Forest Service to acquire it in 1928. Hurricanes in 1938 and 1950 damaged some of the old growth forest but the area around the ponds retains its wild appearance and many old trees remain. Greeley Ponds Scenic Area was designated in 1964.

#### Informal Agreements Lead to Formal Management Plans and Designation

The informal agreements to protect outstanding scenic beauty and old growth forests became more formalized in 1960. The Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act required the Forest Service to develop plans that considered every National Forest resource including “*wood, water, wildlife, forage and*

*recreation*”. This meant that the land and resources would be managed to ensure a continuing supply of forest products and services in perpetuity for “*the greatest good to the greatest number of people in the long run.*” Recreation was considered to be the dominant use in those special areas that had been identified and protected by the early foresters.

When were scenic areas formerly established? The formal establishment of designated Scenic Areas occurred on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Weeks Act in 1961. Forest Service Chief Richard McArdele on October 6th made the announcement at the celebration of the Weeks Act at the Crawford House Hotel, within sight of one of the areas, the Gibbs Brook Scenic Area.

Scenic Areas established in October 1961:

- Gibbs Brook: 900 acres of old growth forest along the Crawford Path.
- Pinkham Notch: 5,600 acres including Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines.
- Snyder Brook: 36 Acres of old growth hemlock, spruce and maple.
- Sawyer Ponds: 1,130 acres with two ponds nestled under Mount Tremont.
- Lafayette Brook: 990 acres along the brook to the summit of Mount Lafayette.
- Rocky Gorge: 70 acres including a gorge and small pond along the Swift River.

Scenic Areas established in October 1964:

- Greeley Ponds: 810 acres of old growth forest near Waterville Valley.
- Nancy Brook: 460 acres of old growth spruce forest and two remote ponds.

Scenic Area established in January 1969:

- Lincoln Woods: Formerly 18,500 acres of remote forest near Shoal and Ethan Ponds. (Reduced to 1,200 acres today with remainder going into the Pemigewasset Wilderness).

Scenic Area established in 1986:

- Mount Chocorua: 6, 100 acres around the summit of Mount Chocorua.

What happened to the 10<sup>th</sup> Scenic Area? The Nancy Brook Scenic Area became the Nancy Brook Research Natural Area (RNA) in 1991. RNA designation overrides Scenic Area designation.

What happened to the proposed Northern Peaks Scenic Area? There was a proposed 11<sup>th</sup> Scenic Area called the Northern Peaks Scenic Area. The boundaries covered the northern and western slopes of Mount Madison, Adams, Jefferson, Washington, Monroe and Eisenhower (then called Mount Pleasant). Residents of Randolph objecting to a timber sale near Bowman responded by lobbying for a new scenic area to prevent timber harvesting on the northern peaks. The proposed Northern Peaks Scenic Area was rejected in 1969 on the grounds that existing protection was adequate. The proposed timber sale was dropped.

What happened to the proposed Bog Pond Scenic Area? A proposed Bog Pond Scenic Area was located on the east side of the Kinsman Range down to I-93 in Franconia Notch. It was 11,700 acres in size and included the 43-acre Bog Pond. It was proposed by citizens after the 2005 Forest Plan Revision was approved and is not under consideration.

What is the largest Scenic Area? The largest Scenic Area was formerly Lincoln Woods at 18,500 acres from 1969 to 1984. The creation of the 45,000-acre Pemigewasset Wilderness by Congress in 1984 reduced the size of Lincoln Woods Scenic Area to a mere 1,200 acres on the western slopes of Mount Willey. Today the Mount Chocorua Scenic Area at 6,100 acres is the largest.

Who designates Scenic Areas, RNA's and Wilderness? The Eastern Regional Forester in Milwaukee, Wisconsin has the authority to designate Scenic Areas and Research Natural Areas. Only Congress can designate Wilderness.

Why was Mount Chocorua not included in the Sandwich Range Wilderness? I found a reference by Charles Burnham of the AMC in Appalachia (Winter 1985 page 158) that alludes to an agreement to make this area a Scenic Area. I infer that Wilderness designation for this iconic peak would have been controversial. Manmade overnight trail shelters, including the historic Jim Liberty Cabin and Camp

Penacook would have to be removed. Mount Chocorua has a high density of trails and Wilderness Act implementation could clearly call for a reduced trail density, a reduced level of trail maintenance, and a reduced level of use by implementing a permit system.

Are motorized vehicles allowed in Scenic Areas? The 2005 WMNF Plan and specific scenic area management plans address motorized use. The Pinkham Notch Scenic Area allows for administrative use of special snow tractors for Snow Rangers in Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines. Route 16 bisects the Pinkham Notch Scenic Area and there is also a public road adjacent to the Rocky Gorge Scenic Area.

What is the White Mountain Forest Plan Management Area for Scenic Areas? The White Mountain Forest Plan (2005) describes management areas as “the grouping of land areas allocated to similar management goals.” All of the scenic areas fall under Management Area 8.5 (MA 8.5). Even though each scenic area has a specific management plan the overall purpose is to manage these areas for their outstanding natural beauty. There are approximately 16,836-acres designated as Scenic Area.

Article footnotes are on Website Newsletter copy.

*David Govatski retired from the US Forest Service in 2005 after a 33-year career. The views expressed are entirely his own.*

## **Trail Head Steward Program**

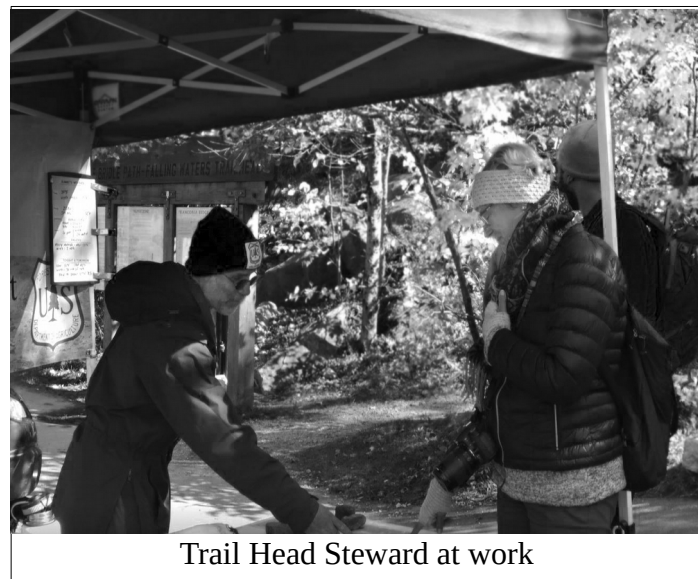
John Marunowski

The White Mountain National Forest Trailhead Steward Program began in 2014 with the help of a dozen volunteers. Today, the program enlists the help of over 100 volunteers but still has the same mission – “encouraging outdoor safety and conservation in the White Mountain National Forest by interacting with hikers at trailheads to promote responsible enjoyment and protection of public land”.

The program was born out of pure need; backcountry ranger staffing had fallen, search and rescue incidents

were on the rise, and fragile alpine vegetation was being trampled. Our plan was simple: staff trailheads and educate hikers before they get on the trail. At the program inception volunteers stood at trailheads for four hours at a time with little more than a map and a Forest Service volunteer uniform. Trailheads were an obvious choice to take advantage of their natural bottleneck effect. We chose to focus on trailheads with high use, access to high mountain areas, and a history of injuries; Old Bridle Path/Falling Waters, Ammonoosuc Ravine, Appalachia, Welch-Dickey and Champney Falls.

Messaging is a challenge and continues to evolve over time. What is the most important message you can convey in 30 seconds: weather, clothing, trail conditions, route choice? The dilemma continues but



Trail Head Steward at work

the effectiveness of our message was immediate. Hikers were willing to listen to our advice and often change plans or go back to their car if they were under prepared. That first year trailhead stewards logged 16,000 contacts with hikers. Nearly 1,000 hikers changed their plans based on our advice. We were fortunate to have the support of several partner groups who still support us with grants to this day. These include: The Waterman Fund, Plymouth State University, and The New Hampshire Outdoor Council. We also feel fortunate to build on the Hike Safe (hikesafe.com) program developed by the USFS and NH Fish and Game where we continually remind folks of the 10 essentials.

The Trailhead Steward Program has come a long way since 2014. Today we have a strong volunteer base and are working towards a model where volunteers lead other volunteers through: volunteer steering committees, lead stewards, off season planning, etc. We have an online sign up system and currently host a spring training and have hundreds of volunteer shifts throughout the summer to choose from. We have set up other volunteer programs for folks who want to hike trails as volunteers, backcountry stewards, or work in our woodshop making signs. Our set up at the trailhead has also become a bit more elaborate; White Mountain National Forest pop-up canopy tents, tables, maps, banners, clickers, binders and visual displays grace the trailheads.

We are still the new kid on the block, the rangers you've seen for the first time. To seasoned weekend hikers, we may be the annoying (but well meaning) presence they want to get around so they can start their hike. But our impact is growing and our volunteers are passionate about preventing search and rescue missions (PSAR). On a recent chilly morning in mid-October, Forest Service Volunteer Pete Heinold was working the Old Bridle Path trailhead where conditions at the trailhead were very different from those on Franconia Ridge. He contacted nearly 300 hikers that morning and was able to change the plans of 85% of those hikers who were unaware of the snow and ice on the ridge. We will be ending the 2018 season with 39,000 contacts and changing the plans of nearly 3,000 hikers – an all-time high for the program.

If you are interested in becoming part of our volunteer community please visit [Volunteer.gov](http://Volunteer.gov) or the volunteering section of the White Mountain National Forest website.

*John Marunowski USFS Backcountry/Wilderness Manager, Pemigewasset District WMNF*

### **Wilderness Trail Blazing**

Listen to the story broadcast on WGBH radio by WGBH Reporter and WODC Member Isaiah Thompson by copying:  
<https://tinyurl.com/WildernessBlazing>  
into your internet browser.

## Fall Trails Report

As I write this report in late October its snowing in Wonalancet. Could be a long winter. We had a successful season on the trails. We logged 433 hours of volunteer time and employed Jed Talbot's OBP crew for 200 hours. It was definitely the year of the blowdown. There were a good number when the snow melted and trees kept falling all season. We also received a \$17K grant from the National Forest Foundation that we used to support the newly formed White Mountain Trail Collective. We purchased 2 tripods to be used for moving rock to trail sites rather than rolling them along the ground. Jed Talbot then provided 2 Rigging Trainings on the use of the tripods. Steve Lord, adopter of the Rollins Trail attended one of the trainings. With snow outside the window the trails will be disappearing until Spring.



*Volunteers on Cabin Trail on June Trails Day*

QTY	Description	Price	Total
	WODC Patch	\$3	
	WODC Map and Guide 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition is sold out 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition due January 2019		
	4 <sup>th</sup> Edition Map Member Price	\$6	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Edition Map Non Member	\$10	
	WODC Historical Collection(CD)	\$25	
	"Serene Green" Cotton T-Shirt (Old Logo) Specify M, L, or X-L _____	\$19	
	Synthetic Navy Blue T-Shirt (New Logo design at wodc.org) Specify M, L, or X-L _____	\$19	
	<b>Memberships</b> Pathfinder _____	\$15	
	Steward _____	\$25	
	Trail Blazer _____	\$50	
	Five Year _____	\$250	
	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Edition Maps are planned to be released in January 2019</b>		

### WODC ORDER FORM (Shameless Commerce and Stocking Stuffer Division)

Please Mail Completed Order Form to:

WODC Member Services  
Hcr 64, Box 248  
Wonalancet, NH 03897

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## A Sad Heart on the Pasture Path

*“If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!”* – Henry David Thoreau *“Life Without Principle”* (1863)

The Wonalancet Out Door Club has three trails on the flanks of Mt. Katherine. These are no peakbagger highways; rather, for a century, they have nourished local families with solitude and gentle forest beauty. In 1935 a lumber company bought the land under these trails and made plans to log. Within two months, Ellen McKey had stepped up and paid the loggers a premium to recover the land. Friends and neighbors joined her cause and formed the Wonalancet Associates. In 1952 the Wonalancet Associates donated the land to a young Massachusetts non-profit, the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF).



**Wonalancet Out Door Club**  
HCR 64, Box 248  
Wonalancet, NH 03897

The deed of donation clearly states our predecessors' expectations: “This conveyance is made on the understanding [that] ... so far as possible in any cutting, aesthetic value shall be realized, especially along the trails.”

This summer NEFF made a timber sale that left well over a mile of skid roads and strip clear-cuts in that small section of beloved forest. They cut along and across our trails, stripping the forest that surrounded Tilton Spring. (See photo on WODC.org.)

I do not doubt that NEFF has followed accepted logging practices, or that this type of cutting can temporarily alter the environment to favor certain species. Nor do I doubt that some of NEFF's staff consider themselves environmentalists, and may share my love of the outdoors . . . and even of Thoreau.

I just wish they had been open enough to ask the WODC – and the community – how we feel about the hallowed space that was entrusted to them.

– Doug McVicar

## *References for Scenic Areas of the White Mountain National Forest*

1. Appalachia. 1986. "WMNF Forest Plan Released." Winter 1986. Page 17-19.
2. Burnham, Charles W. 1985. "AMC Responds to WMNF Plan". Appalachia. Winter 1985. Page 158 has reference to proposed Mount Chocorua Scenic Area.
3. Godden, Jack A. 1965. "The Establishment of Wilderness, Scenic, and Natural Areas on the White Mountain National Forest." Appalachia. June 1965. Page 402-413.
4. Hudson, Judith M. 2010. Peaks and Paths – A Century of the Randolph Mountain Club. Gorham, NH.
5. Pyles, Hamilton K. 1961. "An Order Establishing the Gibbs Brook Scenic Area – White Mountain National Forest." Copy of a file from the WMNF files. 1 page.
6. Tyrrel, Robert R. 1969. "Lincoln Woods Scenic Area". Appalachia. June 1969. Page 490-492.
7. White Mountain National Forest – Ammonoosuc, Androscoggin, Pemigewasset and Saco Ranger Districts. "Management Plans for Pinkham Notch, Snyder Brook, Gibbs Brook, Rocky Gorge, Sawyer Ponds, Nancy Brook, Lafayette Brook, Greeley Ponds, Lincoln Woods and Mount Chocorua Scenic Area". File designation 2360. Various years 1961-1986. Campton, NH.
8. White Mountain National Forest. 2005. Land and Resource Management Plan. Page 3-61 to 3-67. Describes Scenic Area management direction.
9. White Mountain National Forest. 1961 and 1964. Brochures for Gibbs Brook, Snyder Brook, Rocky Gorge, Nancy Brook, Greeley Ponds, Pinkham Notch, Sawyer Ponds, and Lafayette Brook Scenic Area. 4 pages each.
10. White Mountain National Forest. 2017. Forest Map. (NOTE: The Nancy Brook Scenic Area should not be on the map because it was replaced by a larger Research Natural Area).