



MINUTES

July 26, 2018

Lake Shaftsbury State Park – Shaftsbury, VT

Present: Walt Klinger (Pownal), Suzanne dePeyster (Sandgate), Cinda Morse (Shaftsbury), Judy Boehlert (Sandgate), Dan Potvin (Stamford), Janet Hurley (Manchester), Rebecca Dragon (Pownal), Donald Campbell (Conservation), Greg van Houten (Local Business), Ed Shea (Woodford), Bill Deveneau (Bennington), Charlie Rockwell (Rupert)

Chuck Suss (Woodford), Carol Swanson (Woodford), Jock Irons (Woodford), Mike Slattery (Pownal), Leslie Addison (North Bennington), Bill Henry (Arlington), Bill Botzow (Pownal), Ruth Botzow (Pownal), Tyler Resch (Shaftsbury), Tim Scoggins (Shaftsbury), Linda Sciarappa (Pownal), Tyler Yandow (Dorset), Alice Miller (Shaftsbury), RJ Joly (Bennington), Michael Walker (Pownal) David Francomb (Green Mountain National Forest)

BCRC Staff: Jim Henderson, Catherine Bryars, Jim Sullivan

BCRC Chair Janet Hurley opened the meeting and welcomed commissioners, local officials, and interested residents. Special thanks to Jim Henderson for doing the grilling!

I. Minutes of March and May BCRC Meetings

Motion by Boehlert to approve the BCRC Meeting Minutes from March 15, 2018 and May 17, 2018. Second by Shea. Passed unanimously.

II. Pownal Town Plan Public Hearing

The public hearing to consider approval of the recently adopted Pownal Town Plan was opened and, following minimal public comment, closed. Commissioners submitted ballots to vote on approval of the Pownal Town Plan and confirmation of Pownal's planning process. The vote on these measures passed with 21 municipal commissioners plus three interest group commissioners voting in favor, none opposed (13 and 17 required per statute and BCRC bylaws).

III. Green Mountain National Forest

David Francomb, District Ranger for the Manchester office of the Green Mountain National Forest, gave a talk on the National Forest in Vermont with a focus on recent initiatives in the Manchester Ranger District, which extends from approximately Route 4 south to the Massachusetts border. **Presentation handout is attached.**

Francomb discussed GMNF activities in the areas of timber management, recreation, fish and wildlife management, botany, and energy. He noted that the Forest has been instructed to place a primary emphasis on timber production and support for rural economies. Other topics covered included: forest health and resiliency, improving operational efficiency, engaging with communities and partners, integrated resource projects, early successional habitat projects, recreational trails – included a proposed hut to hut mountain biking trail, water quality work, and grant opportunities for local communities working with the GMNF. Francomb answered a number of questions about the GMNF and specific projects being undertaken in our region.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jim Sullivan (BCRC Director)

A topographic map of the Green Mountain National Forest Manchester Ranger District. The map shows terrain contours, roads, and various geographical features. The text is overlaid on the map in a large, colorful, 3D-style font. The text is arranged in three lines: "Green Mountain" at the top, "National Forest" in the middle, and "Manchester Ranger District" at the bottom. The map includes labels for "MANCHESTER", "WINDHAM", "LYE BROOK WILDERNESS", "SUNDERLAND", and "STRATTON".

Green Mountain

National Forest

Manchester Ranger District



The Forest

- **Approximately 450,000 acres along the spine of the Green Mountains**
- **Three administrative offices**
 - Supervisor's Office – Rutland
 - Rochester Ranger District Office – Rochester
 - Manchester Ranger District Office - Manchester
- **Resources managed**
 - Recreation
 - Soils
 - Water
 - Fire
 - Wildlife
 - Fisheries
 - Timber
 - Botany
 - Roads/Engineering
 - Lands Special Uses / Conveyance
 - Wilderness
 - Noxious Weeds
 - Law Enforcement
- **Management guidance**
 - Green Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan)
 - Federal Land Management Laws (Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, etc.)
 - Forest Service handbook and manual policy
 - Other jurisdictions (State, County, landowner) with existing rights or agreements

A vertical map strip on the left side of the slide shows various land management zones. It includes labels for 'LYEBROOK WILDERNESS' at the top, 'BROOK WILDERNESS' in the middle, and 'MANCHESTER WILDERNESS' at the bottom. The map uses different colors and patterns to represent different types of land, such as green for forest, yellow for open land, and purple for water or wetlands. A blue line represents a road or boundary.

Manchester Ranger District

- Approximately 250,000 acres from Highway 4 down to the Massachusetts boarder
- Primarily high elevation lands along the spine of the Green Mountains
- Some lands in the Taconic Range along the Vermont – New York boarder
- District Staff – 18 permanent employees (5 vacant positions) / 5 seasonal employees
- Responsible for all land use management decisions
- Responsible for community and partner engagement and collaboration
- Responsible for public notifications (Schedule of Proposed Action (SOPA), public scoping, opportunity to comment, closure orders (roads, trails, campgrounds, areas, etc.), certain permits)
- Responsible to work in alignment with management guidance (previous slide)

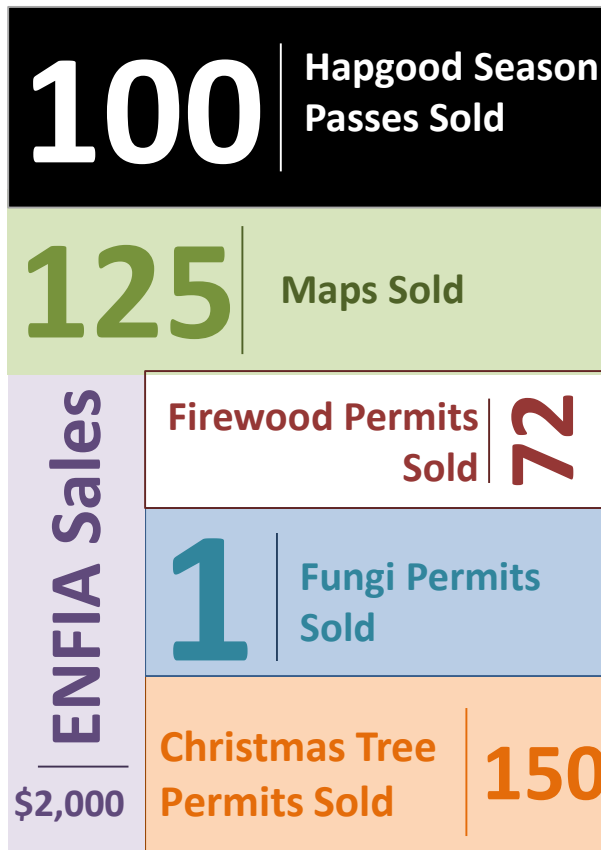
Green Mountain National Forest Update

Bennington County Planning Commission Meeting 26 July 2018

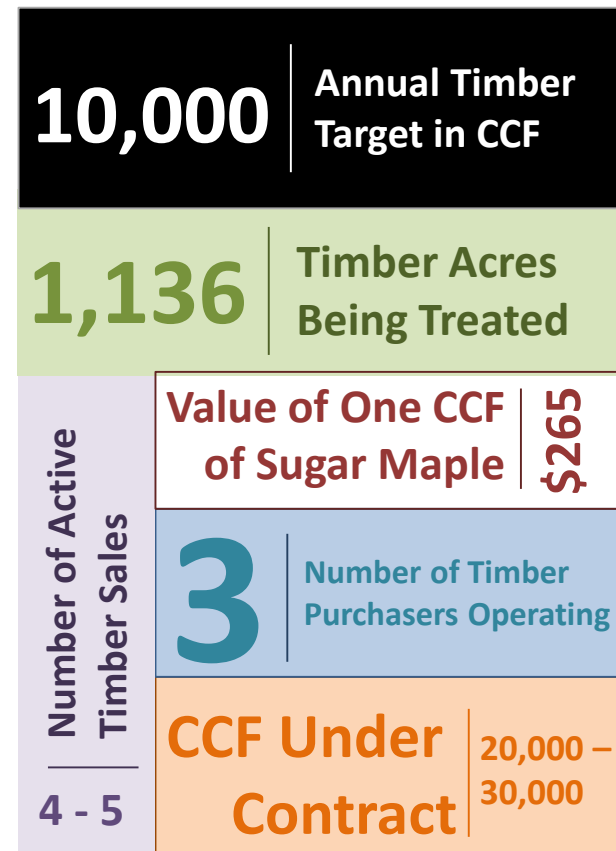
Manchester Ranger District

District Programs by the Numbers

Support and Visitor Services



Timber



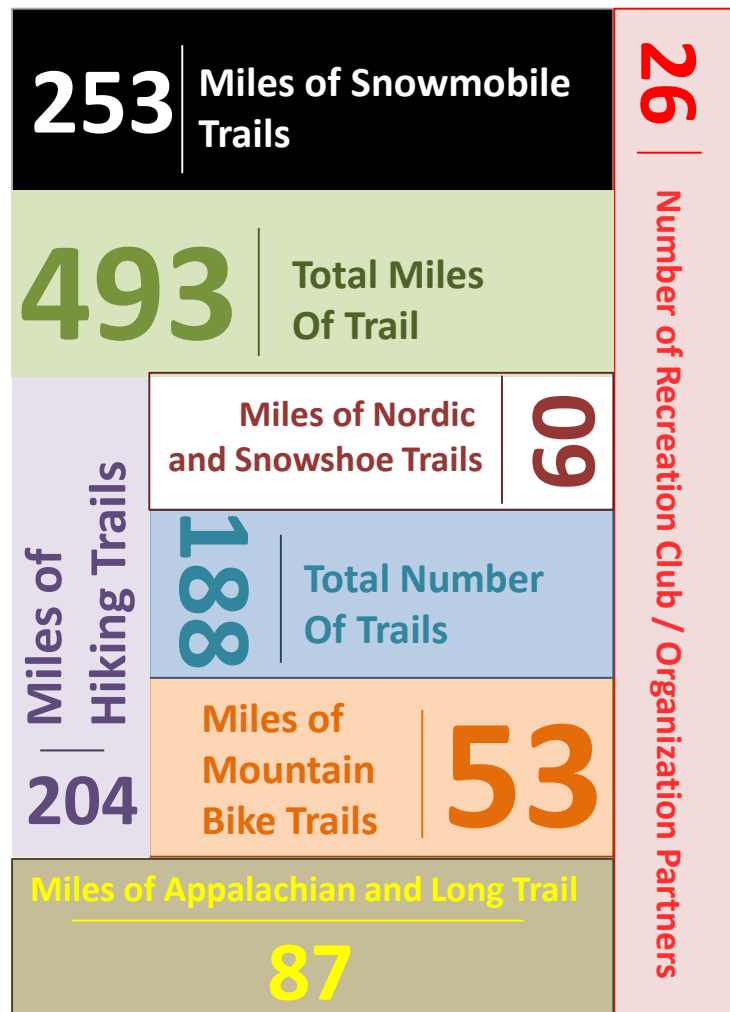
* Numbers are annual approximate values

District Programs by the Numbers

Developed Recreation



Trails

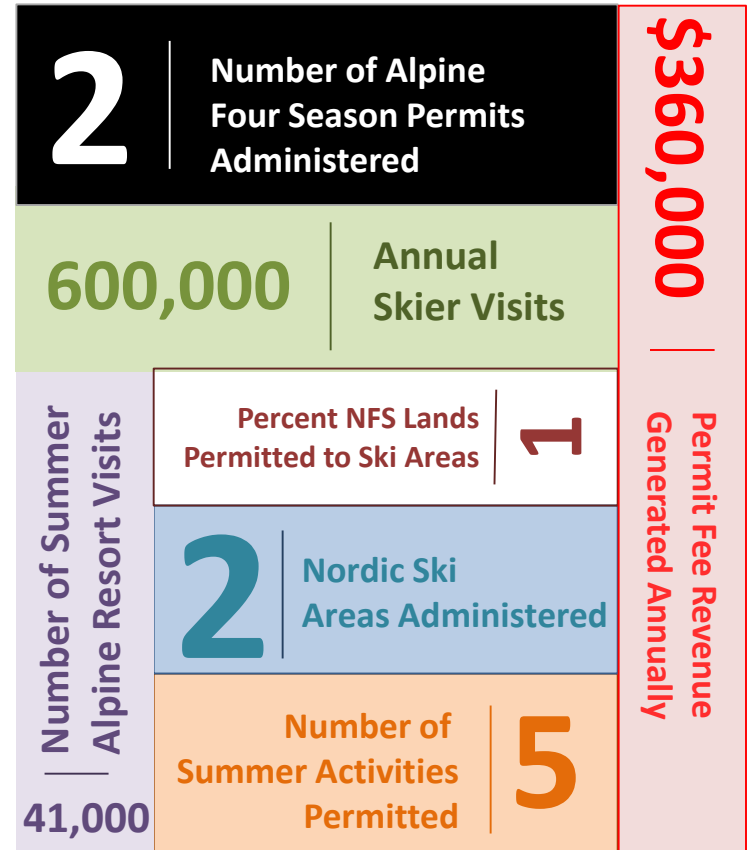


District Programs by the Numbers

Wilderness



Winter Sports



District Programs by the Numbers

Recreation Special Uses

19 | Total Recreation
Special Use Permits
Administered

2 | Isolated Cabins
Under Life Tenancy

1 | Community
Baseball Field

Snowmobile Tour
Company Permit | **1**

14 | Outfitter Guide
Permits

Recreation
Event Permits | **2**

Wildlife and Fisheries

140 | Number of
Permanent Openings
Managed

200 | Prescribed Fire
Acres Burned
Annually

Long-term Stream
Temperature Monitoring
Sites

30

Remote
High – Elevation
Ponds Stocked | **6**

9 | Major Program
Partners

Acres of
Permanent
Opening | **1,400**

District Programs by the Numbers

Green Mountain National Forest Update
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Botany

| | |
|---|---|
| Unique Botany Ecosystem Areas - Dome and High Elevation Ponds | 150 Sensitive Plant Species Populations |
| | 100's Number of NNIP Infestations |
| | Regional Forester Sensitive Plant Species 56 |
| | 1 Walk with a Botanist event at Hapgood Pond |
| 2 Number of Seasonal Program Employees 1 | |

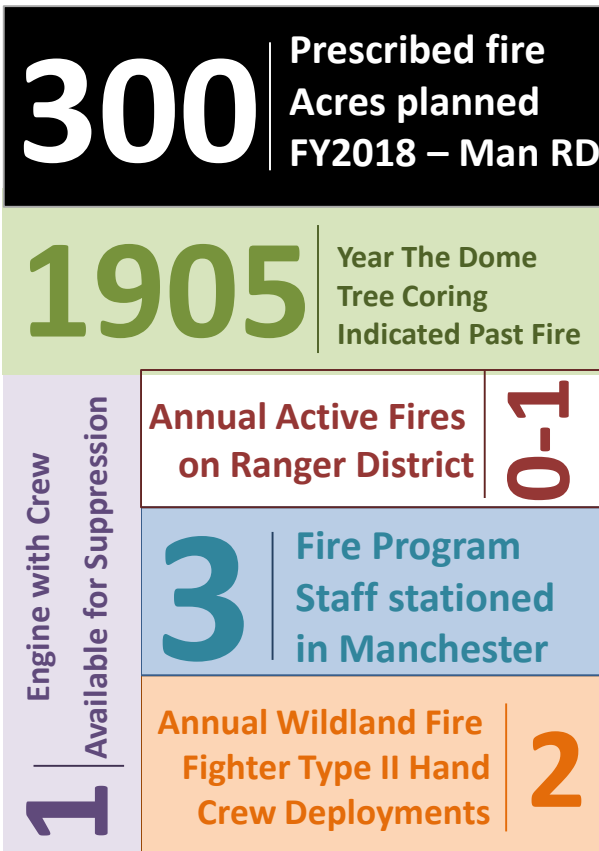
Law Enforcement

| | |
|--|---|
| Connection with Vermont All-Risk System | 1 National Team Representative (TCEMS) |
| | 250,000 Acres to Patrol |
| | Number of FPOs Certified Annually 4 |
| | 3 Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreements |
| 911 All-risk Responder Availability 24/7 | |

District Programs by the Numbers

Green Mountain National Forest Update
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Fire / Fuels



Lands Special Uses





Forest and District Initiatives and Emphasis Areas

- Meeting Agency-wide priorities and expectations
- Proactive engagement with communities and partners
- Completing backlog of small projects / expired permits
- Improving visitor experience

A vertical banner on the left side of the slide features a map of the Green Mountain National Forest. The map shows various colored zones: purple for 'LYEBROOK WILDERNESS', yellow for 'BROOK WILDERNESS', and green for other forest areas. A red dot is placed on the map. Overlaid on the map is the text: 'Green Mountain National Forest Update' in large green letters, and 'Bennington County Planning Commission Meeting 26 July 2018' and 'Manchester Ranger District' in smaller black letters.

Meeting Agency-wide Priorities and Expectations

- Focus on increased vegetation management and prescribed fire
- Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (efficiency effort)
- Forest Products Modernization (efficiency effort)
- Stand Up for Each Other (Internal work environment improvement effort)

A vertical map of the Green Mountain National Forest area is shown on the left side of the slide. The map features various colored regions: green for forest, yellow for open land, and purple for water bodies. Text is overlaid on the map in a vertical orientation. The main title 'Green Mountain National Forest Update' is in large green letters. Below it, 'Bennington County Planning Commission Meeting 26 July 2018' is written in smaller green letters. At the bottom, 'Manchester Ranger District' is written in black letters. The map also includes labels for 'LYEBROOK WILDERNESS' and 'BROOK WILDERNESS' in small grey text.

Proactive Engagement with Communities and Partners

- Focus on community-based collaboration
 - Partner Engagement Sessions at Supervisor's Office (Spring / Fall 2018)
 - Integrated Resource Projects (Somerset IRP)
 - Early Successional Habitat Creation Project (Ruffed Grouse Society and Mennen Environmental Foundation)
 - Dorset Hollow Mountain Bike Trail (NATS and Town of Dorset)
- Working across land jurisdictions
 - Good Neighbor Authority (shared position with State of Vermont – Ethan Crumley)
 - US Forest Service State and Private Forestry
 - 2014 Farm Bill
 - Joint Chief's Tower Road Project
- Forest Service Leader Stance and Habits
 - Stewards the Whole Place
 - Sees Opportunity
 - Shares Leadership
 - Builds Community



Completing Backlog of Small Projects and Expired Permits

- Manchester Ranger District focus on finishing small projects started years ago before taking on new proposals (ongoing for 3 to 10 years)
- National effort implemented on the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests to reduce the backlog of expired permits (lands and recreation special uses)
- Using Nominal Effects Determination for recreation and land special use proposals

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Improving Visitor Experience

- Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Forest Development Fund
 - First Impressions (Signs, kiosks, and facilities)
 - It's All Yours (Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Ads, Testimonials, It's All Yours Walk Series)
 - Employee Development (Forest-wide training opportunities)
- Grout Pond Campground Site Plan (Part of Somerset IRP)
- Manchester Ranger District Office Remodel
- Diversifying Recreation Offerings
 - Dutch Hill (Manchester RD) and Brandon Gap (Rochester RD) backcountry skiing
 - Expanding mountain bike opportunities (Dorset Hollow – Manchester RD and Blueberry Lake (Rochester RD)
 - Looking at fat bike opportunities across the forest



Opportunities

- Sustainable Recreation Infrastructure Financing (Quantified Ventures)
 - Modeled off of the Wayne NF's City of Athen's, Ohio mountain bike trail network
 - Velomont Trail in Vermont (RF Thompson – Vermont Huts and Shelby Semmes – The Trust for Public Land)
- Build Discretionary Grant Program
 - FS cannot apply, however, we can partner with a local governmental body to include improvements to facilities under FS jurisdiction.
 - Partnering with tribes, counties, town and private is extremely beneficial.
 - Minimum grant is \$5 million, maximum is \$25 million.
- Community Led Planning Effort
- Participate and provide input to ongoing planning efforts
 - Somerset IRP
 - Early Successional Habitat Creation Project
 - Additional Small Projects
- Federal, state, and other fund granting entities grant programs