

		<p><b>Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests</b></p> <p><b>News Release</b></p>
<p><b>News Release</b></p>		<p><b>Contact: Jay Strand 802-767-4261</b></p>
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## Forest releases proposed project for Upper White River Area

ROCHESTER, VT (February 23, 2010) The Green Mountain National Forest released the preliminary Environmental Assessment for the Upper White River Integrated Resource Project this week for a 30-day public comment period. The Assessment discloses the environmental effects from proposed management activities west of Route 100 within the upper White River watershed.

The area includes lands primarily in the towns of Granville, Hancock and Ripton, but also includes small portions of Rochester and Braintree. There are more than 36,000 acres that have been studied for potential management with about two-thirds consisting of National Forest and the remaining third in private ownership. A very small amount located in the Granville Reservation is managed by the State.

The proposal includes projects to improve wildlife and fish habitat, create healthier forests, improve the network of roads and trails in the area, and preserve heritage resources such as 19th century home sites. More than 1,600 acres of timber harvesting is proposed using a variety of methods to provide forest products for the local economy, enhance forest health and create more diverse wildlife habitat. Also included is the restoration of streams and improving fish passage structures across roads. Other proposed activities include controlling non-native invasive plants, pruning historic apple trees, and increasing recreation and scenery viewing opportunities.

Forest Service employees have been working with individuals, organizations, towns and agencies since 2007 to find the best combination of activities to include in this project. There have been numerous public meetings, workshops and field trips with great participation. The agency is now inviting public input on the preliminary assessment and will consider any feedback received as they finish planning for the project.

“The Upper White River project has been carefully developed to provide a wide variety of resource opportunities and services to the public. I am looking forward to hearing from them on how well we are proposing to manage National Forest lands in this area” says Greg Smith, Ranger for the Rochester District where the project is located. A final Environmental Assessment and decision for what activities to implement are expected to be completed by June.

For more information about the project call Jay Strand at (802) 767-4261 x522, or email him at [jstrand@fs.fed.us](mailto:jstrand@fs.fed.us).

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