



United States  
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Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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# **Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails Mountain Bike Access**

## **Decision Memo**

**USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region  
Green Mountain National Forest  
Middlebury Ranger District  
Town of Leicester  
Addison County, Vermont**

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**Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails  
Mountain Bike Access Project  
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Addison County, Vermont

**I. SUMMARY**

As District Ranger for the Middlebury and Rochester Ranger Districts of the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF), I am authorizing the implementation of the Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails Mountain Bike Access Project. Currently, the Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails allow hiking use only and would need improvements to allow mountain bike use. Improvements authorized in this decision include construction of new switchbacks, modifying existing drainage structures to bicycle standards, improving the trail tread, and potential reroutes around wet, steep, and sensitive areas. The project is located on National Forest System (NFS) land in the Town of Leicester in Addison County, Vermont (see attached map).

**II. DECISION TO BE IMPLEMENTED**

**A. Background and Project Area**

Opportunities for mountain biking in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area (NRA) and GMNF are limited. By expanding the allowable use on two hiking trails (Forest Trails 121 and 178) to allow mountain biking, there are additional opportunities for this recreational activity, including loop trails. In 2008, the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) received a grant to implement necessary trail improvements to create multiple use trails on the GMNF. Authorizations were provided in October 2008 and July 2009 to designate mountain bike access on trails in the Moosalamoo NRA. Designating additional trails for mountain bike access will provide important links between roads and trails to establish a series of riding opportunities of varying length within the NRA.

A developing partnership between the Forest Service and VMBA is providing enhanced opportunities for public mountain bike-based recreation access as well as public education and support for GMNF resource management programs. In addition, VMBA has worked with the staff of the GMNF to reduce deferred maintenance on existing trails, off-setting routine trail maintenance costs.

The Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails are in the Moosalamoo NRA, including the Moosalamoo Recreation and Education Area Management Area (MA), Green Mountain Escarpment MA, and Eligible Wild, Scenic and Recreational River MA (Leicester Hollow Brook).

**B. Purpose and Need**

The purpose and need for this action is to implement the 2006 GMNF Land and Resource Management Plan's (Forest Plan) goal of "Providing a diverse range of high-quality sustainable recreation opportunities that complement those provided off National Forest System lands" (Forest Plan p. 15). During the development of the Forest Plan, many members of the public felt that the GMNF did not provide enough trail opportunities for mountain biking. The Forest Plan provides several key points that provide the purpose and need for this action:

- “The Forest Service will manage the Green Mountain National Forest for **multiple uses**. The Green Mountain National Forest is open for any legal public activity or management action, unless specifically restricted in law, policy, or the 2006 Forest plan. While allowed, such activities and actions **may require administrative review and authorization** before they are implemented.” (Forest Plan, page 4)
- “Our recreation niche will focus on the fact that the GMNF’s large, contiguous blocks of land are well suited to **trail-based activities** in backcountry settings.... Working in partnership with many organizations will continue to be a hallmark of how the Forest Service provides recreation opportunities to the public.” (Forest Plan, page 9)
- “Increase the effective use of **partnerships** in the improvement, maintenance, and operation of the Forest trails system.” (Forest Plan, page 9)
- “Trail maintenance and improvement activities should focus on the **reduction of deferred maintenance** needs on existing trails before the development of new trails.” (Forest Plan, page 35)
- “**Multiple use trails** should be emphasized over single use trails where the uses are compatible.” (Forest Plan, page 35)
- “Multiple use recreation trails should be designed and maintained to adequately and **safely accommodate the most demanding or impacting type** of use allowed.” (Forest Plan, page 35)
- S-1: “Bicycle trails shall be allowed only on National Forest System **trails that are designated for that use**. Forest System Roads (Class I-V) shall be open to saddle, pack, and draft animals unless posted closed.” (Forest Plan, page 36)
- G-1: “Bicycle trails should be identified and maintained in **cooperation with partners**.” (Forest Plan, page 36)

### C. Description of Decision

The following existing trails will be designated and managed for multiple uses including mountain bike use:

1. Rocky Point Trail (FT 121) from the junction with FT 127 (Silver Lake Trail) to the junction with FT 178 (Chandler Ridge): approximately 0.6 miles
2. Chandler Ridge Trail (FT 178): approximately 4 miles

My decision includes sign changes at trailheads and trail intersections to indicate mountain bike use is allowed. Additional blazing and directional signs will be installed as needed to provide directional information for users. Mountain bike use on trails may be temporarily prohibited in times of extreme wet weather or other adverse resource conditions.

Trail improvements include reroutes and construction of new switchbacks to attain sufficient grades for mountain bike trail standards, modifying existing drainage structures to bicycle standards (such as replacing waterbars with rolling dips), and potential reroutes around wet and sensitive areas. Activities also include standard actions such as installing new water bars, ditches or other structures for improved drainage and to prevent or reduce soil erosion. The Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails will be designed to meet Forest Service Class 2 Bicycle design/construction standards.

The trails being designated for mountain bike use in this project will fulfill the purpose and need for this action. These trails were identified in cooperation with local mountain bike user groups and future partners. A careful administrative review on this proposal has revealed that:

- Allowing mountain bike users on trails will develop additional partnerships that will contribute to the maintenance of existing trails.
- Allowing mountain bike users on trails is in line with our Forest's recreation niche of trail based activities in backcountry settings.
- This decision will foster the development of multiple use trails that will increase recreational opportunities to the public without increasing deferred maintenance or increasing the Forest's infrastructure.

This decision includes implementation of mitigation measures and monitoring requirements identified in Appendix A of this Decision Memo. This decision is based upon an environmental analysis conducted by Forest Service personnel. This information is located in the project planning record located at the Rochester Ranger District office.

### **III. REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE DECISION**

Decisions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories found at 36 CFR 220.6(d) and (e), and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect.

#### **A. Category of Exclusion**

Based upon the environmental analysis contained in the project planning record and on experience with similar activities on the GMNF, I have concluded that this decision can be appropriately categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. I have determined that the selected action is a routine activity within the following category of exclusion found at 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1): "Construction and reconstruction of trails."

#### **B. Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances**

The list of seven extraordinary circumstances that were examined for this analysis may be found at 36 CFR 220.6(b). The mere presence of one or more of these resource conditions does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion. It is the degree of the potential effects of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist. I have concluded that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the project planning record. A summary of the project's potential effects on each resource condition is as follows:

1. Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species or Designated Critical Habitat, Species Proposed for Federal Listing or Proposed Critical Habitat, or Forest Service Sensitive Species –  
A Biological Evaluation (BE) was prepared in July 2009 to assess the likelihood of occurrence, habitat needs, and determination of findings regarding Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) wildlife species in the project area (Widowski July 31, 2009). Based on the analysis in the BE, the likelihood for occurrence of any threatened and endangered (T&E) species in the project area is low. The GMNF has historic occurrence

records of three T&E species (eastern cougar, gray wolf, and Canada lynx), and current occurrence records for one species (Indiana bat). Based on field review, the location of the site and the site characteristics were not in accordance with any of the T&E species that have potential to occur within the GMNF boundaries. There are no known T&E wildlife species occurrences currently in any of the areas (Widowski field review July 21, 2009). There is no potential or critical habitat within the project area, and because the project area exceeds elevation of 800 feet, the potential for Indiana bat maternal roosting habitat is low (Forest Plan, p. 27). As a result, there will be "no adverse effect on species or critical habitat."

This project site has been surveyed for Regional Forester Sensitive Species (RFSS) (Widowski July 21, 2009). No RFSS animals are known to occur within the project area and a survey of the sites did not identify any individuals or ideal habitat for RFSS animals. This project will have "no impact" on any of the RFSS or their preferred habitats.

A BE was prepared in December 2009 to assess the likelihood of occurrence, habitat needs, and determination of findings regarding TES plant species in the project area (Deller December 14, 2009). Based on the analysis in the BE, the authorization of the Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails Mountain Bike Access Project will have "no adverse effect on species or critical habitat" for T&E species; there are no federally listed plant species on the GMNF. Four plants on the RFSS list are known from the Chandler Ridge Trail. All four RFSS are immediately adjacent to the trail and have the potential to be impacted both by trail reconstruction/maintenance activities and by changing use to allow mountain bikes. The four species and the occurrence records are:

- *Asclepias exaltata* – this is one of two known populations on the GMNF
- *Conopholis americana* - this is one of two known populations on the GMNF
- *Isotria verticillata* – the only known population on the GMNF; State listed (Threatened); small population – if lost, would lead to loss of viability on the GMNF
- *Phegopteris hexagonoptera* - this is one of two known populations on the GMNF

Although the four RFSS plants are known from the project area; authorization of this project will have "no impact" on any of the plant RFSS or their preferred habitats due to mitigation measures identified in Appendix A to protect the RFSS. Implementation of this project is not likely to lead to loss of viability or trend toward federal listing for any rare plants on the RFSS list (Deller December 14, 2009).

## 2. Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds –

Approximately twenty percent of the Chandler Ridge Trail is within the eastern edge of a water source protection area (WSPA). Given the minimal and localized amount of soil disturbance connected to the project, and that the trail does not cross any streams in the WSPA, trail improvements will have no effect on water quality or yield in the WSPA. Trail improvements such as those proposed in this project are considered an acceptable activity within WSPAs. No wetlands would be impacted by trail improvements. Activities associated with the Chandler Ridge Trail are not in a 100-year floodplain.

Activities associated with the Rocky Point Trail are not in a WSPA, nor within the 100-year floodplain. Impact to wetlands may occur where the trail is near small wetlands; however, these impacts would be very small-covering less than 0.1 acre in total extent. Trail maintenance, use, and activities will have little to no effect on and will not impair the function of the wetlands. Similar past projects in this area were determined to have no significant wetland-related impacts. No significant impacts to floodplains, wetlands, or municipal

watersheds are expected to result from this project (communication with staff soil scientist, December 14, 2009).

3. Congressionally Designated Areas, such as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or National Recreation Areas –

Wilderness:

Wilderness is identified on the Forest as Management Area 5.1 (Forest Plan, p. 49). The project is not in or near Wilderness. This decision, with impacts limited to the immediate area of activity, will not affect the Wilderness Area (communication with Recreation Planner, October 22, 2008).

Wilderness Study Areas:

There are no Congressionally designated Wilderness Study Areas on the GMNF (communication with Recreation Planner, October 22, 2008).

National Recreation Areas (NRAs):

The GMNF contains two NRAs: the *Moosalamoo NRA* and the *Robert T. Stafford White Rocks NRA*. The Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails are located within the Moosalamoo NRA. One general objective of the Moosalamoo NRA includes providing for public enjoyment of the area for outdoor recreation and other benefits. Opportunities for mountain biking in the Moosalamoo NRA and GMNF are limited. By expanding the allowable use on two hiking trails to allow mountain biking, there are additional opportunities for this recreational activity, including loop trails. Implementation of this decision document is consistent with management direction and the desire for the Moosalamoo NRA to exemplify outstanding recreation opportunities (communication with Recreation Planner, October 22, 2008).

Wild and Scenic Rivers:

Although the GMNF does not contain any Congressionally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, there are many river segments that are eligible to be further considered for addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. These river segments and their associated corridors are within the Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Management Area (MA 9.4). The Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers MA (9.4) has an emphasis on protecting and enhancing the “outstandingly remarkable values” (ORVs) that led the rivers and streams within the management area to be determined as eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers for the National Wild and Scenic River System. Management under this MA retains a river’s eligibility for the stated potential classification (GMNF Forest Plan, pp. 105-109). A portion of the project area includes NFS lands located in the Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers MA, due to the proximity of the Leicester Hollow Brook, an Eligible Recreational River. The Leicester Hollow Brook has special values associated with botanical/ecological ORVs (GMNF Forest Plan, Table 3.1-7 p. 107). There are no specific management area standards or guidelines for non-motorized trails. This decision is consistent with maintaining the eligibility of the Leicester Hollow Brook (concurrence from Forest Recreation Planner, October 22, 2008).

4. Inventoried Roadless Areas or Potential Wilderness Areas –

There are no inventoried roadless areas (Roadless Area Conservation Rule or Forest Plan Inventoried Roadless Areas) in the project area. This decision will not affect inventoried roadless areas (communication with Recreation Planner, October 22, 2008 and April 9, 2009).

5. Existing and Candidate Research Natural Areas –

There are no Existing or Candidate Research Natural Areas (MA 8.6) in the project area. This decision, with impacts limited to the immediate area of activity, will not affect Existing or Candidate Research Natural Areas (communication with staff ecologist, October 22, 2008).

6. American Indian and Alaska Native Religious or Cultural Sites –

See Item 7 below.

7. Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas –

This decision complies with the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Mitigation measures have been identified (Appendix A) to protect cultural resources near the Silver Lake Dam (concurrence from Forest Archaeologist, November 9, 2009).

8. Other Resources –

In addition to resource conditions that could lead to extraordinary circumstances, I also have considered the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to other resources such as soil/water, fisheries, visuals, recreation, and non-native invasive species. The project will not result in significant impacts to these resources, particularly because all applicable Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines will be implemented (communication with Resource Specialists at Small Projects Day, October 22, 2009 and May 15, 2009 and personal communications December 14, 2009).

#### **IV. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

This project was listed in the quarterly *Green Mountain National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions* (SOPA) beginning in January 1, 2009, and will remain in the SOPA until the project is authorized for implementation. This project was also internally scoped with Forest Service staff during Small Projects Day on October 22, 2008, April 9, 2009, and May 15, 2009. A field trip was held July 16, 2009 with interested Forest Service specialists as well as Patrick Kell of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association, Hardy Avery who is redesigning the trail to accommodate mountain bikes, Ethan Ready of Senator Sanders staff, District Ranger Greg Smith, and Eric Sorenson of the Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program. The objective was to discuss the trail design vision and to see and discuss the ecological characteristics of the Ridge and potential impacts of adding mountain bike use. Several invitations to attend field reviews were made available to representatives of the Center for Biological Diversity and Conservation Law Foundation to identify possible conflicts with their organizations goals; however, they were not able to attend any field reviews.

In addition to internal comments and discussions held during the July field trip, external comments were received from two members of the public. Comments from one public member expressed a desire to keep Chandler Ridge Trail closed to mountain bike use in an attempt to keep the trail from being overrun with recreational traffic and the noise associated with potential mountain bike crowds. Another external commenter expressed a desire to prohibit mountain bike use Forest-wide in order to prevent damage to natural resources, limit the potential for illegal drug use, and increase the Forest Service credibility and chance for additional land acquisition.

Comments were used to refine the project and analysis. Comments were also used to consider the possibility of extraordinary circumstances and potential effects to those resources.

## **V. FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OR RELATED TO OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

My decision will comply with all applicable laws and regulations. I have summarized some pertinent ones below.

National Environmental Policy Act - This Act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. The entirety of documentation for this decision supports compliance with this Act.

Forest Plan Consistency (National Forest Management Act) –The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires the development of long-range land and resource management plans, and that all site-specific project activities be consistent with direction in the plans. The GMNF Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was completed and approved in 2006 as required by NFMA. The Forest Plan provides direction for all management activities on the GMNF. The Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails Mountain Bike Access Project implements the Forest Plan.

The Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails are in the Moosalamoo NRA, including the Moosalamoo Recreation and Education Area MA, Green Mountain Escarpment MA, and Eligible Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers MA (Leicester Hollow Brook) as described in the 2006 Forest Plan and subsequent legislation (Public Law 109-382, December 1, 2006).

My decision is based on the best available science, including a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. As required by NFMA Section 1604(i), I find this project to be consistent with the Forest Plan including goals, objectives, desired future conditions, and Forest-wide and Management Area Standards and Guidelines.

The Moosalamoo Recreation and Education Area MA emphasizes providing an outstanding combination of outdoor recreation opportunities and aesthetic attractions. Management emphasizes public use, interpretation, and education, and the protection of the special values and attributes of the area that contribute to public enjoyment. Implementation of this decision document is consistent with management area direction and the desire for the Moosalamoo Recreation and Education Area MA to exemplify outstanding recreation opportunities (GMNF Forest Plan, pp. 100-102).

The Green Mountain Escarpment MA emphasizes management of natural communities along the Green Mountain escarpment, including several rare or uncommon natural communities found in this landscape. The MA identifies a Desired Future Condition (DFC) for recreation management to be concentrated on trail corridors for summer use. Trails Guidelines note that “trail use by [...] bicycles [...] may be permitted as long as such uses do not interfere with Escarpment DFCs.” Concentrating mountain bike use on existing trail corridors is consistent with the DFC for the MA. The potential impact to rare plants and small patch communities will be mitigated by re-routes identified by the Forest Botanist and Ecologist (Appendix A). Implementation of this decision document is consistent with MA direction (GMNF Forest Plan, pp. 86-89).

The Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers MA (9.4) has an emphasis on protecting and enhancing the “outstandingly remarkable values” (ORVs) that led the rivers and streams within the management area to be determined as eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers for the National Wild and Scenic River System. Management under this MA retains a river’s eligibility for the stated potential classification (GMNF Forest Plan, pp. 105-109). River corridors contained within this MA are one-quarter mile on each side of the stream. A portion of the project area includes NFS lands located in the Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers MA, due to the proximity of the Leicester Hollow Brook, an Eligible Recreational River. The Leicester Hollow Brook has special values associated with botanical/ecological ORVs (GMNF Forest Plan, Table 3.1-7 p. 107). There are no specific management area standards or guidelines for non-motorized trails. This use is consistent with management area direction (concurrence from Forest Recreation Planner, October 22, 2008).

Endangered Species Act - The Endangered Species Act requires that federal activities do not jeopardize the continued existence of any species federally listed or proposed as threatened or endangered, or result in adverse modification to such species’ designated critical habitat. In accordance with Section 7(c) of this Act, a report of the listed and proposed, threatened, or endangered species that may be present in the project area was reviewed. See Section III, Item B.1 of this document.

Clean Water Act – The intent of the Act is to restore and maintain the integrity of waters. The Forest Service complies with this Act through Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, specific project design criteria, and mitigation measures to ensure protection of soil and water resources.

Wetlands (Executive Order 11990) - Executive Order 11990 directs the agency to avoid to the extent possible the adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands, and to avoid support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practical alternative. See Section III, Item B2 of this document.

Floodplains (Executive Order 11988) - Executive Order 11988 directs the agency to avoid to the extent possible the adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains, and to avoid support of floodplain development wherever there is a practical alternative. See Section III, Item B2 of this document.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act - See Section III, Item B.3 of this document.

National Historic Preservation Act - Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. It also requires federal agencies to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment. See Section III, Item B.7 of this document.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act - The Archaeological Resources Protection Act covers the discovery and protection of historic properties (prehistoric and historic) that are excavated or discovered in federal lands. It affords lawful protection of archaeological resources and sites that are on public and Indian lands. See Section III, Item B.7 of this document.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act - The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act covers the discovery and protection of Native American human remains and objects that are excavated or discovered in federal lands. It encourages avoidance of archaeological sites that contain burials or portions of sites that contain graves through “in

situ" preservation, but may encompass other actions to preserve these remains and items. See Section III, Item B.6 of this document.

Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 and Executive Order 11312 (Non-Native Invasive Species) – The Federal Noxious Weed Act requires cooperation with State, local, and other federal agencies in the management and control of non-native invasive species (NNIS); Executive Order (EO) 11312 requires all pertinent federal agencies (subject to budgetary appropriations) to prevent the introduction of NNIS. This project's decision meets the intent of this law and EO by incorporating all pertinent Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, and mitigation measures to ensure the management and control of NNIS. Although no NNIS are known from the area, the likelihood of them being introduced increases with the change in allowable use. If NNIS spread into this area, they could out-compete the RFSS present along the trail. Project mitigation measures have been identified in Appendix A to minimize spread of NNIS and protect RFSS.

Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898) - Executive Order 12898 requires consideration of whether projects would disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. This decision complies with this order. Public involvement occurred for this project, the results of which I have considered in this decision-making. Public involvement did not identify any adversely impacted local minority or low-income populations. This decision is not expected to adversely impact minority or low-income populations.

## **VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES**

This decision is not subject to an administrative review or appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.

## **VII. IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

This decision may be implemented immediately.

## **VIII. CONTACT PERSON**

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Holly Knox during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at the Rochester Ranger District office at 99 Ranger Rd. Rochester, VT 05767; Phone: 802.767.4261.530; or E-mail: hknox@fs.fed.us.

Additional information about this decision can be found on the Internet at [http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/htm/greenmountain/links/projects/projects\\_current\\_andcomplete.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/htm/greenmountain/links/projects/projects_current_andcomplete.htm)

## **IX. SIGNATURE AND DATE**

/s/ Jay Strand

for

Gregory D. Smith  
Rochester and Middlebury District Ranger  
Responsible Official

Date: December 23, 2009

## **Chandler Ridge and Rocky Point Trails Mountain Bike Access Project Decision Memo**

### **APPENDIX A – Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements**

All pertinent Forest-wide, and Moosalamoo Recreation and Education Area MA, Green Mountain Escarpment MA, and Eligible Scenic and Recreational River MA Standards and Guidelines will be adhered to during project implementation. The following additional mitigation measures and monitoring requirements will also be adhered to during and, where applicable, after project implementation:

1. Project implementation should occur between April 1 and October 31. Trail construction activities should not be implemented between November 1 and March 31 in order to minimize disturbance to resting black bears.
2. Trail crew members should be informed of black bear habitat and recent sightings in the project area so as to remain vigilant during trail construction activities and to avoid potential black bear encounters.
3. Bike use should be limited to mid-May through early November, annually, to prevent bike use during the wettest time of the year.
4. Prior to project implementation, GMNF botany and recreation staff will visit the project site together during the growing season to identify rare plants and construct trail reroutes around them accordingly.
5. When implementing any project activities within 200 meters of the Silver Lake Dam, recreation staff should consult with the Forest Archaeologist to ensure protection of heritage resources.
6. For 3 years following project implementation, monitor for newly established NNIS and treat infestations as needed (treatments to be in keeping with the GMNF Forest-wide Non-native Invasive Plant Control EA decision - expected to be completed in May 2010). Monitoring and treatment will continue until infestations are eradicated or controlled.
7. New structures built for this trail, including bridges, should be either resistant to fire, or constructed in a way that they can be removed or otherwise protected from fire use.
8. Ensure that relocations and reconstruction are used and designed predominantly to protect resources (e.g. plants, soil, water) and/or reduce grade.
9. Prior to the trail opening for bike use, develop a monitoring strategy to address the following monitoring issues of ecological concern; such a strategy will include monitoring questions to be evaluated, tasks and methods, frequency, timeline, and staff/area assigned to complete the monitoring.
  - a. Soil rutting in small muddy areas not hardened or reconstructed during this project to determine when/if additional reconstruction is needed prior to damage becoming significant.
  - b. Levels of bike use and their impacts (e.g. off-trail use, widening of trail tread, encounters) on the quality and integrity of the significant ecological features at Chandler Ridge in order to determine and alert recreation staff if use appears to be having unacceptable impacts.
10. If fill material is needed from off-site, make sure it is weed-free if available, otherwise monitor for NNIP and control as necessary.
11. Develop a plan to sign the Minnie Baker and Silver Lake trailheads providing information about Chandler Ridge and other significant ecological features accessed by these trails; include information about NNIP, and ways that hikers and bikers can control spread through clean boots and tires. The design concept and text should be developed by Recreation and Resources staff and other partners within the first year of project implementation. Building the signs will be contingent on funding, which may not be available with this particular project.
12. Any equipment brought in to implement the project must be clean (free of visible mud and plant debris) prior to accessing the site.