

**PROJECT INFORMATION**  
**Feller Brook Trail and Wallingford Pond Spur C Decommissioning Project**  
**Green Mountain National Forest**

The US Forest Service is proposing to decommission the 1.8 mile Feller Brook Trail (FT322) and the 0.6 mile Wallingford Pond Spur C (FT322.01). Both trails are located on National Forest System lands on the Manchester Ranger District, Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) in the Town of Wallingford in Rutland County, Vermont (see attached map for more information).

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

Neither trail is on the VAST map nor being maintained for snowmobile use. Feller Brook Trail has two stream crossings that are missing bridges, and Wallingford Pond Spur C terminates in an archeology site. Both trails need to be removed from the National Forest System trails database and corresponding maps to better provide accurate trail information to the public, protect cultural resources, and improve consistency with the VAST map.

The purpose of the Feller Brook Trail and Wallingford Pond Spur C Decommissioning Project is also provided by the Forest Plan that includes the following direction:

Forest-wide Goal 12, Objective 8: *“Reduce the total deferred maintenance on the GMNF trail system”* (Forest Plan, p. 15).

Forest-wide Goal 14: *“Provide a safe, efficient, and effective Forest transportation system that meets both the needs of the Forest Service and the public”* (Forest Plan, p. 16).

Forest-wide Trails Guideline 1: *“National Forest System trails should be operated and maintained to National Quality Standards for trails”* (Forest Plan, p. 35).

If the Feller Brook Trail and Wallingford Pond Spur C Decommissioning Project is not implemented, the opportunity to improve accuracy of trail information presented to the public; reduce the total deferred maintenance on the GMNF trail system; provide a safe, efficient and effective Forest transportation system; protect cultural resources, and enhance user safety would be lost.

**PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action is to remove the Feller Brook Trail and Wallingford Pond Spur C from the National Forest System trails database and associated maps. The trails are already naturally revegetating and signage and bridge structures are absent. No on-the-ground decommissioning activities would be necessary. The Bully Brook timber sale will be using FR15, which connects with the Feller Brook Trail. This operational maintenance level 1 road (closed to public motorized vehicles) will be gated during sale closeout, which will further deter unauthorized motorized use on these trails.

**FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The Feller Brook Trail and Wallingford Pond Spur C Decommissioning Project was designed to be consistent with the goals, objectives, and Forest-wide and Management Area (MA) Standards and Guidelines as provided in the GMNF Forest Plan. The project area is within the Diverse Forest Use Management Area (Forest Plan, pp.47-48) and the Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area Management Area (Forest Plan, pp.79-81). The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan direction including goals, objectives,

desired conditions, and forest-wide and management area standards and guidelines relevant to project activities. Specifically, this project aligns with Forest Plan Goal 12, Objective: “Reduce the total deferred maintenance on the GMNF trail system.” (Forest Plan, p.15).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

This proposed action potentially falls in a category of actions excluded from analysis in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, as proposals of this type individually and cumulatively do not have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposal appears to fall under the following category:

36 CFR 220.6(e)(20), “*Activities that restore, rehabilitate, or stabilize lands occupied by roads and trails*”

The environmental effects from the proposed action will be analyzed following National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations and guidance. The environmental analysis will identify any extraordinary circumstances that exist and could result in significant effects to the environment. At a minimum, the following specific resource conditions will be considered in accordance with 36 CFR 220.6(b):

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Regional Forester’s sensitive species
2. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds
3. Congressionally designated areas (Wilderness or National Recreation Areas)
4. Inventoried Roadless Areas
5. Research Natural Areas
6. American Indians and Alaska Native Religious or Cultural Sites
7. Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas

Other resources anticipated to be included in the environmental analysis include soil, water quality and aquatic habitat.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public comments received for the project proposal will help focus the environmental analysis on the resource issues of concern. The analysis will be the basis for the final decision.

### **DECISIONS TO BE MADE**

After conducting and reviewing the environmental analysis, including public involvement and interdisciplinary resource specialist input, the Responsible Official will make the following decisions:

1. Whether the proposed project will proceed as proposed, as modified to address issues, or not at all;
2. What specific resource protection or mitigation measures should be implemented as part of the project;
3. Whether the project would have environmental impacts at levels that may require an EA or EIS; and
4. What monitoring requirements should be applied to the project.

### **RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL**

David Francomb, Manchester District Ranger on the Green Mountain National Forest, is the Responsible Official for the decision on this proposal.

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