



Collaboration Guides Planning Efforts



Local citizens took part in a map-drawing exercise as part of the GMFL NF's plan revision process.

Can stakeholders with varied interests, backgrounds, and opinions stand around a single map and agree on how land management activities should be distributed in their own backyards?

The Green Mountain and Finger Lakes (GMFL) National Forest Planning Team thought so, and put the task to its devoted public 'planning groupies' to accomplish.

Following an intense round of public participation meetings that began in January 2003, the GMNF held two Forest-wide public meetings, and one Forest-wide public meeting on the FLNF, as the culmination, and final public collaboration effort, until Plan alternatives are released.

Although a risky adventure to expect mapped results from groups with diverging opinions, the GMFL NF Planning Team had confidence that they would be successful. Inflated egos or naïve optimism? Neither!

The GMFL NF had seen the development of a trusting, collaborative atmosphere form among diverse public opinion groups over the course of holding 79 public meetings across the States of New York and Vermont.

Even though opinions varied and areas of disagreement emerged, the Forests were pleased with the information gathered. The two Forest-wide meetings, held in the northern portion and the southern portion of the GMNF, began with a presentation of the management area (MA) 'box of crayons,' describing the management area differences and assigning a color for the public to use to allocate each MA on the maps.

To give a frame of reference before the coloring and MA allocating began, the small public groups were given money by the Forest Service. Think pie charts and percentages, not corruption and buy-off!

A pie chart exercise allowed the public to turn 100 pennies into management area percentages. With percentages in mind, the mapping exercise began.

Stakeholders were respectful of each other, listening to opinions, values, and reasons about why some areas should be colored with the purple wilderness pen, and others the brown backcountry motorized pen.

Given expectations of consensus before colors could be drawn, the Forest was pleased to receive maps with areas of agreement, in addition to ideas about Forest-wide allocation percentages. The GMFL NF Plan Revision Team will use the information gathered, as well as internal feedback, and information heard at all public meetings, to help formulate Plan alternatives.

The final public collaboration meetings were a rewarding effort for a Plan Revision Team that witnessed initial meetings of polarized debate and heated discussions. After months of late-night public meetings, tolerance and understanding grew for varied opinions and the task of making multiple use work.

The Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests witnessed collaborative work at its finest, as captured by GMFL Forest Supervisor Paul Brewster: "It has been very gratifying to witness the dedication of Vermont and New York citizens to really roll up their sleeves, gain an understanding of our planning process, and then work with us through many of the tough choices that we have ahead of us."

Inside:

Ottawa Employee Honored

Power Saw Training

Finger Lakes Presentation

LE&I Agent Visits With Scouts

IICC Receives National Award

Landscape Prescribed Fire

Forests Collaborate Statewide

Sleigh Bells Ring on Cheq-Nic



Ottawa Employee Gains National Honors

Ottawa National Forest Soils Scientist Sarah Mase received National recognition earlier this month when she was named USDA Forest Service Soils Scientist of the Year. This National award recognizes specialists who exhibit outstanding performance in soils management, helping to ensure the protection and improvement of soil productivity in all management actions.

Mase has devoted over 20 years of her Forest Service career promoting soil protection/conservation. Through Mace's oversight, numerous soil conservation and watershed restoration projects have been completed across the Forest, including road and trail stream crossings, soil erosion prevention, timber sale soil protection and stream channel repairs.

In addition to the work being completed on the ground, Mace has been instrumental in gathering the Ottawa's baseline ecological inventory data into a standard database that includes over 16,000 field observation records. With this information, the Forest can take full advantage of all field recorded data on soils, landforms and vegetation.

Working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Mace has taken the lead for production of a seamless ecological inventory and soil survey of all National Forest System lands and private lands within the Forest boundary. The consistent collection of data across the Forest between multiple agencies helps us to be more effective in our management practices and dealings with other land management agencies.

Mace has made many notable contributions to Forest projects over the past 20 years as exhibited above and as evident in projects across the Ottawa, but even more remarkable is Mace's enthusiasm and willingness to share her expertise and knowledge with the next generation of Forest Service specialists. Through her involvement, the Ottawa NF has been able to recruit several students from across the region to participate in the student coop program. Each of these students was mentored through their first season of field work under Mace's tutelage and has since joined the work force of the Forest Service.

The Ottawa National Forest is extremely proud of Mace's contributions, and we congratulate her on receiving this honor.

For more information contact Lisa Klaus at (906) 932-1330

Shawnee Employees Undergo Power Saw Training



Shawnee employees attended a wildfire power saw training course last fall.

A Wildfire Power Saw training course was held on the Shawnee National Forest last October to qualify operators.

Shawnee employees Anthony Kirby, Darrell Neal, Lance Brown, Mike Welker, Kara Kleinschmidt and Suzanne Hirsch attended a one-day training course on wildfire power saw use. Six people from Golconda Job Corps also attended the training.

The course included instructions on the proper use of power saws, precautions necessary to insure safe use of power saws, and proper maintenance of the equipment. Successful completion of the course is an important step in participants receiving certification as wildfire power saw operators.

In addition to the power saw training, employees must have current CPR, First Aid and Blood Pathogen certification to be fully qualified as wildfire power saw operators. The CPR, First Aid and Blood Pathogen training opportunities were provided on the Forest in early December 2003.

The Wildfire Power Saw training provided the participants with basic knowledge and skills needed to run the equipment properly, while the CPR, First Aid and Blood Pathogen training opportunities taught additional health and safety skills.

By providing the various training opportunities for employees, the Forest has insured that resources are available to support the efforts in fighting wildfire on the Shawnee National Forest and other national forests across the U.S.

For more information contact Marion Bunch at (618) 253-7114



Caywood Point Presentation Draws Crowd



The Queen's Castle was the subject of an informative session held on the Finger Lakes National Forest.

The Finger Lakes National Forest hosted an Historical Presentation on the history of Caywood Point, the Queen's Castle, and Camp Fossenvue in February.

The large turnout was surprising due to nasty weather conditions, and the prediction of a bad snow storm. There were people there from as far away as Peterboro, New York, as well as representatives from the local historical societies, and representation from the Women's Rights Historical Park in Seneca Falls, NY.

Caywood Point is located on one of New York's Finger Lakes, Seneca Lake. New York's Finger Lakes Region lies in the heart of farmland, vineyards, and wineries.

During the evening's discussions, the history of the land parcel known as Caywood Point was outlined, starting with the first settler to the area, George Faussett. He came to the states in 1760 from Kildare County, Ireland, and

eventually settled at Caywood Point.

The land was transferred down through his family for a number of years, up until its sale to the Boy Scouts of America in 1924. The parcel was known as Camp Seneca, and utilized by the Boy Scouts until its sale in 1996 to the Trust for Public Land, which then conveyed the property to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

The era of historical interest that the evening's presentation focused on was the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 1875, the point became a lakeside retreat and summer camp for the social elite, and was known as Camp Fossenvue.

The members and guests consisted of young suffragettes, politically liberal young women and men. The camp was unusual because in 1875 women did not pursue such activities as they did there – swimming, tennis, archery, etc. They went there to relax and recreate. That sounds simple today – but back then it was not as simple as it sounds.

They acted outside the assumed "proper women's sphere" which consisted of passive activities such as needlework, reading, drawing, etc. You'll have to remember, women were thought of as second class citizens then, and did not have the right to own property, or to vote, nor hold elective office.

They had their own well-defined roles in society, and combine that with the social mores of the time, and most women "behaved" comfortably in that role. At Fossenvue, besides the outdoor experience, and the physical exercise, they engaged in theoretical, political, and philosophical discussions. Ooh, that too, was taboo back then. It was presumed that women could not know much of politics, nor have the mental capacity to engage in such discussions, and nor should they!

So you can see that Camp Fossenvue was not the norm. It was thought of as radical at the time, yet today we consider these things normal. The camp lasted for over a quarter of a century!

The Queen's Castle was the last structure built at Fossenvue. It was a birthday present for Elizabeth Smith Miller, known as the Queen of Fossenvue, on her 77th birthday, which was September 20, 1899. The castle still remains at Caywood Point today, and is now part of the Finger Lakes National Forest.

The first half of the presentation featured many photographs taken during the Fossenvue era, and included bits of history donated by local residents. The second half of the presentation showed the original handwritten pages from the journal kept in 1908, and they were read aloud. The Geneva Historical Society had the original copy of this journal, and it really captures the daily activities of the men and women at Camp Fossenvue.

The Caywood Point historical presentation was a huge success, and copies of the presentation have been given to the local libraries and historical societies.



For more information contact Kari Lusk at (607) 546-4470



Special Agent Visits Area Scouts

In February, the local Fredonia (Wisconsin) Boy Scout Chapter sponsored a winter weekend with an outdoor winter camping experience theme at Hawthorne Hills County Park at the Herb Peters Youth Camp.

Hawthorne Hills County Park is located in northern Ozaukee County, about 40 miles north of downtown Milwaukee.

On February 28, approximately 25 scouts of various ages—including Bobcats, Wolves, Bears and Webelo Scouts, with their respective den leaders and volunteer chaperones—spent a day in the field with Forest Service employee Richard Glodowski, Special Agent in Charge of Law Enforcement & Investigations for the USDA Forest Service Eastern Region.

After the basics of conservation, forestry and wildlife were introduced, the scouts assembled for a day in the field with Glodowski searching for wildlife and identifying trees and shrubs. Another segment of the day was set aside for an exercise in using a compass and orienteering.

The day's activities helped the boys earn several scouting activity and achievement badges.

Glodowski has been invited to the Pack's annual Blue and Gold banquet in May to be acknowledged for his assistance to the Fredonia scout troop.



R9 Special Agent-in-Charge Richard Glodowski spent time with area Scouts.

For more information contact Rich Glodowski at (414) 297-3198

Hoosier Fire Center Receives National Award



Members of the Indiana Interagency Coordination Center received the 2003 National Fire Plan Award for Excellence.

The Indiana Interagency Coordination Center (IICC) has been selected to receive the 2003 National Fire Plan Award for Excellence in Firefighter Preparedness, Safety, and Training.

The IICC is an interagency partnership including Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) personnel. The IICC serves as the contact point for mobilization of fire personnel and equipment for in-state assignments as well as emergency assignments of Indiana resources nationwide.

The main purpose of the Center is for state and federal agencies to work together on a daily basis and streamline dispatch procedures so only one phone call is made to contact Indiana fire resources.

The concept of having one coordination center in Indiana was in the mind of Hoosier National Forest Fire Management Officer Chris Peterson from the time he arrived on the Forest in 1999.

"I knew we could make the interagency fire management concept work in Indiana—it was just a matter of bringing the partners together and securing some funding," Peterson said.

IDNR State Fire Supervisor Steve Creech (now retired) embraced the idea, but told Peterson the state could not support the Center financially at that time. However, with the help of Hoosier National Forest Supervisor Ken Day, funding was secured and a new facility, located at the Tell City Ranger District on the Hoosier National Forest, was built.

Peterson, accompanied by David Nugent of the National Park Service, and Brian Winters of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, are traveling to Reno, Nevada, this month to receive the award at the Second Annual National Fire Plan Awards Ceremony.

For more information contact Frank Lewis at (423) 476-9700



Improving Safety and Efficiency in Landscape Prescribed Fire

Three areas totalling 1,436 acres were treated with prescribed fire to reduce fuel loadings still remaining from the tornado and storms of 1996.

Prescribed fire was used within a predetermined range of weather conditions. Fuel and topography were variable in small stands, but generally mature oak forest in hilly terrain with hardwood leaf litter as the primary fire carrier, dominated the burn area landscape.

Pockets of thick downed trees and “jackpot” fuels, remaining from the tornado, were found throughout the three areas. The decision to do the prescribed burns was triggered by concern about the dangers posed by these thickets of hazardous fuels so near urban areas and the Charles C. Deam Wilderness. Additionally, fire will favor the oak and hickory over the maple and beech saplings resulting in a better mix in the forest stands.

Ground crews lit the perimeter starting on the backing fire or the downwind side. There was little wind, so they let the highest ground be their starting or control point and burned downhill. When the area is large (300 to 1,000 acres) there is less opportunity to light the interior safely. In this case, they needed to allow the fire to back and flank across a large tract of land. Initially, they planned to break the large burn units into smaller units to light on foot. However, aerial ignition eliminated the need for that and allowed larger units to be burned. Safety of ground forces and efficiency was also increased. The helicopter aerial ignition allowed the crew to speed up the burn but also control the fire intensity.

There are two types of aerial ignition, the spherical dispenser and the terra torch. The spherical dispenser machine has the advantage of dropping the ping pong balls through the tree canopy before they ignite. The terra torch or flying drip torch drops a mixture of diesel fuel and gasoline to the ground for ignition. The fuel is on fire as it leaves the helicopter, therefore, tree tops are ignited as the flaming liquid falls through the canopy. Because the crew did not want to ignite the tree canopy, they used the spherical dispenser machine.

The first day, a 700-acre tract was burned by lighting a backing fire from the highest point and using existing trails. It was a cold day and the fire intensity was low, therefore, they needed to make the burn hotter. They accomplished this by using hand lighters to ignite parallel strips to widen the fire line. Then we conducted aerial ignition in strips adjacent to the control line. The cold temperatures made the chemical reaction take up to two minutes for the potassium permanganate to work with the injected ethylene glycol and reach the temperature of ignition. We'd fly a strip and drop a ping pong ball every 40 feet and then turn and set a parallel strip. In about 10 minutes, our little spots of fire grew from about a six-inch circle to about 8-foot circles and if they got a gust of wind or could run uphill, the typical fire ellipse showed up every 40 feet. We dropped a few thousand balls to increase the intensity the first day and successfully ignited the entire interior after about 4 hours of ignition with a few breaks to reload the machine and take on fuel.

The second day was warmer and the fire burned much hotter. After the north and east flanks of the burn unit were lit, we reduced the fire intensity by lighting the ridgetops and allow the fire back into the wind or downhill, and flank perpendicular to the wind and sideslope. We noted that even with a steady 15 mile per hour southwest 20-foot wind, fire still backed down hills. This made the task of developing flight paths for the drops simply a matter of igniting the ridges.

Working with the helicopter crew and spherical ignition was enjoyable. It allowed us to speed up ignition yet control the fire intensity by observing the fire behavior and applying fire effects principals for prescribed fire use.



Firefighters move into position prior to the prescribed burn on the Hoosier NF.



Forests Use Statewide Collaboration in Working Toward Plan Revision



Forest representatives have held meetings with a host of private citizens and public officials while working toward revising the two Forest plans.

One look at a map and it's easy to see the multicolored checkerboard pattern of land ownerships across the Chippewa National Forest, and how land overlaps 90 percent of an Indian Reservation.

One look at almost any Minnesota newspaper reveals how many people – and issues – are focused on the large Superior National Forest.

In Minnesota, statewide collaboration and data sharing between land management agencies has been ongoing for many years. And, fortunately, organizations with opposing agendas regularly sit at the table in Minnesota to work on forest issues together.

In this environment, the two National Forests decided to jointly conduct a revision of both Forest Plans.

One goal of Forest Plan revision on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests was a collaborative process that was open, early, interactive and would produce Plans that the public supports. A variety of methods, including one of the Region's first websites, were used to exchange information with urban, rural and underserved populations.

At each stage of revision, the Minnesota national forests thought through options for collaboration and developed detailed plans to customize each forum to the topics the Forests and publics needed to learn to make progress. Sometimes this involved a mailing, or a field trip, or an open house. Sometimes it required an interactive workshop or a tutorial on how to interpret Forest Service documents or how to get data from a multi-layered website. Forest leadership on both Forests served as key communicators throughout Plan revision. The work of pre-existing, integrated statewide projects was incorporated to establish a common ecological basis on multiple ownerships. Analysis tools and "best management practices" were built with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and other groups such as the Governor-appointed Forest Resource Council and citizen boards addressing regional area Landscape Assessments.

The two national forests have worked through tough issues including recreational motor vehicle use, special land allocations, and timber harvest levels.

At one point a regional expert from Milwaukee was invited to visit Duluth and offer advice about collaborative techniques. This helped the Forests validate that their experiences were working and with good humor he took copious notes for three days and collected examples to share with staff on other national forests.

For example, Chippewa and Superior National Forest staff had written a guide for publics about how to review forest plans and environmental impact statements, and how to make effective comments that could help influence the outcome. The guide, along with many other resources, has subsequently been shared across the region.

For their efforts, the Chippewa and Superior National Forests were recognized in 1997 by the Chief's Internal Communication Award; they experienced an understanding public during the 2000 and 2001 rollout of major planning legislation; and they will soon deliver Forest Plans with pieces their publics will recognize and support.

For more information contact Kay Getting at (812) 277-3579





Improvements Made to BWCAW Portages During ‘Off Season’

Using Recreation Fee Demo funds to supplement program dollars, Superior National Forest employees, volunteers and the USDA Forest Service sled dog team partnered to rebuild a sunken 300-foot section of the Thomas to Cacabic Lake portage during the midst of a northern Minnesota winter.

The frozen conditions allowed the materials to be freighted 12 miles into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) over lakes and swamps using sled dogs. The snow also helped protect the resource by providing a cushion over a frozen bog at the building and placement site.

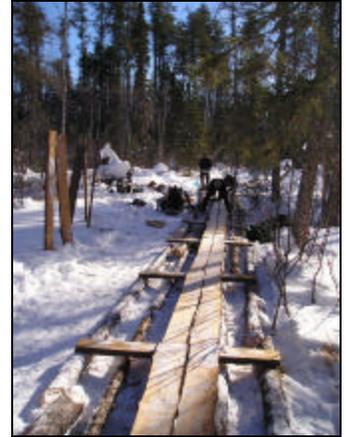
The Forest spent several seasons looking for an alternate route for the portage, but a large ash drainage running perpendicular to the portage eliminated any options. Last summer, a minimum requirement and tool analysis was completed which considered a range of alternatives including: status quo, removing the old corduroy, eliminating the portage completely, or rebuilding the deteriorated section of portage using several different options.

The minimum requirement and tool analysis is part of project planning in the BWCAW to help managers make decisions that result in the least impact to wilderness character. The work crew, commenting that they preferred working in waist-deep snow as opposed to working in waist-deep mud, camped in “comfortable” wall tents with morning temps down to -30.

This section of the portage, corduroyed years ago, had deteriorated and sunk into the bog. With parts of the corduroy missing and/or under two feet of standing water over muck, user safety became a concern. Resource damage was also a concern as visitors continued to widen the portage, to 40 feet in some areas, by attempting to avoid the mud and water. The portage goes through a lowland black spruce/tamarack forest, and the concentrated off-trail use had the potential for impacting a number of threatened and endangered plants.



The working sled dog team moves stringers into place on the Cacabic portage in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.



Rec Fee Demo funds played a key role in funding the project on the Superior NF.

The selected alternative was to replace the tread using a combination of native materials from the area and rough cut untreated tamarack. The four-foot mud depths on this portage forced the Forest to examine innovative ways of completing the project while mitigating safety, logistical, and resource concerns.

This resulted in plans for a winter operation with the project being completed in February, 2004. Some follow-up work will be needed when the ice and snow melt to help level out and tie the ends into a stable surface.

With spring, the stringers will sink into the bog and return the portage to an eighteen inch tread. As this happens, user safety concerns will be minimized, further resource damage will be eliminated, and the area will become much more natural appearing as vegetation fills in around the structure and user impacted area.

All in all, this project was a win for wilderness, a win for visitors, and a great example of user fees at work.

For more information contact Barbara Soderberg at (218) 626-4326



Great Lakes Visitors Center Kicks Off Ashland Sesquicentennial Celebration

Sleigh bells jingled as horses were put through their paces at the first-ever Sleigh and Cutter Rally at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center on Saturday, January 16, 2004.

Over 30 horse-drawn sleighs, bobsleds and other cutters raced across the snowy field as more than a thousand spectators braved the cold winds to watch the spectacle.

Hosted by the Northwoods Harness Club, this event kicked-off the City of Ashland sesquicentennial celebration. Reminiscent of days gone by, drivers dressed in costumes from the late 1800s.

Drivers from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and even North Dakota came to show off their four-legged beauties. Before the rally began, the visitor center parking lot was transformed into make-shift stables. Spectators got a chance to wander through admiring the horses and talking to their owners. People watched as sleighs were prepared, horses and ponies were harnessed, and drivers donned their 1800s style clothing.

As the rally began, horses circled the 50-acre field awaiting their turn to display their team before the crowds. The spectacle gave a feeling of a time when horse and sleigh were the main means of transportation. Dressed in antique clothing, some drivers wore lap robes made from animal hides to keep them warm from the cold gusty winds.

One driver had a coal-burning foot warmer inside the sleigh to keep her warm. Each team was introduced and the horses pranced as spectators cheered.

Inside the visitor center, spectators gathered to see the display of more than a hundred harnesses, sleigh bells, saddle ornaments and hitches. A banquet was held for horse drivers later that day where awards were presented in 12 categories, including best costume, single and multiple horse hitch, and most authentic sleigh.

Without the support of the many businesses, area volunteers and staff from the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, this event would not have been possible. The overwhelming interest in the Sleigh and Cutter Rally has group organizers convinced that the visitor center is the right place to hold this type of event. Preparations are already underway for next year's rally, and we hope to attract harness clubs from Canada and other states throughout the Midwest.



Single- and multi-horse teams participated in the rally during the kickoff to the local town's sesquicentennial celebration.

For more information contact Susan Nelson at (715) 685-9983

NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint or of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.