

# Wilderness Interpretation & Education Plan Green Mountain National Forest



**Approved by:** /s/ Jerri Marr - March 2010  
Acting Forest Supervisor Jerri Marr

**Reviewed by:** /s/ Chad VanOrmer - 3/12/10  
Heritage, Recreation, and Wilderness  
Program Manager Chad VanOrmer

**Prepared by:** Recreation Planner Douglas Reeves



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## 1 - Introduction

*“I believe that at least in the present phase of our civilization we have a profound, a fundamental need for areas of wilderness – a need that is not only recreational and spiritual but also educational and scientific, and withal essential to a true understanding of ourselves, our culture, our own natures, and our place in all nature.*

*By very definition, this wilderness is a need. The idea of wilderness as an area without man’s influence is man’s own concept. Its values are human values. Its preservation is a purpose that arises out of man’s own sense of his fundamental needs.”*

-- **Howard Zahniser** (*Author of the Wilderness Act*), from *The Need for Wilderness Areas*

*“One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. And ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.”*

-- **Aldo Leopold** (*An ecologist, forester, and environmentalist, considered to be father of American wildlife management*)

*“If you plan for a year, plant rice. If you plan for ten years, plant trees. If you plan for 100 years, educate your children.”*

-- **Proverbs, Sayings and Songs, Chinese Proverb**

What is wilderness? The etymology of *wilderness* is Middle English *wildern* wild, from Old English *wilddeoren* of wild beasts (13<sup>th</sup> century). Ask 20 people what wilderness means to them, and you will likely get 20 different answers. Talk to these people for a few minutes, and you probably also find each person uses the word wilderness in multiple ways – they are lost in the wilderness and they find rejuvenation in the wilderness. The wilderness is a place where ships fall off the edge of the earth and it is the home of Mother Nature – our sanctuary in the storm of modern life. It seems that wilderness is as easy to define as truth, beauty, justice, God, and the Tao. In our minds, wilderness refers to those dark places the ego has never been able to define and the imagination is free to roam, which makes it the perfect place for interpretation and education.

As Howard Zahniser stated, the idea of wilderness is a human concept that desires to protect the wilderness within us by preserving some of the last remaining wilderness around us. Indeed, we will lose a vital part of ourselves if we develop the last remaining wild places. The earth may not know it as it will keep spinning and revolving around the sun, and sun will continue to shine, but we will know and feel that a vital part of us has disappeared.

As Aldo Leopold stated, ecological interpretation and education does not leave a person feeling all warm and fuzzy as the understanding emerges that industrialized human influence on natural processes has often been devastating. However, empathy with other life forms can promote the desire to become good stewards of the land.

The challenges of managing wilderness do not stem from managing nature, but from managing the impacts of industrialized societies. Indeed, the majority of ecological threats to most wilderness areas occurs outside of the wilderness boundary and is often beyond the control of the wilderness manager and user. As the Chinese noted in their ancient proverb, the hope for changing these threats in the long-term lies in the education of the children. Moreover, as any good educator will tell you, children learn best by watching their elders, and when they know their elders care, they will care.

Similarly, the public will be more open to the wilderness manager's thoughts when they see that we truly care, and, most importantly, we are willing to listen to their thoughts.

The importance and purpose of wilderness education has been further defined in "*A Wilderness Agenda: Thinking Like a Mountain*," a strategic framework for addressing current management challenges and for guiding the Forest Service Wilderness program at all levels of the agency well into the future. It states that, "*Wilderness is a cornerstone of our Natural Resource Agenda, providing clean water and air, naturalness, critical habitats for endangered and non-endangered plants and animals, solitude, scenic beauty, and economic benefits to communities through tourism and recreation. Wilderness is a benchmark for determining our nation's environmental and spiritual health.*"

The Agenda further states that for Wilderness to survive, we must, "...*communicate effectively internally and externally to develop support across a broad spectrum. To accomplish this we must understand the needs of people in relation to Wilderness, reach out to a more diverse populace, and define our messages in ways that touch people's lives.*"

## 2 - Goals and Objectives

One of the primary goals of this Interpretation and Education (I&E) plan is to influence the attitudes and behavior of wilderness visitors and the Forest Service employees who are responsible for protecting these areas. Our interactions with people should help them to understand how and why to value wilderness, the fragility of wilderness ecosystems, how their actions affect these ecosystems, and to have a basic understanding of wilderness management concepts.

Wilderness managers recognize wilderness education as a proactive management tool. Managers also know that educating wilderness visitors and employees today can reduce or, in some cases, prevent resource damage in the future, which saves money in the end. This education plan is a tool for identifying issues, assigning action items and tracking accomplishments related to the education of wilderness visitors and land managers.

The goal of Wilderness management on the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) is to manage all federal Wilderness areas in a manner that is consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and enabling legislation. We recognize that each area has its own attributes, ecological types, and use patterns. For example, Bristol Cliffs Wilderness and George D. Aiken Wilderness do not contain any designated trails. Many miles of the Long and Appalachian Trails cross each of the remaining wilderness areas. These differences require wilderness managers to consider each area based on its individual qualities. The ultimate goal with all federally managed wildernesses, however, is to let nature take its course and have an area where man and his imprint go substantially unnoticed.

Our specific GMNF Wilderness I&E goals are:

- Increase awareness of wilderness history, philosophy, values of wilderness, and role of wilderness in ecosystem management.
- Instill and strengthen an appreciation for the value of wilderness resources in managers and users for the development of a wilderness ethic that results in informed decision-making.
- Influence behavioral changes in managers and users that promote the preservation of wilderness quality.
- Demonstrate and promote attitudes and behaviors appropriate to wilderness resource protection with special emphasis on the Leave No Trace (LNT) program.
- Promote the sustainability of the wilderness ecosystem by ensuring its health, diversity, and productivity.
- Promote the understanding that natural ecosystems are much larger than individual wilderness areas and that many of the threats to wilderness ecosystems are from outside of the wilderness boundary.
- Wilderness I&E programs should provide the historical perspective and cultural legacy of Wilderness; address spiritual and emotional renewal; challenge and risk; and explain the reasons for preservation of natural systems.
- Provide accurate, accessible, and appropriate wilderness information via web pages, trailhead signage, booklets and brochures, and training of internal personnel with wilderness responsibilities, including VIS and frontliners.
- Collaborate with neighbors, stakeholders, other agencies, and publics in fostering wilderness awareness through the development of partnerships for the management of wilderness areas.

### 3 - Historical Perspective

Today, forests cover a third of the United States and 60 percent of our total forested land lies in the densely populated region east of the Mississippi. In fact, some of the most densely populated states – New York and New Jersey – are more than half-forested, and Vermont currently is 75 to 80% forested.

It was not always so. The indigenous people of North America lived in harmony with the eastern forests for thousands of years and their lifestyles allowed for healthy ecosystems while providing for all of their needs. In fact, these light-on-the land Native American agriculture practices developed over 50% of the food we eat today, i.e. corn, tomatoes, potatoes, and squash. Their advanced agricultural practices combined with ample wildlife for hunting, made for native populations that were much healthier than their European counterparts were. Unfortunately, the comparatively disease ridden Europeans spelled disaster for healthy Native American populations, and the human component of these stable ecosystems were severely impacted with mortalities of over 90% in some locations.

Early European settlers perceived the vast and magnificent forests they first encountered here as “wilderness” – a condition that should be feared and conquered. Over the next two centuries, while Native American communities were being decimated through contact with Europeans, the forests were also being reduced – harvested for timber for their wheels and walls, ships and fuel, bridges and barns, and cleared to make room for European-style agricultural and grazing practices. As the East industrialized and urbanized, its forests declined in size and quality. Wildfire consumed the forest debris left behind; rain swept away the topsoil. By the end of the 1800’s, the primeval forest in the eastern United States had virtually disappeared.

As industrialization progressed, the taming of the wilderness progressed at an alarming rate. For example, in the early 1830’s, the first trains began to appear. For the first time in human history, people could move faster than the horse and the whole continent could be traversed in one week by the 1870’s instead of months of perilous overland travel or equally risky ocean travel around the cape of South America. In the early 1870’s, buffalo herds were still so vast that it often took several days to pass through one herd. By the end of the 1870’s, buffalo were nearly extinct and the remaining native tribes of the plains were starving.

Teddy Roosevelt was a man who loved the outdoors. At the turn of the century, he recognized that we were destroying our natural resources through the slaughter of wildlife, overgrazing of grasslands, uncontrolled mining, and uncontrolled logging. He saw a people that were so busy conquering a country that they had failed to protect the land and its beauty. He had a dream for changing the future and he helped to create over 150 National Forest, National Parks, and Wildlife Areas. Here are a couple of his thoughts on natural resources and wilderness:

- ***“...The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem it will avail us little to solve all others.”***
- ***“There can be nothing in the world more beautiful than the Yosemite, the groves of giant sequoias and redwoods, the Canyon of the Colorado, the Canyon of the Yellowstone, the Three Tetons; and our people should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children's children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred.”***

It took 60 years for humankind to go from Wilbur and Orville Wright’s first flight until the landing on the moon. Modern technology and the population were exploding so fast that many people felt the same as President Teddy Roosevelt, and they were concerned that we were in danger of losing the last wild places in America. In 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law.

## **4 - The 1964 Wilderness Act**

Sec. 2. (a) In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.

For this purpose there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by Congress as "wilderness areas", and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness; ...

### DEFINITION OF WILDERNESS

(c) A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which

(1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;

(2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;

Section 2(c): Definition of Wilderness : "... (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

Section 4(b) Use of Wilderness Areas: "Except as otherwise provided in this Act, wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use."

## 5 - Wilderness Areas on the Green Mountain National Forest

<i>Wilderness Areas by Acts that Established Them</i>					
	“Eastern Areas” Wilderness Act (1975)	PL 94- 268 (1976)	Vermont Wilderness Act (1984)	New England Wilderness Act (2006)	Total Acreage
George Aiken			5,060		5,060
Lye Brook	14,300		1,080	2,338	17,718
Bristol Cliffs	6,500 <sup>1</sup>	3,775 <sup>1</sup>			3,775
Big Branch			6,720	47	6,767
Peru Peak			6,920	752	7,672
Breadloaf			21,480	3,757	25,237
Joseph Battell				12,333	12,333
Glastenbury				22,425	22,425

- The Green Mountain National Forest was established in 1932 from mostly abandoned agricultural land that was deemed undesirable. Today, it is estimated to be within a day’s drive of 74 million people, which was about the total population of the United States in 1900.
- Eight wilderness areas have been established on the Green Mountain Forest over the past thirty years. These areas were heavily impacted by America’s rapid industrialization in the 1800’s, and the present landscape is rich in cultural resources.
- The Forest contains over 400,000 acres total in which about 101,000 acres (25%) have been designated as Wilderness by law under the National Wilderness Preservation System. Due to ample rainfall and favorable conditions for rapid regeneration of natural forest ecosystems, healthy forest ecosystems are rapidly returning to Vermont.

## **6 - FSM 2300 – Wilderness References**

Wilderness is a unique and vital resource. In addition to offering primitive recreation opportunities, it is valuable for its scientific and educational uses, as a benchmark for ecological studies, and for the preservation of historical and natural features.

Manage the wilderness resource to ensure its character and values are dominant and enduring. Its management must be consistent over time and between areas to ensure its present and future availability and enjoyment as wilderness. Manage wilderness to ensure that human influence does not impede the free play of natural forces or interfere with natural successions in the ecosystems and to ensure that each wilderness offers outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Manage wilderness as one resource rather than a series of separate resources (sec. 2320.6).

### **2320.2 - Objectives**

1. Maintain and perpetuate the enduring resource of wilderness as one of the multiple uses of National Forest System land.
2. Maintain wilderness in such a manner that ecosystems are unaffected by human manipulation and influences so that plants and animals develop and respond to natural forces.
3. Minimize the impact of those kinds of uses and activities generally prohibited by the Wilderness Act, but specifically excepted by the Act or subsequent legislation.
4. Protect and perpetuate wilderness character and public values including, but not limited to, opportunities for scientific study, education, solitude, physical and mental challenge and stimulation, inspiration, and primitive recreation experiences.
5. Gather information and carry out research in a manner compatible with preserving the wilderness environment to increase understanding of wilderness ecology, wilderness uses, management opportunities, and visitor behavior.

### **2320.3 - Policy**

Where there are alternatives among management decisions, wilderness values shall dominate over all other considerations except where limited by the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation, or regulations.

Manage the use of other resources in wilderness in a manner compatible with wilderness resource management objectives.

Inform wilderness visitors that they face inherent risks of adverse weather conditions, isolation, physical hazards, and lack of rapid communications, and that search and rescue may not be as rapid as expected in an urban setting in all publications and personal contacts.

## 2320.5 – Definitions

**Untrammled.** In the context of the Wilderness Act, an untrammled area is where human influence does not impede the free play of natural forces or interfere with natural processes in the ecosystem.

**Mechanical Transport.** Any contrivance for moving people or material in or over land, water, or air, having moving parts, that provides a mechanical advantage to the user, and that is powered by a living or nonliving power source. This includes, but is not limited to, sailboats, hang gliders, parachutes, bicycles, game carriers, carts, and wagons. It does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances. It also does not include skis, snowshoes, rafts, canoes, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts.

**Motorized Equipment.** Machines that use a motor, engine, or other nonliving power sources. This includes, but is not limited to, such machines as chain saws, aircraft, snowmobiles, generators, motorboats, and motor vehicles. It does not include small battery or gas powered handcarried devices such as shavers, wristwatches, flashlights, cameras, stoves, or other similar small equipment.

## 2320.6 - The Wilderness Management Model and the Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Management Model (ex. 01) illustrates the wilderness resource, as defined by the Wilderness Act, and the basis for Forest Service wilderness management direction.

The Wilderness Management Model (ex. 01) shows the relationship between the natural, undisturbed purity of a wilderness area and the human influence that affects it. The more human influence, the lower the purity of a wilderness is; the less human influence on a wilderness, the higher, or purer, the wilderness area could be.

In absolute wilderness there is no human influence preventing the area from retaining its purest natural form. It is unlikely, however, that this condition exists anywhere on earth. There are few places, if any, remaining where humans have neither set foot nor where human influences, through pollution, have not been felt. The Wilderness Act defines wilderness at some point below absolute wilderness.

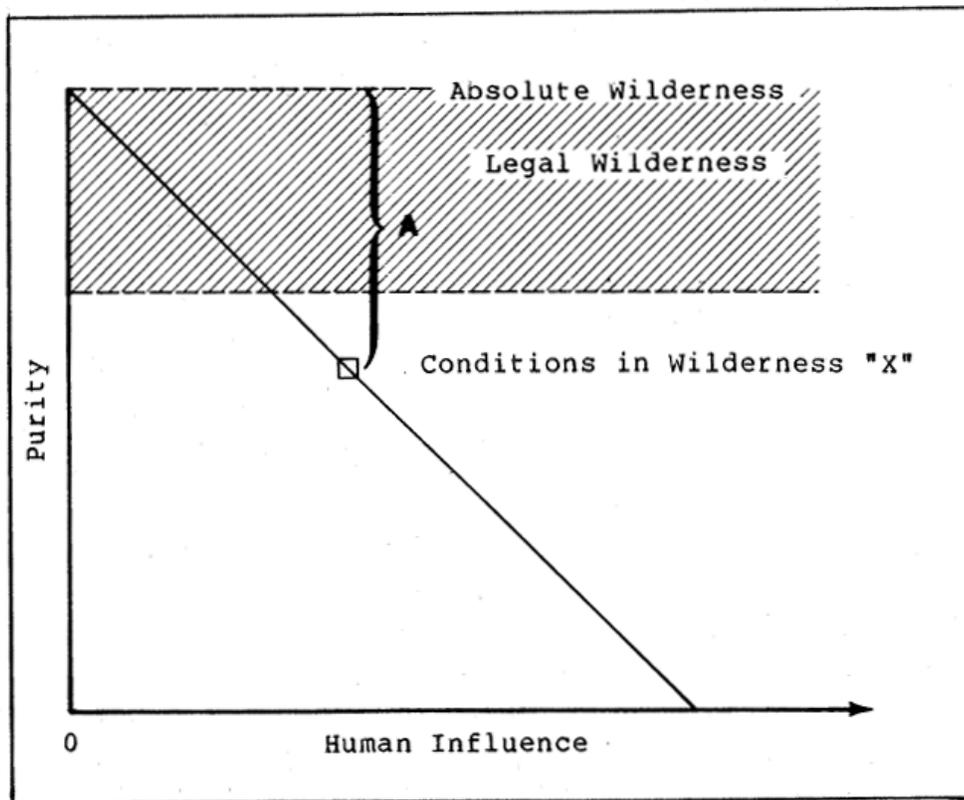
The Act permits certain activities and contains prerogatives that also tend to lessen the opportunities to reach absolute wilderness. Mining is permitted on valid claims; access to valid occupancies and private land is provided for; and fire control, insect and disease control, grazing, and visitor use are permitted. Considered together, these modifications define legal wilderness. Manage wilderness toward attaining the highest level of purity in wilderness within legal constraints.

Each designated wilderness is affected by a variety of human influences that vary in intensity. In one area, human influence may be very limited; in another area, major disturbances occur. The number and intensity of these influences cause a gap between the attainable legislative wilderness and the conditions that exist on a wilderness ("X"). The goal of wilderness management is to identify these influences, define their causes, remedy them, and close the gap ("A") between the attainable level of purity and the level that exists on each wilderness ("X").

Where a choice must be made between wilderness values and visitor or any other activity, preserving the wilderness resource is the overriding value. Economy, convenience, commercial value, and comfort are not standards of management or use of wilderness. Because uses and values on each area vary, management and administration must be tailored to each area. Even so, all wilderness areas are part of one National Wilderness Preservation System and their management must be consistent with the Wilderness Act and their establishing legislation.

2320.6 - Exhibit01

The Wilderness Management Model



## **7 - The 10 Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge**

The 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (10YWSC) was developed by the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG) as a quantifiable measurement of the Forest Service's success in Wilderness stewardship. The goal identified by the Wilderness Advisory Group, and endorsed by the Chief, is to bring every wilderness under Forest Service management to a minimum stewardship level by the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014. The first year of the Challenge was Fiscal Year 2005.

Wilderness encompasses nearly 20% of the land area of the National Forest System. The Wilderness Act of 1964 states that wilderness is to be managed for the "enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness." With improving technologies and ever-increasing pressure from a growing population, wilderness program responsibilities and complexities have increased while available wilderness workforce has decreased. Consequently, concerns have risen at many levels of the agency regarding our ability, at the ground level, to assure the protection and perpetuation of wilderness.

In 2002, an assessment of critical tasks of wilderness stewardship was applied nationally, and wildernesses did not fare well. An earlier attempt to quantify wilderness management tasks had identified over 200 individual tasks. The Wilderness Information Management Steering Group, in an effort to simplify this measurement, distilled these 200 individual tasks down to 10 comprehensive elements. A "minimum stewardship level" was defined as meeting 6 out of the 10 elements. The 2002 data indicated that only 8% of the Forest Service Wildernesses were managed to this "minimum stewardship level."

Data from the 2005 reporting indicate only a slight improvement from the original assessment, with approximately 12% of wildernesses meeting the minimum level of stewardship. Since then, accomplishment has been in a positive direction, most recently 24.6% of wildernesses reported being managed to this standard as of the FY 2008 reporting cycle. Perhaps more encouragingly, the average score for all wildernesses has risen steadily from 34.7 in FY 2005 to 46.7 in FY 2008.

To move forward with the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge each Region has identified specific strategies (these strategies are available on the [10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge Web Site](#) on the Forest Service Intranet). It is clear that the Challenge cannot be met by utilizing resources in wilderness and recreation alone. An interdisciplinary approach is necessary. Support is needed from specialists in air quality, aquatics, botany, fire, and wildlife in order to successfully meet the Challenge.

The ten elements of the Challenge have been distilled from over 200, representing only a portion of the difficult task of Wilderness stewardship. It's important to remember that the elements are not to be regarded as a checklist or a card to be punched. Attainment of each element is a stepping-stone to ensure that each Wilderness retains its untamed spirit into the future.

One of the objectives of the Green Mountain National Forest's Wilderness I&E plan is to integrate programmed wilderness tasks with key I&E messages. These key messages help the public and employees to better understand the context of their wilderness tasks on a given day and to have a framework for explaining this work to the public. Each element of the 10 Year Wilderness Challenge, its desired outcome, and the key I&E messages are listed for each task.

**(1) Direction of fire in Wilderness and considers the full range of management response.exists in either the Forest Plan or subsequent planning document that addresses the natural role**

**Goal:** The natural fire regime will be restored as much as possible in each Wilderness, improving forest health and reducing the threat of destructive wildfire caused by unnatural fuel accumulation. This may include prescribed fire.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Fire is part of nature and it plays a key role in many ecosystems.
- Native Americans in Vermont used fire for agricultural and hunting purposes.
- Different cultures have used fire for manipulating natural processes in ecosystems.

**(2) This Wilderness was successfully treated for non-native, invasive plants.**

**Goal:** Identification and removal of invasive plants threatening the natural appearance and biological processes of each Wilderness will allow native species to thrive and will restore the natural landscape.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Non-native, invasive species may affect natural ecosystems in ways that diminishes the diversity of flora and fauna.
- Volunteers are needed to help identify invasive plants that are being managed on the Forest.
- By practicing important Leave No Trace (LNT) principles, people can help stop the spread of non-native, invasive species.
- Climate change may affect the spread of non-native, invasive species.
- Non-native invasive species may be suppressed where native ecological communities or Threatened Endangered & Sensitive Species (TES) are threatened by their presence.
- Wilderness areas are managed so that they appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Ecosystem restoration is considered only if the need is causally linked to human-induced changes, and if those changes pose a significant threat to resources outside of wilderness.
- Ecosystems are constantly changing. The changes we are seeking to control in wilderness ecosystem are those that are caused by industrial civilization.

### **(3) Monitoring of Wilderness air quality values is conducted and a baseline is established for this Wilderness.**

**Goal:** We will be able to determine if the air quality in each Wilderness is getting better or worse and to develop strategies for improvement.

#### **Key I&E Messages:**

- Air pollution is regional in nature and originates outside of the wilderness boundaries.
- Air pollution affects flora and fauna, air quality, water quality, and soils.
- Air pollution promotes climate change.
- Ecosystems are much larger than individual wilderness areas and that many of the threats to wilderness ecosystems are from outside of the wilderness boundary.
- The remoteness of many wilderness areas from the direct impacts of industrial civilization makes them ideal locations for many types of environmental monitoring.

### **(4) Priority actions identified in a Wilderness education plan are implemented.**

**Goal:** Existing and potential Wilderness visitors have a better appreciation for the importance of Wilderness and how to protect it. This will translate to reduced impacts from camping, day use, and stock use.

#### **Key I&E Messages:**

- Education is the first choice for reducing the impacts of people on natural processes and on each other. Limits on use, restrictive laws and policies, and closure of impacted areas are the less desirable second choice because it diminishes the wilderness experience.
- People can greatly reduce their impacts to the wilderness environment when they become aware of how their personal choices affect the world around them.
- LNT principles allow for a better recreational experience for everyone.
- Wilderness management must be holistic and people are not excluded from its value.

**(5) This Wilderness has adequate direction, monitoring, and management programs to protect opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.**

**Goal:** Wilderness visitors will be free to enjoy pursuits like fishing, hiking and camping without feeling crowded. Places exist within each Wilderness that allow visitors to experience different levels of isolation, closeness to nature, tranquility and challenge in an environment that is in distinct contrast to their normal lives.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Recreation is one of the managed wilderness resources. There are many sources of guidance for the direction, monitoring, and management of recreational wilderness programs.
- Only congress can designate wilderness areas and each wilderness may have different enabling legislative guidelines.
- Maintaining wilderness' untrammelled characteristics is the top priority in making wilderness decisions. The goal is to use the minimum tool necessary for achieving the necessary results.
- LNT principles allow for a better recreational experience for everyone.
- One goal is to manage wilderness areas so that future generations may someday enjoy the same experience.

**(6) This Wilderness has a completed recreation site inventory.**

**Goal:** We will know where and how people use each Wilderness and the effects of this use. We can use this information to make decisions to protect Wilderness character (for example, limits on use, revegetation of over-used areas, or education strategies). This information is not static; some percent of site inventories are re-evaluated each year.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- A baseline measurement of impacts from the people must be established in wilderness areas for gauging the positive and/or negative effects of various management actions.
- We need to be proactive in protecting wilderness because damage happens fast and recovery is a slow process.
- Human impact to wilderness areas is not static and predictable. We survey 20% of user made recreation sites each year so that we can adjust our management actions.

**(7) Existing outfitter & guide operating plans for this Wilderness direct outfitters to model appropriate Wilderness practices and incorporate appreciation for Wilderness values in their interactions with clients and others. Needs assessments are completed for new operations or for major changes to existing outfitter programs.**

**Goal:** Outfitter/guides will serve as ambassadors for Wilderness. Their clients will leave with appreciation and knowledge that they may use in future self-guided trips to wild areas. Outfitters will provide a direct benefit to the Wilderness in which they operate.

**Outfitter-Guide Specific Permit Restrictions:**

- Any trips involving hiking on the AT/LT and in the Wilderness will have group size limited to ten people including staff.
- Permit clauses state that trip leaders are required to carry a valid copy of the Outfitter-Guide permit with them in the National Forest.
- Aiken Wilderness: No Outfitter-Guide groups are allowed.
- Lye Brook Wilderness: No camping on weekends or holidays at Bourn Pond.
- Lye Brook Wilderness: No Outfitter-Guide use at Lye Brook Falls.
- Breadloaf Wilderness: No Outfitter-Guide use on weekends and holidays (Exceptions may be made for wilderness dependent activities that do not utilize the Long Trail system).
- Breadloaf Wilderness: No fires allowed at Skylight Lodge or 500 feet of Skylight Pond.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Collaborating with different partners and stakeholders, such as outfitter/guides, can benefit wilderness areas if they instill an appreciation of wilderness resources and LNT principles.
- Outfitter/guides are more regulated than an individual user so that the impacts of group use does not overly interfere with other's enjoyment of solitude.

**(8) This Wilderness has adequate direction in the Forest Plan to prevent degradation of the Wilderness resource.**

**Goal:** "Wilderness Character" is the combination of ecological, biological and experiential qualities that make Wilderness unique from any other place. With specific objectives developed for social conditions (party size, encounter levels), ecological conditions (fire, air quality, invasive plants) and managerial conditions (signs, trails, outfitter/guides), these aspects of Wilderness character can be protected or restored.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Forest direction for managing Green Mountain National Forest's wilderness areas is found in the current Forest Plan.
- Wilderness is part of the Forest Service's multiple use mission.
- Wilderness areas are different from other Management Areas (MA) in that they are designated by Congress with special enabling legislation.
- Wilderness ecosystems on the Green Mountain National Forest have been severely impacted by industrial civilization in the past, and they are in the process of reverting to a pre-industrial condition.

**(9) The priority information needs for this Wilderness have been addressed through field data collection, storage, and analysis.**

**Goal:** We will be able to identify what data needs are the most important for long-term, effective Wilderness stewardship. This will enable Wilderness rangers and other field people to concentrate on collecting information that will most help that particular Wilderness.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Baseline information on wilderness areas is essential for protecting the wilderness areas for future generations.
- Collected data needs to serve a role in guiding management decisions.
- Wilderness areas do not take care of themselves.

**(10) This Wilderness has a baseline workforce in place.**

**Outcome:** Each Wilderness will have the number of staff necessary to ensure good Wilderness stewardship.

**Key I&E Messages:**

- Wilderness areas do not take care of themselves.
- The GMNF cannot manage its wilderness program by itself. Collaboration with neighbors, stakeholders, other agencies, and publics in fostering wilderness awareness through the development of partnerships for the management of wilderness areas is essential for a successful wilderness program.
- Natural ecosystems are much larger than individual wilderness areas and many of the threats to wilderness ecosystems are from outside of the wilderness boundary.
- Good wilderness stewardship is a multi-resource task that involves a variety of resources and specialists.

## 8 - Green Mountain National Forest Program of Work

Wilderness management activities not covered in Chief's 10 Year Wilderness Challenge:

A. Complete boundary monitoring will be conducted on an 8-year cycle with one wilderness being completed per year.

### **Key I&E Messages:**

- In general, wilderness boundaries need to be monitored for detecting encroachment activities that threaten the wilderness resource
- Encroachment activities are defined as activities that originate outside of and cross into wilderness, and are inconsistent with the 1964 Wilderness Act and corresponding regulations.
- Encroachment activities can originate from adjacent private landowner, roads/trails, or Forest Service management actions.

B. Patrol and presence of Forest Service employees working in wilderness management is essential for monitoring of wilderness resources and for making I&E contacts with wilderness users. The ability to do this work is connected to item #10 of the Ten Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge that deals with baseline staffing guidelines. These patrol and presence activities are treated as a separate program of work item from the 10YWSC because management issues discovered in wilderness monitoring often require significant follow up time from law enforcement personnel and wilderness management staff for resolution of the issues.

### **Key I&E Messages:**

- Education of the public is the preferred tool for managing human impacts to wilderness resources. Additional regulations and restrictions on wilderness users are used only when education fails to achieve desired results.
- Users need to understand the reasons behind management actions and laws that restrict and/or control their negative behavior.
- Patrol and presence discourages intentional violations of the law.
- Forest Service employees must model the behavior they wish to encourage in the wilderness user.

## 9 – Wilderness Leave No Trace Principles

*Leave No Trace Mission and the Sustainable Use of Wild lands*  
(From the Leave No Trace Training Cookbook, version 01/01).

- “The mission of Leave No Trace is to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships.
- The Leave No Trace Education program promotes skills and ethics to support the sustainable use of wild lands and natural areas.”

The Leave No Trace Skills and Ethics educational program is a valuable management tool in reaching the desired objectives of this wilderness I&E program. The LNT program is a nationally accepted program for minimizing recreational user impacts to the environment through the promotion of low impact recreational skills and ethics.

Wilderness areas, like our national parks, exist in a delicate balance between the Wilderness Act’s legislative mandates for the preservation of its natural, untrammeled conditions, with outstanding opportunities for solitude, and of promoting recreational use and enjoy of wilderness by humans with an ever growing population. This is why careful monitoring of wilderness resources and identification of limits of acceptable change is an important component of this wilderness I&E plan.

If visitor use in wilderness increases substantially, then wilderness user education and management plans must quickly adapt in order to protect the wilderness resource. Proper visitor behavior through information and education efforts can reduce negative social, biological and managerial impacts to the wilderness experience.

Detailed information on the LNT program may be found at: <http://www.lnt.org/>

Key LNT messages for wilderness hikers and backpackers:

### **Plan Ahead and Prepare**

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into smaller groups.
  - Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

### **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Obey camping setbacks (if they exist) from lakes, streams, trails, other campsites, and historic and cultural sites and structures.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

### **In popular areas:**

- Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

### **In pristine areas:**

- Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

### **Dispose of Waste Properly**

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

### **Leave What You Find**

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

### **Minimize Campfire Impacts**

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Instead, consider using a lightweight stove for cooking and a candle lantern for light.

### **If fires are permitted:**

- Use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

### **Respect Wildlife**

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

### **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

## 10 - Identification of General and Specific Audiences

General Audience	Targeted Segment
Internet Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/htm/greenmountain/g_home.htm">http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/htm/greenmountain/g_home.htm</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://wilderness.net/">http://wilderness.net/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.lnt.org/">http://www.lnt.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.greenmountainclub.org/">http://www.greenmountainclub.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.appalachiantrail.org/site/pp.aspx?c=mqLTIYOwGIF&amp;b=4805391">http://www.appalachiantrail.org/site/pp.aspx?c=mqLTIYOwGIF&amp;b=4805391</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="http://wilderness.org/">http://wilderness.org/</a></li> <li>2. <a href="http://ijw.wilderness.net/">http://ijw.wilderness.net/</a></li> <li>3. <a href="http://leopold.wilderness.net/">http://leopold.wilderness.net/</a></li> <li>4. <a href="http://carhart.wilderness.net/">http://carhart.wilderness.net/</a></li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Boy Scout/Girl Scouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.scoutingvermont.org/">http://www.scoutingvermont.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://girlscoutsvt.org/">http://girlscoutsvt.org/</a></li> </ul>
Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnson State College</li> <li>• Green Mountain College</li> <li>• Syracuse University</li> <li>• University of Vermont</li> <li>• All colleges noted in Wilderness Ranger Field Reports/Register sheets/Special Use Permits</li> </ul>
Forest Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District/S.O. visitors</li> <li>• Campgrounds and day use sites</li> <li>• Trailheads</li> <li>• GFA recreating public</li> </ul>
Elementary/Secondary/High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kids in the Woods program</li> <li>• High School community service programs</li> </ul>
Internal Audiences Partners Outfitter & Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilderness Staff</li> <li>• Public Services Mission Group</li> <li>• Campground Hosts</li> <li>• Soil, water, NNIS, air quality</li> <li>• Outfitter/Guide Permitting</li> <li>• Green Mountain Club Care Takers/Paid and Volunteer Trail Crews</li> <li>• Green Mountain Club Trail Maintainers/Shelter Adopters</li> <li>• Vermont Youth Conservation Corps</li> <li>• Appalachian Trail Conservancy</li> <li>• Wilderness Society</li> </ul>
Multi-Media Sources for wilderness information & for news releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television news channels</li> <li>• VPR Radio</li> <li>• Various outdoor oriented magazines</li> <li>• Local &amp; regional Newspapers</li> <li>• Magazines &amp; periodicals</li> </ul>

## 11 – Interpreters, Educators, & Visitor Information

**A.** Green Mountain National Forest employees dealing with the public should be familiar with the basic messages in the Wilderness I&E Plan

- Natural resource managers and line officers
- Frontliners
- Forestry technicians working in wilderness, trails, and developed recreation

**Action Items:**

1. Wilderness I&E plan distributed to all employees.
2. Wilderness I&E plan integrated with Forest I&E plan.
3. Wilderness interpretive displays in visitor information areas.
5. Employees should be familiar with wilderness information resources at:

<http://wilderness.org/>

<http://jjw.wilderness.net/>

<http://leopold.wilderness.net/>

<http://carhart.wilderness.net/>

**B.** Forest Service employees making one-on-one personal contacts in Wilderness Areas and to internet inquiries should have comprehensive wilderness management knowledge about the National Wilderness Preservation System, the GMNF Wilderness I&E Plan, and in local GMNF wilderness management issues.

- All personnel involved in wilderness management activities connected to 10 Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge
- Forest Service personnel involved in trail maintenance activities in wilderness areas
- Forest Service personnel involved in monitoring/authorizing scientific natural resource monitoring activities in wilderness areas
- Wilderness Rangers

**Action Items:**

1. Two hour basic wilderness training for all field going people and people making one-on-one contacts in wilderness areas.
2. Permanent employees working in wilderness management complete at least one Carhart Wilderness training course.
3. One wilderness management topic will be presented yearly to employees and/or partners.

**C.** Visitor Information about wilderness areas on the GMNF should have appropriate wilderness information that emphasizes the LNT principles found in the GMNF Wilderness I&E Plan, basic information on how wilderness areas are different from other areas on the Forest, and links to where to find additional wilderness information.

- Websites – GMNF and Partners
- Recreation Opportunity Guides (ROG's) in district and S.O. offices
- Trailheads with bulletin boards

**Action Items:**

1. Update ROG's yearly.
2. Update Forest's website quarterly.
3. Update trailhead bulletin boards entering wilderness areas yearly.
4. Write news releases about critical wilderness management issues concerning scientific studies, NNIS, law enforcement issues, and LNT issues.