

# Request for information re: Sandwich Vegetation Management Project

**Zack Porter** <zporter@standingtrees.org>

Jun 16, 2022, 12:53 PM

to james.innes, Johnida.dockens,

Dear District Ranger Innes and Environmental Coordinator Dockens,

I hope this email finds you well. I look forward to meeting you and appreciate your public service at the White Mountain National Forest. I'm writing with some questions pertaining to the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project and would be grateful for your help.

1. Could you please share a map (or maps) depicting the location of proposed treatments (harvests, prescribed burns, etc) with 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries and WMNF 2005 Forest Plan Inventoried Roadless Areas boundaries overlaid?
2. Could you also please confirm whether any harvests are planned within 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule Inventoried Roadless Areas or WMNF 2005 Forest Plan Inventoried Roadless Areas?
3. On the same or different maps, could you please overlay the stand age classes with the proposed treatments (harvests, prescribed burns, etc)?
4. On the same or different maps, could you please overlay the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Scenery Management System with the proposed treatments (harvests, prescribed burns, etc)?
5. The Scoping Notice says that 76% of the project area is "mature forest" and 24% is "young age class." Are these age definitions taken from *WMNF 2005 Forest Plan Appendix D, Age Class Definitions by Habitat Type*? Can you please confirm whether there are any stands that qualify as old forest as defined by Appendix D?
6. I cannot locate the 2015 Transportation Analysis Process document on the WMNF website. The Scoping Notice says that "in 2015, the White Mountain National Forest completed a Forest-wide transportation analysis process (TAP) (USDA Forest Service 2015)." Could you please post this document and share the link?

Thank you for your help, and please don't hesitate to contact me for clarification or other questions.

Best regards,

Zack

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Zack Porter  
**Executive Director, Standing Trees**  
*he/him/his*

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[Standing Trees](#) works to protect and restore forests on New England's public lands.

**Dockens, Johnida -**  
**FS <[johnida.dockens@usda.gov](mailto:johnida.dockens@usda.gov)>**  
to me, James

Jun 22, 2022, 1:52 PM

Mr. Porter,

Thank you for your email. As a general statement, more information will be available as we complete the last season of field work and the environmental analysis. I can provide some clarifications below. In addition, I will add this information to the question-and-answer sheet which will be posted on the project website following the public meeting this Thursday, June 23.

1. There are no Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR) areas in the project area; therefore, no timber harvest would occur in RACR areas. The nearest designated RACR area is about 0.1 mile north of the proposed harvest units. Forest plan inventoried roadless areas which were ultimately included in management area (MA) designations during forest plan revision are managed according to the relevant MA direction. All forest plan inventoried roadless areas in the Sandwich VMP are included in designated MA 2.1 lands and would be managed consistent with forest plan direction for that MA. I will post a background document providing more information on forest plan inventoried roadless areas to the project website for your reference.
2. See above.
3. I will be posting a habitat management unit (HMU) rationale document to the project website which provides further information on existing vs desired conditions in the Sandwich HMU, which includes the project area. The HMU rationale also includes a more in-depth discussion of existing vs desired conditions, including stand ages and habitat types.
4. The entire project area is in the semi-primitive motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. The scenery analysis has not been completed at this stage of the process, but would be completed as part of the environmental analysis documentation.
5. Definitions are clarified in the HMU rationale document and forest plan. The HMU rationale also includes a more in-depth discussion of existing vs desired conditions, age classes, and habitat types. No old forest has been identified in the project area to date.
6. The transportation analysis process (TAP) resulted in a figure which was on the public website until recently. I will upload it to the Sandwich VMP project website for your reference. Please note that Appendix C of the Notice of Proposed Action includes those TAP recommendations which are relevant to the Sandwich VMP.

Thank you for your interest in this project. Let me know if you have any other questions.

**Johnida S. Dockens (she/her/hers)**  
**NEPA Planner**  
**Forest Service**  
**White Mountain National Forest, Androscoggin Ranger District**  
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**Zack**  
**Porter <zporter@standingtrees.org>**  
to Johnida, James,

Mon, Jun 27, 2022, 11:34 AM

Good morning, Johnida and Jim.

Thank you for hosting last Thursday's public meeting and for providing the information that you sent in your email response.

I do have some follow up questions that I hope you might be able to help answer:

- Could you please provide a map showing where Forest Plan inventoried roadless areas overlap with the project area?
- I am having trouble reviewing the project map because it lacks topographical detail. Could you please share a version with contour lines included?
- Could you please share a stand age class map, showing the age of the stands that are proposed for harvest or prescribed burns?
- Thank you for providing the TAP map. Would you also please share the analysis that went into that map? Was there a Final ROD that was signed related to that map? If so, could you also please share that document as well?
- Table 5 on page 12 (attached) in the document entitled "Rationale for Habitat Objectives" is very challenging to make sense of. Could you please clarify the unit of measurement for the first column labeled "current"? Does "desired objectives" mean "project objectives"?

Thanks again,

Zack

**Dockens, Johnida -**  
**FS <johnida.dockens@usda.gov>**  
to James, Jodi, me

Jun 28, 2022, 5:02 PM

Good afternoon!

Thank you for the chat on the phone earlier this afternoon. I hope we addressed your concerns during that discussion. I am following up with this email to ensure I've captured everything:

- We do not have a stand table produced at this time. However, stands currently proposed for treatment are mature.
- We do not currently have a map showing forest plan inventoried roadless areas. We consider potential impacts to roadless areas during the environmental analysis, consistent with our regulations and forest plan direction. I did note that your concern is with potential future wilderness eligibility.
- We do not have figures with the topographical background. I did note that your primary interests are in walking the project area and overlaying the proposed units with the various MAs and treatments. As I mentioned, the MAs are shown with the proposed treatment units overlaid in the figure in the HMU rationale document.
- There is not a decision document associated with the TAP. The TAP provided recommendations based on roads information that was compiled at the time, including public involvement. The TAP output is essentially the map already provided and a large database, from which we've pulled the relevant information for inclusion in the Notice of Proposed Action.
- We have made clarifications to table 5 of the Sandwich HMU Rationale document and reposted it to the website. The units are current acres, and desired objectives (in percent) are for the full Sandwich HMU. We discussed some of the difficulties in interpreting the HMU analysis information and tabular data, which I will relay to our biology team. We would like to ensure that the HMU document is as useful as possible for the public, and have already made some adjustments. I appreciate the additional feedback.

Following up on your question about progress on overall desired conditions for the forest plan, there is information available in the biennial monitoring reports on the WMNF website. The 2020 report is at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/whitemountain/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5187780>.

Let me know if you have any other questions. Thanks!