

State of New Hampshire
Department of Resources and Economic Development
Division of Forests and Lands

State Lands Management Team - Request for Review

Date: December 26, 2012

Comments- If your agency does not attend the State Lands Management Team meeting we will need this form mailed back to us by the deadline date.

SLMT meeting date: 1-8-13
Deadline to comment: 1-24-13

Item #: SLMT 13-01-03
Project: Stark OHRV Connector Trail
Property: Nash Stream Forest
Project Presenter: Chris Gamache

Agency Commenting: __NH Division of Forests and Lands_____

Please check one:

 Concur with no conditions.

 Concur with the following conditions: (Indicate major reservations about the project and the specific substantive changes or modifications desired.)

__X__ Do Not Concur (Summarize the major legitimate reasons for not concurring including documentation or references to plans, statutes, etc.)

 No Comment

Non-Receipt of this review by the deadline implies consent.

Technical Comments: __As the managing agency for this property, there are many concerns with this proposed route. While I agree that the environmental impact will be minimal using an existing gravel road my concerns go beyond the immediate impacts. Forests and Lands is concerned that if allowed on the east side it will open up much more of Nash Stream to ATVs. There will be no place to put a gate and therefore ATVs will have carte blanche on the remainder of the gravel roads. There is already illegal ATV activity on Nash Stream. There is not enough law enforcement to adequately enforce the existing trails, let alone new trails. There are also the

safety concerns of allowing ATVs and vehicular traffic and log truck traffic to share the road. Another one of my major concerns is that expanding the ATV network within Nash Stream is inconsistent with the management plan. In the management vision for the property one of the bullets points is to continue to offer public access for traditional, low impact, dispersed recreation including hunting, fishing, hiking and snowmobiling in designated areas. While I understand that ATVs are now allowed on certain areas, we cannot abandon the vision for the property. To quote from the management plan” the vision includes Principles and Goals of Management which together provide a timeless management focus plus a glimpse at what is hoped to be achieved through implementation of the Plan and those that follow.” Looking more at the big picture, the North Country will soon be a destination for ATV enthusiasts, and while there are some that think public lands is a great place to put a trail network like this. We must ask the question, if ATV trails are going to be on private property and ATVs allowed on town roads in almost every community in the North Country, then where are those people to go who would like to recreate free of ATVs and the hum of an engine? State land might the only place for those people to go, a place where we are trying to “protect that natural qualities and integrity of the land.”

Any changes or additions to the current designated trails would require a change to the existing management plan, which needs to be thoughtfully done so that we are not amending our plan too often. Forests and Lands is not against all ATV activity in Nash Stream and has worked cooperatively on the proposed Columbia section, however, is adamantly against allowing ATVs on the main Nash Stream Road. This property was bought with conservation money and the USA holds a conservation easement on the property. All activities should have a conservation focus to them. If ATVs are allowed on the East Side, it would only be a matter of time before they requested to go on all the gravel roads. Nash Stream was not bought with this intention.

Reviewer’s Signature: Margaret Machinist

Date: 01/22/13

Name: Margaret Machinist

Title: Regional Forester