

White Mountain National Forest



United States
Department
of Agriculture

Forest
Service

Eastern
Region



Camp Dodge Renovation Project

Township of Greens Grant
Coos County, New Hampshire

Scoping Report

Prepared by the
Androscoggin Ranger District
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<http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/whitemountain/landmanagement/projects>

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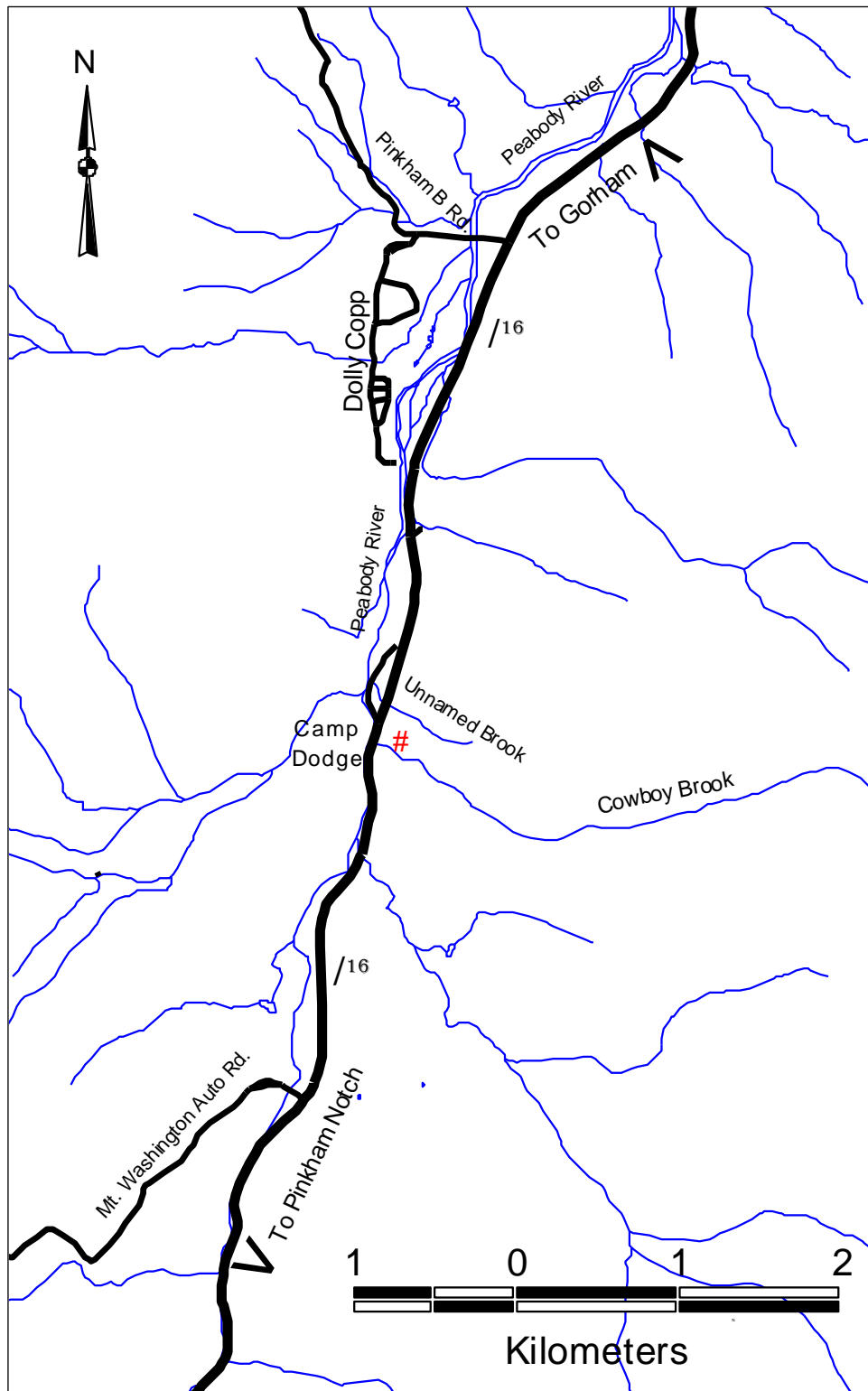


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Figure 1. Camp Dodge Location Map



Introduction

The White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is seeking your input on a new project proposal: the ***Camp Dodge Renovation Project***. This project is located at the Camp Dodge Volunteer Trails Center, which is currently operated by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), under a special use permit from the WMNF. Camp Dodge is located off of New Hampshire State Route 16 in the township of Greens Grant in Coos County, New Hampshire, approximately 4 miles north of the AMC Pinkham Notch Visitor Center and 4 miles south of the USFS Androscoggin Ranger Station (see project location map - Figure 1).

The WMNF is proposing to enter into a public/private partnership with the AMC to address the long-term maintenance needs and improvements at Camp Dodge. AMC's current permit for Camp Dodge, which limits investment in the buildings and infrastructure systems to maintenance-related repairs, will expire this year. Due to the age and condition of many of the buildings, as well as the connected electrical, water and septic systems, there is a need for a significant capital investment over the next five years to keep the facility functioning and in compliance with health and safety laws. This partnership project is designed to address the growing maintenance, accessibility, and safety needs at Camp Dodge, as well as to provide housing for AMC, Forest Service, and partner seasonal crews and volunteers. This project strives to make the experience of staying, volunteering, and working at Camp Dodge more appealing, and more appropriate for the spectrum of ages (teens through older adults) and skills (beginners to skilled maintainers/trainers) that AMC's trails programming brings to the camp, and to better position and strengthen trail partnerships across the Forest to leverage resources and skills in the investment and future stewardship of the White Mountains trail system. Proposed renovations and additions to several buildings throughout the property, as well as the construction of new structures, septic and power lines and parking areas, would be authorized under a new long-term (20 to 30-year term) special use permit issued to the AMC by the Forest Service and analyzed as part of the proposed action. The length of the permit would protect AMC's substantial investment in public facilities, investment the Forest Service would not be able to make given projected budgets and priority needs in developed recreation sites across the Forest.

About the Camp Dodge Volunteer Trails Center

Over the last 80 years, the area at Camp Dodge has had various human uses. Initially, it was established in 1935 as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp to promote environmental conservation and build good citizens through challenging outdoor labor as one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs. For the first eight years, Camp Peabody, as it was then known, was a center for trail construction and other recreation work projects. During World War II, it briefly served as a conscientious objectors camp. In the 1950's, the US Army Cold Weather Lab used the facilities for testing cold weather equipment. The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) operated the camp starting in 1974. Its current incarnation as Camp Dodge began when the AMC received a special use permit in May 1982 to operate the facility as an organization camp for AMC volunteers working on projects in the WMNF. AMC has continued to maintain and operate Camp Dodge under a special use permit to present.

Currently, facilities at Camp Dodge allow the AMC to provide housing and logistic support (training, equipment, meals, leadership, and project coordination) for AMC volunteers and support staff. This includes approximately 225 volunteer trail adopters, 700 volunteer trail crew members, and 40 staff, who utilize the facilities at Camp Dodge annually. Activities and trainings include two weekly volunteer trail crews, skill sessions, Adopt-A-Trail program support, and coordination of special activities such as New Hampshire Trails Day, National Trails Day, trail work weekends, AMC seasonal employee training, and special trail work projects for groups.

Camp Dodge is located near Route 16 between Pinkham Notch and Gorham (Fig. 1). A short gravel road extends from the highway, forks, and eventually leads to 3 small parking areas with a total capacity of approximately 25 cars. The current facilities consist of a mess hall, a toilet and shower building, 3 volunteer bunkhouses (102 beds), a staff housing building (8 people), 16 canvas tent platforms, a small workshop/toolshed, and an air quality monitoring shed. The capacity ranges up to 100 overnight campers during busy weeks and special events such as early-season training sessions, and provides logistical support to more than 1,000 volunteers per season. The facilities are operational between late spring and early fall each year.

Figure 2. Camp Dodge – Proposed Action (Existing Facilities)



What Are We Proposing?

The following is a list of the proposed renovations, alterations and expansions of existing facilities at Camp Dodge included in this project (Figure 2):

Dining Hall:	Construct a new addition, approximately 24 ft x 20 ft in size, on the north side of the building. Remodel and expand the kitchen; update kitchen equipment and features.
Bathhouse:	Construct a new addition, approximately 20 ft x 16 ft in size, on the north side of the building. Remodel interior to provide private changing stalls and showers.
Parking	Expand current parking area near tent platforms to accommodate approximately 25 vehicles.

In addition, AMC proposes to construct the following new structures and facilities at Camp Dodge in this project (Figure 3):

#	Type	Location/Size/Design
1	Training Pavilion	Approximately 48 ft x 32 ft in size, connected to the north side of the Dining Hall by a short covered walkway.
1	Volunteer Bunkhouse	Construct on existing 36 ft x 20 ft concrete pad located between existing southwestern-most and middle bunkhouses, design for a maximum capacity of 16 occupants.
1	WMNF/ Partner dorm	Construct on northwestern-most existing 36 ft x 20 ft concrete pad, design for a maximum capacity of 8 occupants.
3	Staff Dorms	Construct on northeastern-most existing 36 ft x 20 ft concrete pads; would replace existing 16 tents; design for a maximum capacity of 12 occupants/dorm
1	Tool/Equipment Garage	Construct north of existing toolshed, approximately 24 ft x 36 ft in size with 2 garage bays, design to house trail crew tools, gear, equipment, and field supplies.
1	Pro Trail Crew Dormitory	Construct in northeast corner of the property to replace existing tent platforms; approximately 60 ft x 36 ft in size, design interior with partitions into separate, smaller rooms with a maximum capacity of 26.
1	Staff Bathhouse	Construct in the northern field, design to include showers, sinks toilets and laundry machines.
1	Septic Line	Construct to connect new Staff Bathhouse to existing leach field, may require installation of an additional leach field in proximity to the new bathhouse in the northern field, should capacity of existing leach field be exceeded.
1	Power Line	Install power line along eastern edge of the project between main building and the proposed new Pro Trail Crew dormitory, shop, staff bathhouse, and FS dormitory.
1	Parking Area	Construct staff parking in proximity to new pro-crew dorm (~25 spaces) in addition to a long drive at west boundary and along southern edge of drive up to the bathhouse (~40).
1	Interpretive Display	Construct a permanent educational/interpretive plaque on the history of the facility near the proposed new training pavilion.
1	Air Quality Monitor	Move satellite dish currently on the roof to a 20' ground-based post, adjacent to the shower building. The satellite dish uploads hourly ozone data to a NHDES/EPA server in Concord, per a Cost Share Agreement between the WMNF and NHDES. This will include minimal tree clearing to maintain connectivity of satellite and station.

Figure 3. Camp Dodge - Proposed Action (New Facilities)



Purpose of and Need for the Project

Camp Dodge has been operated by AMC since the early 1980s as a rustic camp for seasonal crews and volunteers. While general maintenance has been performed every year, the facilities have continued to age and become outdated. In particular, accessibility and safety issues have emerged. In order to address these issues and the growing overall deferred facility maintenance and aging infrastructure (electrical, water, sewer), a large capital investment is needed. The Forest Service does not anticipate having the funding necessary to address these issues given projected budgets and developed recreation needs across the Forest. AMC has indicated their willingness to partner with the Forest Service and invest the capital needed at Camp Dodge.

The purpose of this innovative public/private partnership with AMC is to update, preserve, and maintain the structural integrity and functionality of Camp Dodge as a historical volunteer center into the future. This project is driven by the need to address the growing deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, and safety issues at Camp Dodge. It also offers an opportunity to address the lack of adequate seasonal housing and provide mutually beneficial housing and training opportunities to FS, AMC, and regional partners' crews and volunteers.

A long-term special use permit, 20- to 30-year term, would protect AMC's substantial investment in Camp Dodge. All renovations and newly constructed facilities would remain public facilities, owned by the Forest Service.

Forest Plan Compliance

Proposed facility maintenance, renovations and additions would be accomplished in accordance with the objectives and standards and guidelines provided for in the Forest Plan. Project design criteria, applicable Forest Plan standards, guidelines, and best management practices (BMPs) would all be implemented to protect resources during the implementation of the Proposed Action activities. Initial concepts for the maintenance and improvement proposals at Camp Dodge have kept in mind the long and dynamic history of use at this site.

Environmental Analysis and Decisions to be Made

The potential effects of the proposed activities described under the Proposed Action will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA). Following completion of the EA, the Responsible Official, Androscoggin District Ranger Jennifer Barnhart will make a decision whether to implement the Proposed Action described above, an alternative design, or not implement any project activities at this time. This decision includes whether to authorize this work under a new long-term permit. It is expected that a decision regarding implementation of the Camp Dodge Renovation Project will be made sometime in early 2017.

How Can You Participate?

How are you involved in this decision?

We are soliciting your comment on all aspects of this proposal. Your input on the Proposed Action will help us refine our proposal and determine the appropriate level of analysis. Comments on the proposal and potential impacts to the social and natural environment will help us define any key issues associated with the project, develop alternatives to the Proposed Action, and refine the analysis of effects.

Before a decision is made on the activities evaluated in the EA, there will be an additional opportunity to comment on this project, pending release of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA).

If you provide comments on this project now, we will notify you when the Draft EA for this project is released. If you do not wish to provide comments at this time, but wish to be notified when the Draft EA is released, please contact the project contact listed below.

How can you comment?

In your comments, please include the following information:

- Your name, address, and telephone number.
- The project you are commenting on: **Camp Dodge Renovation Project**
- Site-specific comments about the Camp Dodge Renovation Project, along with supporting information you believe will help the Forest Service identify any issues, develop alternatives, or predict environmental effects of our proposal.

Comments should be addressed to the Responsible Official for this project, Androscoggin District Ranger Jennifer Barnhart. In order for your comments to be considered in the next stage of analysis, they should be submitted by August 30, 2016, in one of the following ways:

Written comments:

By Letter: White Mountain National Forest
Androscoggin Ranger District
300 Glen Road
Gorham, NH 03581

By FAX: (603) 466-2856

ATTN: Camp Dodge Renovation Project

By email: comments-eastern-white-mountain-androscoggin@fs.fed.us

Oral Comments:

Oral comments must be received in person at the Androscoggin Ranger District, (603) 466-2713 (TTY 711), during normal business hours (8:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday). Please direct questions to Assistant District Ranger - Recreation & Wilderness, Justin Preisendorfer (603), 466-2713, extension 1224.

Please be aware that your name, address, and comments will become part of the public record and may be available for public inspection.

Objections Process

In 2013, the Forest Service revised regulations at 36 CFR 218 related to administrative review of projects documented in a Decision Notice or Record of Decision. The revised regulations change how the agency addresses concerns of the public that remain unresolved after the analysis is completed. The new rule replaced the post- decisional appeal process for all projects analyzed in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement with a pre- decisional objection process.

This project is subject to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. Therefore, anyone who submits timely “specific written comments” during any designated opportunity for public participation (including the scoping period and 30-day comment period) will be eligible to file an objection based on the final analysis and a draft decision document. For the purposes of this rule, “specific written comments” should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Specific written comments can include transcripts or other notes of oral comments or presentations.

This scoping period is a designated opportunity for public participation. Individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments about this proposed project during this public participation period will be eligible to file an objection if they have concerns with the draft decision. To be considered timely, comments must be received or post-marked by August 30, 2016.

Other eligibility requirements are identified in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments, and signature or other verification of identity upon request.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the management of the White Mountain National Forest.