



Section 1: Project Proposal

1. **Project Name:** Manchester Multisport Event 2026
2. **Responsible Official:** Martina Barnes, District Ranger
3. **Project Location:** Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester Ranger District, Multiple Towns and Counties, Vermont. (see Project Maps)
4. **Project Contact:** Jen Edmonds, Natural Resource Specialist, jennifer.edmonds@usda.gov or (802)747-6746.
5. **Purpose and Need** (*Why here? Why now? Why is the outcome desired?*):

The purpose and need for this project is to respond to an application to hold an event that is partially within Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF). The race would be eight stages, seven of which would be partially on National Forest System lands (**Stage A excluded**).

6. **Proposed Action** (*What would we be doing? How would we do it? Where is the project located?*):
Is tree cutting included in this proposal? Yes No

The proposed action is to issue a recreation event permit for a term of less than one year, authorizing an event for up to 200 participants in teams of 2 to 4 people in June 2026. The stages are detailed below, and include biking, hiking and paddling. Transition area options between stages can be viewed in the project map.

Stage B – New York to GMNF Bike Ride (Tuesday, June 23, 2026)

Teams would cycle into GMNF from the west on non-Forest Service roads. They would arrive on Ice Bed Road and transition at the picnic area at the northern edge of the Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area (White Rocks NRA).

Stage C – White Rocks Trek (Tuesday-Wednesday, June 22-23)

A formal transition area would be set up at the White Rocks Picnic Area where teams would check in with race staff and leave their bikes for an orienteering stage to locate various checkpoints throughout the White Rocks NRA. There would be about 10 vehicles on site for the majority of the trek. Teams would finish the trek at the Big Branch Trailhead parking lot on Forest Road 10 where race staff would be stationed. From there they would depart on bike.

Stage D – White Rocks to Somerset Reservoir Bike Ride (Wednesday-Thursday, June 23-24)

Once teams return from orienteering, they would continue their bike ride east and then south onto the Old Job Trail through the White Rocks NRA corridor between the Peru Peak and Big Branch Wilderness areas. Teams would connect with the Mad Tom Notch Trail and then ride west, exiting the National Forest for a stretch in Dorset. They would then return to National Forest land via Routes 11 and 30 and ride south to the Grout Pond winter parking area.

Stage E –Somerset Reservoir Packraft (Wednesday-Thursday, June 24-25)

Bikes would be dropped with race staff at the Grout Pond Winter parking area, where teams would pick up trekking and packrafting gear. They would then have the option to trek down the Grout Pond East or Grout Pond West trails on foot to Somerset Reservoir.

Stage F – Somerset Reservoir to Heartwellville Bike Ride (Thursday-Friday, June 25-26)

Continuing south, teams would bike through Mt. Snow on designated trails. After biking along the Harriman Reservoir, teams would connect to the Heartwellville area to transition for an orienteering trek. The preferred transition area is a large open area along Forest Road (FR) 73, with a contingency of the Heartwellville trailhead at the junction of VT Route 8 and FR 73.

Stage G – Heartwellville to Prospect Mountain Trek (Thursday-Saturday, June 25-27)

Another orienteering stage through GMNF to checkpoints, avoiding the George D. Aiken Wilderness Area and honoring any exclusion areas provided by the Forest Service. Permission dependent, teams would end the trek at Prospect Mountain.

Stage H – North Adams, Finish Line Bike Ride (Thursday-Saturday, June 25-27)

Teams would bike to the finish, routed down through National Forest System land to North Adams via the County Road (GMC) trailhead parking lot.

7. **Forest Plan Management Area:** Green Mountain Escarpment, Diverse Forest Use, Diverse Backcountry, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Ecological Special Areas, Robert T Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area, Remote Wildlife Habitat, Remote Backcountry Forest, and Alpine Ski Areas
8. **Forest Plan Compliance** (*How does this project comply with the Land & Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) direction?*):

The proposed action is designed to comply with the Forest Plan including goals, objectives, desired conditions and Forest-wide and Management Area (MA) standards and guidelines. Specifically, the following Forest Plan direction would be met with this proposal:

Forest Wide Guidelines:

- **Recreation Special Uses G-1:** Recreation special uses should be managed to protect the characteristics of the desired Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification.
- **Recreation Special Uses G-2:** Special use authorizations should be issued only when there are no private land alternatives, or when the use has a clear and significant public benefit.

These events inherently use large areas of land and require a mix of land ownership.

Green Mountain Escarpment MA:

- **Recreation Special Uses Guideline G-1:** Recreational special use permits may be authorized provided they are consistent with Management Area emphasis and Desired Future Condition and they will not threaten or diminish the character or purpose for which the MA was designated.

Diverse Backcountry MA:

Nothing specific to Recreation Special Uses. Recreation management would be towards the desired ROS class of Semi-primitive Motorized.

Remote Backcountry Forest MA:

- **Recreation Special Uses S-1:** Permits for competitive or recreation events shall be restricted to existing trail and road systems or recreation sites.

Diverse Forest Use MA:

Nothing specific to Recreation Special Uses. Recreation management would be towards the desired ROS class of Roded Natural.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail MA:

- **Recreation Special Uses Standard S-1:** Competitive and fundraising event permits shall be prohibited.

While competitive recreation events are not permitted on the Long Trail or Appalachian Trail, this event would only cross the trail, not travel along it.

Ecological Special Area MA:

- **Recreation Special Uses Standard S-1:** Recreational use shall complement the desired future condition and management objectives of this MA.

The proposed route barely crosses into ESAs and where it does so remains on designated roads and trails.

Alpine Ski Area MA:

- **Major Emphasis:** “Year-round recreation opportunities at the three alpine ski areas managed by the private sector under Special Use permit authority.”

No Special Use Recreation Restrictions pertaining to this project.

Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area MA:

No Recreation Special Use Restrictions.

Remote Wildlife Habitat MA:

- **Recreation Special Uses Guideline G-1:** Recreational activities are de-emphasized in this MA.

In the section where the proposed route crosses this MA, it stays on an existing trail.

9. **Exclusion Category:** (7 CFR 1b.4(d) USDA-26c-USFS) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor, short-term (1 year or less) special uses of NFS lands.