



### Small Projects Day, Section 1: Project Proposal

- 1. **Responsible Official:** Martina Barnes, Manchester District Ranger
- 2. **Project Name:** Dutch Hill Glade Additions
- 3. **Project Location:** Town of Readsboro, Bennington County, Vermont.
- 4. **Project Contact:** Danna Strout, Recreation Specialist, [danna.strout@usda.gov](mailto:danna.strout@usda.gov), (802)-362-2307 ext 7237
- 5. **Purpose and Need** (*Why here? Why now? Why is the outcome desired?*):

Dutch Hill Backcountry Ski Area was approved as part of the South of Route 9 Integrated Resource Project and has been cooperatively maintained by Dutch Hill Alliance of Skiers and Hikers (DHASH).

Since re-opening glades in 2017 on the former ski hill, Dutch Hill has been very well utilized by skiers, snow boarders and other winter non-motorized recreation uses. The areas that have been made skiable include a variety of terrain including slopes suitable for beginners, intermediates and to a lesser extent, advanced skiers. Most backcountry skiers willing to skin up hills in order to ski down are strong and capable skiers. They seek steep, challenging terrain and options for longer steep runs at Dutch Hill are currently limited.

Dutch Hill has an abundance of steep terrain and three lines have been identified in the southern half of the former ski area (see Project Map) that would offer sustained steep pitches from the top of the hill to the bottom for ungroomed glade skiing. Adding and managing these additional glades would provide additional opportunities to advanced skiers, disperse existing use and help reduce some of the overuse that is occurring in existing maintained ski lines. Additionally, there is timber harvest activity planned in some of this area approved as part of the 2016 South of Route 9 Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice. Skiers would be drawn to newly opened areas even if they are not managed for recreation use. This project would make the post-harvest situation safer by providing maintained and marked glades that are cleared of obstacles.

The proposed additional ski lines could easily be accessed from both the highway and Readsboro Legal Trail 3 in case of an emergency.

The true summit of Dutch Hill is located near the top of the southern-most glade. There is an opportunity to create a vista here for a filtered view of the surrounding landscape. This proposed action would enhance very limited visual resources in the area.

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

This project would involve clearing underbrush and low hanging branches with hand tools and power saws in three proposed glades. These would be 200 feet wide. Low quality trees under 5 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) (mostly beech) would be removed where needed to create safe skiable lines. It is estimated that up to 20 trees under 5 inches DBH would be removed. Any down tree material would be bucked up and moved to locations out of the skiable lines or behind boulders. After timber harvest operations in the



area, chainsaws would be utilized to lower the height of cut stumps to reduce protrusions that could lead to ski accidents in glades.

An access route to the true summit of Dutch Hill would continue to be kept open as it already exists. At the summit of Dutch Hill, proposed work includes maintaining a former vista by cutting low hanging branches and cutting two trees (less than 20 inches DBH). These trees would be left on site.

All work would be done by DHASH volunteers.

**7. Forest Plan Management Area:** Diverse Forest Use

**8. Forest Plan Compliance** (*How does this project comply with the Land & Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) direction?*):

The addition of these glades would align with the following direction in the Green Mountain National Forest Land Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan)

Forest wide management direction:

Goal 12 (Forest Plan, page 12) - *Provide a diverse range of high quality, sustainable recreation opportunities*

Goal 15 (Forest Plan, page 16) - *Maintain or enhance visual resources such as viewsheds, vistas, overlooks, and special features*

Diverse Forest Use Management Area direction:

Major Emphasis (Forest Plan, page 47) - *Public use is managed to provide a full range of recreation opportunities*

Desired Future Condition (Forest Plan, page 47) - *Recreation opportunities will be diverse in this MA, and - Impacts from recreation use will be evident.*

**9. Exclusion Category:** 220.6 (e)(22): *Construction, reconstruction, decommissioning, or disposal of buildings, infrastructure, or improvements at an existing recreation site, including infrastructure or improvements that are adjacent or connected to an existing recreation site and provide access or utilities for that site.*

**10. Expected Implementation Date:** November 2022

