

August 29, 2023

James Innes, District Ranger
USDA Forest Service
Saco Ranger District
33 Kancamagus Highway
Conway, NH 03818

I am writing to comment and oppose the proposed action NOPA for the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project.

I am a home owner living each summer for the last 25 years off Ferncroft Road in Wonalancet in the heart of the Sandwich Range. This section of the White Mountain National Forest is biodiverse and predominately old growth forests, home to people, water, trees and animals, all living harmoniously. There are many hikers that travel here to walk this mountains who also cherish the beauty and trails. My extended family has owned this property since 1964 and the Dwight family before us built this home in the early 1900's. Our community are stewards of this range and valley. We are joining forces now to insure that our beloved home will not be logged in the foreseeable future, no matter how the action is worded and communicated to the general public and neighborhood. The fact that hundreds of acres of proposed logging will be visible form trails, outcrops and summits is both an aesthetic and environmental local disaster.

I would like to see a range of alternatives to this plan of logging 650 acres. We have seen the devastation that logging in the range in the 1970's did to the ecosystem and scenic views. We ask that you propose a reasonable alternative that includes the benefits of leaving the forest as it is. The value of leaving this pristine setting and access to the outdoors is far greater than logging that will devastate this land and biodiversity for generations.

The healthy mature forests that have regrown over more than 100 years are the quality of forest we need to combat climate disaster across the globe. We want to support out forests in growing old to store carbon particular to help reverse the human impact on the climate. We need to lessen the impacts of climate change, not contribute more disruption to the carbon cycle. Please allow this forest to remain unlogged and grow old to support health of our local and global environment. Forests have more power than logging and commercial production.

Biodiversity will be altered perhaps indefinitely in the face of climate change. Water quality is one of the greatest assets of living in this part of the word. Clean undisturbed rivers and streams are central to the stability, and sustainability of this forest and human feeling of beauty and calm. We need to care for the animals and their habitats that will be disrupted and changed for years to come. The birds, the bats, the bears too. The flow of water will be changed for generations.

We need to develop this forest in response and reflection of climate change on local and global scales. Terms like "forest restoration," "habitat improvement," and "even-age management" are misleading to the public. I urge you to stop this proposal and consider alternatives. I adamantly oppose logging in the Sandwich Range.

How can we work together better to steward these forests into the future.

Susanne Cockrell Purves
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