

Please pause before moving forward with the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project #57392, in order to completely review your current plan. Many of its assumptions are outdated.

Climate change is now taking place at great speed. It should be a primary focus of any forest management. Your plan needs to reflect the current science on carbon sequestration and mature forest preservation - and incorporate the 2022 Executive Order 14072 calling for the protection of old-growth and mature forests on federal public lands.

The plan fails to address the protection of trails and recreation - a vital part of this region's ethos and economy. The local hiking trails should be considered Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) and the Plan reconfigured to highlight this important aspect of the WMNF.

The plan prioritizes commercial timber harvesting even when admitting that the cost of the operation will exceed revenues. While patch cuts no doubt benefit white pine regeneration and wildlife, their scale as proposed seems all out of proportion. And they need a much wider buffer from trails.

And the Plan, unlike others of its kind, fails to list alternative approaches.

For all these reasons, please stop, look, listen, reflect, and revise the Plan with a considered, long-term, big-picture point of view that will augment the health of the forest and all the associated ecosystems for the next 150 years.