

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/26/2024 7:02:11 PM

First name: Mary

Last name: Breasted Smyth

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ranger Innes,

Mar. 28, 2024

I am writing to object to the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project now scheduled for approval in May of this year. My objections stem from my original comments about the scope and impact of the logging and controlled burning proposed in the project description issued by the Forest Service. I object to your office's recent conclusion that the proposed management project would have "no significant environmental impact" on the area mapped for the management project. It is not surprising that you would draw such a conclusion on a proposal initiated by your office.

An outside appraiser would, I maintain, draw a different conclusion, as do I.

I still maintain that the proposed Sandwich Vegetation Management Project will have a profoundly harmful effect upon the environmental health of the Sandwich Range south-facing slope, on its beauty, its soil, water quality, wildlife habitats, erosion potential, air quality, carbon sequestration and recreational use. I remain fully convinced that the Sandwich Vegetation Land Management project is not a good plan for our precious White Mountain National Forest. And I still believe it offers no help against our most urgent environmental problem, catastrophic climate change and global warming. Indeed, it promises to add to the catastrophe.

Relevant to the issues at stake in your proposal and my objection to it is the fact that between the timing of the last comment period for this project ended and the objection period opened, the Forest Service published a national rule change proposal for putting all the nation's National Forests under consideration for identifying and setting aside old growth sections of all those forests and for recruiting new sections of them to be protected and husbanded into becoming mature and old growth forests. Your office has proposed to set aside a mere fifty acres for these purposes, a tiny amount out of the 600 you propose to put under timber harvest in the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project. The proposed rule change and your response to it were prompted by a Presidential executive order urging the Forest Service to save more trees from logging. That this whole subject of rules change consideration was raised outside the scope of the management project our community has been reacting to with you should not make it irrelevant to your vegetation management proposal. On the contrary, it gets at the heart of your mission, which, as you have explained to us, has until now been forest management for timber harvesting. But now, even the head of the Forest Service, Mr Vilsack has proposed to add to your mission the projection of and expansion of mature tree sections in all the National Forests. Surely, this should now be twinned with your previously single purpose.

Thank you for your attention.

I hope you will see the value of my objections.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Breasted Smyth

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(originally submitted, prior to written signature, Mar. 26, 2024)