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Title:

Comments: Please see comment letter and 3 enclosures, attached.

The Lakes Region Conservation Trust ("LRCT") holds a Conservation Easement on a parcel of land in the town of Albany, New Hampshire (Tax Map 1 Lot 16) (referred to herein as the "Conservation Easement Land") that abuts part of the White Mountain National Forest included in the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project. The Conservation Easement was granted to LRCT in 2016 by landowners Ruth Moscovitch and Vinton Thompson and is recorded with the Carroll County Registry of Deeds in Book 3247 at Page 858. A copy is enclosed for your reference.

LRCT worked with the landowners to develop the Conservation Easement because of the significant natural and recreational values of the Conservation Easement Land. The Conservation Easement was granted for several important conservation purposes, including preservation of the land for recreation by the general public—particularly hiking—and for the scenic enjoyment of the general public, protection of the land's valuable natural habitat (highly ranked under the NH Wildlife Action Plan) and its plant and animal communities, and protection of surface and groundwater quality.

Consequently, LRCT is very concerned about the potential impacts of the proposed project on the Conservation Easement Land.

The Conservation Easement Land includes a portion of the Forest Service Road (Spring Brk Rd 337/Old Mast Road) that appears to be proposed for use in accessing the Forest Service land that will be logged, as well as the initial portions of two popular hiking trails maintained by the Wonalancet Out Door Club—the Old Mast Road and the Wonalancet Range Trail. These are shown on a survey entitled "Boundary Plan of Land in Albany, NH Property of the Ruth Moscovitch Trust & Vinton Thompson Trust" prepared by Paul L. King, LLS, PE, dated Sept. 2009, recorded with the Carroll County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 228 at Page 6, a copy of which is also enclosed. It appears that the proposed Project will entail considerable logging along a portion of the Old Mast Road, past the Conservation Easement Land. In addition, the Conservation Easement Land includes a part of Spring Brook, a tributary to the Wonalancet River, which runs for more than 1,000 feet through the property.

LRCT believes that it is critically important that the proposed project activities, including use of heavy logging equipment, not detrimentally affect the Conservation Easement Land. Project activities on the Conservation Easement Land could have the following impacts, all of which the Conservation Easement is intended to prevent:

- [bull] harming water quality, wetlands, or riparian zones;
- [bull] interfering with soil productivity;
- [bull] degrading the overall quality of forest products on the land;
- [bull] damaging the scenic quality of the property as viewed from public roads or public trails;
- [bull] failing to protect unique or fragile natural areas; and
- [bull] interfering with the conservation of native plant and animal species.

Any such impacts would be contrary to the purposes and terms of the Conservation Easement. It is also important that any logging on the Forest Service property be carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the preservation of the existing trails and of the vegetation and habitat on the neighboring Conservation Easement Land.

We would welcome an opportunity to understand how the Forest Service plans to ensure that the proposed Project will avoid any such impacts. In addition, we would like to confirm that the Forest Service's presence on and use of the Conservation Easement Land will be limited to the area and activities specified in the 1974 Right-of-Way Deed to the U.S. Government, recorded with the Carroll County Registry of Deeds in Book 568 at Page 219. A copy of that document is also enclosed.

If it would be helpful to meet to discuss these matters and confer on how the proposed Project plans can avoid damage to the trails and natural habitat protected by the Conservation Easement, we would be pleased to do so. We believe that such a meeting should also include the owners of the Conservation Easement Land and the Wonalancet Out Door Club.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and for your consideration of and attention to our concerns.

ATTACHMENT: Encl. 1--CONSERVATION EASEMENT--R. Moscovitch and V. Thompson to LRCT 2-12-16 (CCRD 3247-858).pdf

ATTACHMENT: Encl. 2--BOUNDARY PLAN--Property of R. Moscovitch Trust and V. Thompson Trust 9-2009 (CCRD Plan Book 228 Plan 66).pdf

ATTACHMENT: Encl. 3--RIGHT-OF-WAY DEED--Behr to U.S.A. 4-18-1974 (CCRD 568-219).pdf