

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/8/2023 12:43:56 AM

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Comments: While the proposal may have met the conditions as indicated in the prior forest management plan, that plan is over 17 years old. Due to the intervening pressing needs of climate change and the advance of diseases that will naturally cause forest gaps, it seems exceedingly unwise to create a new management protocol as this is based on old information and not taking into account new variables. The excuse that we don't have funding does not argue to do something, rather it argues to do nothing. To use an old saying, first do no harm. This proposal seems from a different era when the forest was seen as a wood lot, not as a carbon reserve and an ecological ark per the current research ( see attached journal articles). This new research indicates that the best thing to do with the older trees is to leave them alone. Most species will continue to grow for 100's more years.

Emerald ash borer has created extreme mortality in the ash population and thereby will naturally create openings in the forest canopy without the need for mechanical clearing. I am writing from New Jersey where Emerald ash borer has effectively extirpated ash trees from the landscape. The part of the proposal that talks about new trail building is seen as a positive development. One could look to your neighbors to the north in the northeast kingdom and see the kingdom trail system as a model for sustainable development in the forest without the need to cut mature trees.

New England has very little old forest left. The idea that any old forest would be cut on public lands contrary to the executive order protecting older forests seems unbelievable . When I heard the proposal at the public forum, I thought I was being "punked". I could not believe in 2023 that this type of project was being considered. I hope for the sake of climate & ecological protection that this project is shelved.