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First name: Charles

Last name: Houston III

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service - Thank you for the work you do, and for this opportunity to submit public comment. I'm writing to encourage the Forest Service to cease any plan to log this vital area. As is made clear in the recent publication of "Wildlands in New England"(published May 2023 jointly by Harvard Forest, Northeast Wilderness Trust and the Highstead Foundation), we are at a crucial inflection point in New England's history. Our original forest wildlands have shrunk to just 3.3% of the total land area, whereas these scientific organizations have set a minimum goal of at least 10% of New England be left as forever wild. The complete report is attached and should guide federal policy. This is for biodiversity, clean air, clean water, flood control, and to absorb as much carbon dioxide as possible; in other words, for our own good. This objective is strengthened by President Biden's 2022 Executive Order 14072 which recognizes especially mature forests that are well on their way to becoming old growth. In the spirit of our federal leadership and scientific community, please allow the White Mountain National Forest and any other areas under federal control to be part of the solution, to give especially our young people hope for the future, and to maintain the exquisite beauty of our homeland. Commercial logging should continue to be an important part of New England's economy, but not at the expense of crucial federal lands that are our last hope for maintaining the sanctuary that is New Hampshire. Thank you, Chuck Houston, Nashua, NH

Attachment: Wildlands in New England: Past, Present, and Future produced by Wildlands Woodlands Farmlands and Communities: An Integrated Conservation Initiative