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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project.

First, I note this project is based on the goals and objectives of the 2005 Forest Plan. That Plan included a required 10-15 year planning cycle. Eighteen years may not seem like a long time to a forest. But Climate Change is happening quicker than we know how to deal with it. Before implementing this project, I would think the required update to the Forest Plan should be done. Has that even begun? If not, when?

The analysis and conclusions of the visual impacts are short sighted, at best. As I understand Figure 5, the views from Mt Katherine and Mt Chocorua were selected to best represent viewsheds of the entire project. No other locations were included in the assessment. (Wait, what?) And since there hasn't been any even aged harvesting done in the last 30 years, any impacts are pro-rated over that time. This is curious math.

The views from those peaks are spectacular. But so are the views of them. I would point out, many people enjoy the scenery of the White Mountains, without ever climbing Chocorua or Mount Katherine. (They're loss, but still.) And many hikers leaving from the Ferncroft and Liberty Trailheads will be offended that their visual experiences are being completely ignored. Even if we don't count, some of us will be looking that prescribed burn north of the Liberty Trail for many years to come. (see attached.)

The Transportation Analysis appears to be limited to roads within the WMNF. While that's understandable, was any consideration given to the impact on town roads? That would be neighborly. I'm parochially concerned about how much of the six million board feet is to be harvested from the Liberty Map 3 area, over the 5-10 year period. Because it's 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles over the town's dirt roads until you get to blacktop. Our gravel roads are going to take a continuous beating. While the draft includes reconstructing the part of Paugus Road in Albany, it ignores the impact to Tamworth's dirt roads.

I would be curious to learn about the analysis of past management activities in the areas of this plan. Specifically, about 50 years ago there were some 25-30 patch cuts in hardwood areas # 18, 47, 11, 09, and 33. Did those yield the desired type of regeneration? Or did those areas come back as beech regeneration? How did the results from that activity inform the current plan?

I'm aware the WMNF must plan on a much larger scale than anything I can comprehend. The section on Cumulative Actions discusses recent timber harvest on surrounding private property. But we are all neighbors of the Sandwich Wilderness Area, where there isn't any timber harvesting at all. Shouldn't this be considered as well? There won't be any permanent wildlife openings in the Wilderness Area. So it seems to me a higher emphasis needs to be placed on creating and leaving more non-forested openings for their wildlife benefits, to balance things out. I realize clearcutting isn't always popular. But wildlife should get a vote too. It's not clear to me what this phrase means: "log landings would be constructed to support vegetation management activities." Will those be permanent openings? Or does "vegetation management activity" mean they will be left to fill in naturally?

Thank you for all your work maintaining the WMNF.

Attachment: picture