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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I just learned about the proposal to cut 6 million board feet of timber from the

Sandwich Range, one of our favorite places to recreate.

I oppose the timber cut in the Sandwich Range as it was described in the Environmental Assessment. I have just now had time to read the environmental assessment which furthers my concern. Some comments:

1) The local community has not been informed, except through the Union Leader, a southern NH paper, as far as I can see. The Tamworth Conservation Commission has not been involved in this project nor asked to comment despite the fact that you include their name on p. 30.

2) The assessment is based on a 2005 plan for the Forest which is out of date in two very important respects that are apparent to me. There may be other reasons but I do not have the background or the time to research further, so can't comment on those. One, the understanding of the effects of climate change has vastly increased in the last twenty years. Climate change gets only a very cursory paragraph on p. 25. It is much clearer now that the eastern forests are critical to the United States meeting its carbon reduction goals. The use of clear cuts, [ldquo]almost clear cuts[rdquo] and prescribed burns are counter-productive given the dangers of climate change. This assessment is based on a idea that the quality of the timber harvest is a major right of the forest service. If that was the case in 2005, it is no longer a viable basis for an environmental assessment.

3) The assessment is also based on an assumption that recreation is a minor activity in the White Mountain National Forest. Since the pandemic, recreational use has increased exponentially. Your plan to close half of the Ferncroft and Liberty parking lots is totally unacceptable. Ferncroft's lot was just expanded because the use has increased so markedly.

Unacceptable as well is the lack of plans to use buffers to protect current hiking and skiing trails. It is important to shield the public from the mess that logging creates. My family travels to the Tamworth/Sandwich, Chocorua area multiple times a year. Five to ten years would not be a [ldquo]short term[rdquo] effect for us, and many others who come to NH primarily for recreation. Recreation is a prime economic driver of our economy, and people do not come here from all over the east coast and beyond to see a logging operation.

To summarize, the scope of this project is not only unnecessary, it is also detrimental to our meeting essential climate goals and to maintaining the economy of this region. The short notice and limited attempt to gain public comment is surprising, and disappointing. It gave little time to understand or gain expert advice, and to make our voice heard.

I hope the project is halted until a more sufficient plan is developed and communicated to all of us.