

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/22/2023 4:00:00 AM

First name: Laura

Last name: Magzis

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Innes:

I grew up just outside of New York City, but spent seven summers in rural Vermont, during which time I learned to love the forests and mountains of Northern New England. In 1990, I found a way to get back to that area (from Atlanta, GA), when I found a job in Dublin, NH. I was eager to hike and to cross-country ski in New Hampshire's forests, especially those in the White Mountains. The more I did this, the more I appreciated the areas of largely unbroken natural beauty that the White Mountains provided.

I am concerned that, with the Forest Service's plan to log in the Sandwich Range, one area of largely unbroken forest will be scarred and aesthetically injured by logging.

I was aware, even before moving to NH, that winters were at risk due to climate change. I was not by profession an environmental scientist, but I have done my best to speak up for a healthy climate since learning about this threat in the late 1980s. I have also been aware of the role of forests in cooling the planet, and that role that has become even more crucial as the planet has warmed, despite international meetings and agreements to reduce emissions. In the last few years, it has become apparent to me that we must all do everything in our power to protect our climate. It cannot be a case of "Oh, this is just a little exception, and it won't do much harm." Together, all these "little exceptions" will present a great injury.

I was therefore appalled to hear of the plan to log in the Sandwich Range. I gather that this area has been protected from such activities since the early nineteenth century, so that its trees constitute a mature forest that can store huge amounts of carbon. If permitted to grow as time progresses, these trees will take on the characteristics of old growth forests, which are especially valuable as carbon "sinks."

(I am also aware that, in 2022, President Biden issued an Executive Order instructing the Forest Service to protect forest such as those it now plans to log in the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project).

This is not an area that should be exempt from efforts to conserve forests. If we all figure that we can be exceptions to calls to preserve our planet, the terrible consequences we have seen in the last few years will only increase in severity. Though I live in an area that has been largely free of the worst impacts of climate change so far, I am aware it can happen here. I am also aware that it matters to all of us when Canada and California burn, when Texas floods, when people die of high temperatures in Europe, when Africans migrate due to desertification. I believe we must abandon our habit of thinking we can just go on as usual. This is not a usual time, and we must re-examine our former ways of behaving and change them as necessary.

It is very necessary to switch gears and abandon plans to harvest areas of the Sandwich Range in New Hampshire's White Mountains.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely, Laura Magzis