

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/31/2024 4:27:04 PM
First name: Maura
Last name: King
Organization: Wonalancet Preservation Association
Title: President
Comments: Dear Mr. Jim Innes,

I write in objection to Sandwich Vegetation Management Project # 57392. My previous comments were submitted on August 28th and October 23, 2024.

The WPA is the sole organization charged with protecting the Wonalancet Basin, which includes parts of Sandwich, Tamworth, Albany and Waterville Valley against degradation and destruction of its natural beauty.

The Forest Service's own guidelines call for the Plans they create to be updated or revised every 15 years. That very requirement has been ignored in the SVMP # 57392.

Remedy: Revise the 2005 Plan, taking into account President Biden's Executive Order 14072 on Old Growth and Mature forests and consider further exceptions to the current plan. Forests must have time to reach a Mature forest state. To continually harvest the largest trees does not allow for them to grow old.

In my previous comments I noted that the 2005 FS Plan did not include a Recreation Plan, but the Plan stated that one would be provided at a later date. That Plan never did materialize and on that basis the FS should keep its word and work to get that in place before any work on this project takes place. Recreation is the main activity in the Wonalancet Basin and to leave out such an integral part of the Plan is malpractice.

Remedy: Create a plan that allows for safe, recreational use of the forest in the presence of skidders, logging trucks and other noisy, heavy, commercial logging equipment.

The finding of No Significant Impact is baffling. A 5-10 year span of potential logging happening in one of the busiest outdoor recreation areas is going to drive a lot of people to abandon this beautiful area because of limited parking, noise, smell and unintended interaction with large logging machinery. This will impact the many businesses that benefit from the hikers stopping coming and going from their day outside in the woods.

Remedy: Find alternate potential logging sites that are not recreation areas. Do they exist? Were any considered?

My last objection is to the fact that there is No Consideration of Alternatives. It seems this finding lacks imagination.

Remedy: There would always be the alternative to find out exactly where the bat population frequents and avoid that part of the forest completely. More than once in the four meetings I attended did I hear said that the FS will not make any money on this project. If its not profitable, cancel now. Another alternative could be instead of cutting diseased Beech trees, go look at how they fare over time in the 35,000 acres of the Sandwich Wilderness area which abuts this project and see if this cutting is really needed. There are always alternatives when you are seeking solutions.

Thank you for your careful attention to these concerns. This forest belongs to all of us. The WPA is honored to help protect it.

Maura King
Tamworth, NH