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Comments: Comment on Lake Tarleton IRP 56394 EA:

The Lake Tarleton Logging Project EA states: "White Mountain National Forest archaeologists completed a cultural resource review for this project pursuant to the regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC 470f). No historic properties will be affected by the proposed project activities." The wording of the report actually is: "No historic properties affected subject to WMNF recommendations detailed in Item 15 of Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report (2019-14-17)" Item 15. The above report is not accurate in stating that all known potential adverse impact on cultural resources could be removed with the measures outlined in c. Only known resources will have a 50' buffer, so feller bunchers and skidders are likely to damage unknown resources, for example the missing graveyard mention in Fillion's pamphlet, wells, dumps and stone piles. The report admits potential for damages, especially to the road, a historic resource above and below ground, one which has not been given the protected status it merits. The Charleston Road appears to have been part of a 1781 layout from Wentworth to Piermont. 155 rods were re-routed in 1785, and from the S. Ames property north to the junction was discontinued in 1875. Recent WMNF logging projects have effectively destroyed the historic aspects of roads and trails, for example the Blueberry Mt. Trail off of the North and South (Long Pond) Road and the Jericho Trail in Easton. The report states: "existing roadways will be improved or realigned, as well as the addition of gates or barriers to keep unauthorized vehicles from entering." The EA fails to justify "improving" and realigning a historic resource for a logging project of unproven need. The EA fails to explain what types of users are accessing the Charleston Road illegally, and thus fails to open for public input other ways of limiting this presumably motorized access. Were the stone piles (below) in Tommy Hall's former pasture, thorough which the Jericho Trail in Easton passes, marked before, or protected during, the Bowen Brook Logging Project? Edgar Alan Nutt, in his book "Coventry-Benton Revisited" (2004) wrote of the Nathan Mullikan property: "Southeasterly and just beyond the ell are the remains of the outline foundation of a 36 foot square barn mostly destroyed by the Forest Service road running through it." (p. 229). The Cultural Resource Review found resources scattered throughout the proposed logging areas, and it was by no means a complete survey. Given the pre and post-contact richness of this area, there are obviously undiscovered resources and logging should not be allowed, except chain-saw clearing around the apple orchards and smaller trees that are damaging foundations. Pruning of the orchards should also be done, and identification of apple varieties if grafted trees remain. The apple trees are historic resources. "There has been much public debate on how the US Forest Service (USFS) can better fulfill its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) obligations.... In contrast to recently publicized concerns about indeterminable delays caused by NEPA, our research finds that the vast majority of NEPA projects are processed quickly using existing legal authorities (i.e., Categorical Exclusions and Environmental Assessments) and that the USFS processes environmental impact statements faster than any other agency with a significant NEPA workload... We further show that there has been a dramatic decline in the number of NEPA analyses initiated and completed annually that should be of great concern to all who care about public lands in the United States... Historically, NEPA provided a platform that facilitated the transformation of the USFS from a client elistic agency that primarily served extractive industries to an agency that attempts to balance diverse public values (Fleischman 2017)... Evidence suggests that citizen engagement enabled by NEPA leads to decisions that are better at both managing public resources and aligning with public values (Young et al. 2010, Bevington 2012, 2018, Trnka and Ellis 2014, Nie and Metcalf 2016)... Finally, we find a very significant decline in the number of NEPA projects being initiated and completed that cannot be explained by any changes in NEPA law. If anything, recent acts of Congress and Executive Orders should have decreased the costs and increased the speed of NEPA compliance by introducing new CEs and establishing new processes aimed at increasing the efficiency of environmental reviews (Hoover et al. 2019, Council on Environmental Quality 2020). A great slowdown in USFS activity could mean that needed work is not being done on the landscape. Agency critics have argued that many USFS activities are destructive to the values the agency is supposed to be

promoting (Bevington 2018). If this is the case, then fewer projects could mean fewer destructive activities on public lands, and therefore better management." (2020)  
<https://academic.oup.com/jof/article/118/4/403/5825558>(emphasis added).The Lake Tarleton Logging project Cultural Resource review and the EA Scenic Management assessment used an overly narrow definition of scenic resources. The Revised Lake Tarleton Logging Project Environmental Assessment states: "The proposed action is consistent with Forest Plan standards and guidelines for scenery management. Nine viewpoints were used for scenery analysis and the timber units were modeled and adjusted to minimize visual impacts and ensure Forest Plan compliance (Figure 4). Some visual impacts from the proposal can be expected, however these impacts would be most apparently immediately following timber harvest and would fade and blend over time as the forest regenerates." To sum up scenic impacts by stating there will be huge visual impacts that will become less noticeable over the next 50 years is not an adequate response. The EA provided no data showing less than 9% of the view with visual impacts from the proposed logging. The EA provided no data incorporating previous logging. Did the viewshed analysis take into account the increased viewshed that would be created by the logging, for example, the view from the powerline? The EA provided no data showing that 9% is an acceptable scenic impact. "Scenery Management G-1 In evaluating cumulative effects for viewed landscapes from established concern level 1, open, higher elevation viewpoints affording expansive or large scale views, no more than 9 percent of the acreage within the view should be treated with regeneration vegetation management activities within a 30 year period. Total area affected during any one entry period with new regeneration treatment should not exceed 4 percent of the acreage. Assessment may need to be made from multiple viewpoints (that view a common land base). The assessment will apply to each view separately. "The EA provided no records of the logging that has been done in the Tarleton area over the past 30 years. It would be impossible for anything other than a several thousand acre clearcut to be more than 9% of a viewshed, unless that viewshed was extremely limited. USFS failed to provide the percentages of proposed logging areas visible from each of the chosen visual impact locations. A visual impact map like the one below, needs to be produced for this project. WMNF has been approached by the Board of Trails (DNCR) which hopes to gain FS permission for OHRV use of the snowmobile trail on the powerline that abuts the old Charleston Road. This would be a cumulative impact in terms of noise, wildlife and terrain damage and would also threaten the cultural resources in and around that section of trail/powerline. WMNF needs to disclose all potential cumulative cultural impacts in the area of the proposed logging. "Appalachian National Scenic Trail The National Trails System Act (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1241-1251) identifies the ANST as a National Scenic Trail. The National Scenic Trail designation identifies trails that "provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass" (16 U.S.C. 1242). The National Trails System Act does not specifically regulate visual resources (either within or external to the trail right-of-way), but does require that, "to the extent practicable, efforts shall be made to avoid activities incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established" (16 U.S.C.1246c.)."[https://www.ferc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/volume-III-part-2\\_2.pdf](https://www.ferc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/volume-III-part-2_2.pdf)"While no laws or regulations specifically govern visual impacts in the US, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that federal agencies... consider the adverse impacts of their actions on properties that may be eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP). The NRHP includes districts, sites, buildings, objects and cultural resources." Federal Agencies "must allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment, and must consult with state historic preservation offices and representatives of federally recognized Native American tribes...To determine whether the landscape can absorb the visual change resulting from a proposed... project without significantly affecting scenic quality or viewer enjoyment, a project proponent generally prepares a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA). The VIA uses techniques such as distance modeling, visual simulations, and professional rating panels to quantify the potential effects and their impact on stakeholders. Ultimately, the VIA determines whether the threshold of acceptable visual impact will be exceeded and considers any measures that will reduce or mitigate visual impact, such as uniform design, lighting and siting." <https://www.whitecase.com/publications/insight/united-states#:~:text=While%20no%20laws%20or%20regulations,National%20Register%20of%20Historic%20Properties>.WMNF failed to provide an adequate assessment of the visual impacts of the proposed logging project on the Appalachian Trail and the Charleston Road, one which includes simulated post-logging views. "NEPA VIA

includes impacts on the people at those places and on the larger landscape. Where there are potential visual impacts on both scenic values and historic properties, both NEPA and Section 106 VIAs must be conducted." Clearcuts and shelter cuts are extremely depressing to look, be in, and walk through. In the summer they are hot. As they grow up they become even more impassible as saplings cover the stumps and dropped trees and raspberries require protective clothing. Even thinning destroys the feel of a forest, especially a forest one is familiar with, because parts of it are missing. This is not an assessment based on ignorance of the "need" for management (deer habitat and saw-logs) but an understanding of the damage done to the forest. One can see and feel this in the cut-over area north of the north end of the Charleston Road. Given the recent logging here, the plan is clearly to prevent any old growth forest, the most scenic forest possible. WMNF has not taken into account that logged forests have visual impacts not just when they are clearcut, shelter cut, etc. but for the next 100 years. The fact that most people have not experienced an old growth forest does not mean WMNF can ignore this standard. The Environmental Assessment failed to assess the scenic and recreational value of the Lake Tarleton area as a mature forest. The EA failed to consider the scenic experience of viewing a clearcut forest compared to viewing a mature forest. Less than 1% of New Hampshire forests are old growth. People want to see and be in mature forests. The short and easy access to the historically rich Tarleton Lake area increases its value for such recreation. "Section 106 of the National Historic Places Act requires Federal agencies to consider the impacts, including visual impacts, of their undertakings on the ability of certain historic properties to convey their historic significance. Visual impacts of Federal agency undertakings must also be considered under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) for their potential to affect historic properties, scenic resources present in the landscape, and the scenic experiences of people who view the landscape. This paper discusses important differences between visual impact analysis (VIA) under Section 106 and under NEPA. In essence, VIA under Section 106 looks at impacts on places, while a NEPA VIA includes impacts on the people at those places and on the larger landscape. Where there are potential visual impacts on both scenic values and historic properties, both NEPA and Section 106 VIAs must be conducted." WMNF failed to do an adequate Section 106/NEPA analysis, including VIAs for the AT and the Charleston Road."When conducting VIAs, there may be confusion about the resources that must be evaluated and the appropriate method for assessing impacts on a given resource. When stakeholders focus on a particular resource or when impact assessment professionals are accustomed to using a familiar methodology, the result may be a tendency to see the impacts and assessment approach through the "lens" of the resource they are accustomed to dealing with. This can result in overlooking important impacts and/or using inappropriate methods to conduct the assessment."

"Limitations of Key Observation Point Analysis in VIAs Under NEPA Using KOP analysis in a VIA to assess impacts on people's visual experience and enjoyment is clearly consistent with the NEPA mandate to assure that all people have aesthetically pleasing surroundings, in part because it addresses the interaction of humans and their aesthetic experience of the landscape. This implies that humans are the receptors for visual impacts. Relying solely on KOP analysis in VIA is problematic, however, because as land uses and people's viewing behaviors and locations change over time, KOPs and viewer sensitivities may also change. For example, the development of new roads or trails may result in new areas being opened up for scenic viewing and other recreational uses. A project that has little impact on views from current KOPs may have much larger effects if evaluated from different KOPs in the future." <https://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/pubs/gtr/gtr-nrs-p-183papers/20-sullivan-VRS-gtr-p-183.pdf>The proposed Lake Tarleton logging project EA scenic evaluation is invalidated by its limited KOP analysis. The Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report finding of No Effect ignored the important historic landscape of the Lake Tarleton area, which includes Lake Tarleton and Lake Katherine, the Cross Mine, the old Tarleton Club trails and the Charleston Road itself, with its associated cellar holes, stone piles, foundations, old dumps, foundations, springs, wells and orchards. The Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report ignored the history of Charleston, documented in William Little's Histories of Warren (1854 and 1870), Thumbnail history of Warren, New Hampshire, 1763-1963: by John H. Nichol, The Life, Labors, and Travels of Elder Charles Bowles, of the Free Will Baptist Denomination, by Eld. John W. Lewis. Together with an Essay on the Character and Condition of the African Race by the Same. Also, an Essay on the Fugitive Law of the U.S. Congress of 1850, by Rev. Arthur Dearing: Elder John W. Lewis, (1853), Theda Page Brigham's Some More Things about Coventry-Benton (1964), Robert Fillions pamphlets; Early Haverhill-Warren roads (1991), Charleston (1995), Still some More Things about Coventry-Benton, and Lake Tarleton... (2005), William Witcher's Some Things about

Coventry-Benton, Roland Bixby's History of Warren (1985), the Lake Tarleton Club map (1921), James E. Hobbs' Piermont, N.H. and Lake Tarleton Club, Piermont, Jeffrey Belyea's A Pictorial History of Warren, N.H. (1985), William Whitcher's records, Amos Cloughs 1860s stereoviews, deeds, and three posts by Lyme Cellar Holes. The Charleston Road, Lake Tarleton and Lake Katherine area is eligible for listing to the National Register. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of U.S. history and the lives of persons significant in our past: One of the first residents of Charleston was Charles Bowles, a bi-racial man who later became a notable Free Will Baptist preacher. It has yielded and "may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (National Park Service 1997)" through the pre-contact artifacts, the remains of Charleston; foundations, orchards, stone walls, the Cross Mine, the Lake Tarleton Club remains and history and the summer camps; the latter all aspects of the tourism history of New England. This Old Charleston Road area retains integrity of setting and feeling: "Setting is the physical environment of a historic property and includes the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. Setting can include natural or humanmade elements, such as topographic features, vegetation, paths, or fences, and, importantly, the relationships between buildings and other features or open space. Setting should be examined not only within the exact boundaries of the property, but also between the property and its surroundings (National Park Service 1997)..." "Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character." (Bulletin, National Park Service 1997) The Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report incorrectly arrived at a finding of No Significant Effect. 2,687 acres were incompletely surveyed, the proposed project would affect 5,375 acres, cultural resources were found in an area with a pattern of settlement and pre-contact use that indicates that far more extensive resources exist. WMNF has improved their documentation of the locations of historic features in the Forest, but appears not to value these resources and has made almost no effort to preserve them. NHDHR has also been slow to acknowledge the value of foundation holes, old un-built roads, and other cultural "remnants". The same assessment of lack of value led to the failure to save the thousands of historic structures that have been destroyed through neglect or deliberate destruction since the mid 1860s. With global warming and the sixth great extinction, pre-fossil fuel historical resources will increase in cultural significance and value, representing as they do a culture that existed and thrived without the objects, fossil-fuel dependence, materials and culture of acquisition and consumption that now threaten the planet and which are evident in every built landscape we encounter from a vehicle. The Charleston/Lake Katherine/Lake Tarleton area is of value not only because it offers an experience of the natural world, but also because it offers an experience of the pre-fossil fuel material culture and environment. "The images of a colonial farmhouse on a hill, a brick mill village by a waterfall, or the austere church on a common are all undisputed icons of Massachusetts' history and culture. But the historic landscape of the Commonwealth is far more complex than these familiar snapshots, and contains many other, individual features that collectively contribute to the larger cultural landscape. Often made of stone, they may have a historic significance that makes them worthy of preservation in their own right; as it is often these stone details that are the only features to survive successive periods of care, development, abandonment, and neglect. They are the wells and cellar holes, the stone walls and dams, the boundary markers and quarries, examples of which are found scattered throughout Massachusetts, providing clues towards former land uses in places where the past is often obscured by development, neglect, vegetation, or theft. They are the traces that survive where more ephemeral materials have disappeared. Yet how do we learn to recognize these features when toppled stone boundary markers or collapsed and tree-filled cellar holes often go unnoticed in the woods? Even when identified, it may be assumed that their isolation removes any relevance or historic significance. But it is exactly these types of landscape elements that tie the land to a past use and history that may no longer be immediately discernable, and without the skills needed to identify these features their eventual loss is assured. However, stone features can be protected through proper stewardship that addresses threats such as neglect, collapse, and damage from vegetation and theft." (emphasis added). The Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report states: "If linear historic features (e.g. stone walls, historic road, etc.) can't be avoided, crossings shall be placed at existing openings/crossings or at right angles to minimize disturbance and retain overall integrity."