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First name: Sara
Last name: Acharya
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear New Hampshire Forest Service,

My name is Sara Wipfler Acharya and my family has owned and operated Kingswood Camp for Boys since 1985. I was born in 1987 and have spent every summer of my life since I was 6 months old on the shores of Lake Tarleton. I vehemently oppose any forest management across the lake that could disrupt our viewshed or disturb our pristine waters. The first emotion felt when campers or staff return to our campus after a few years (or decades) of being away is always, "that view never changes." We must reclassify the area so that the area remains protected and untouched for perpetuity, as was intended in 2000 when the community came together and believed to have saved this pristine wilderness.

If you've only looked at Lake Tarleton and surrounding forests on a map, you miss the majesty of the area. I've heard people say that the waters of Tarleton are healing. But I know, down to my core, that being in the presence of the natural, undisrupted Lake Tarleton and surrounding lands is otherworldly. It's my religion. In a world that is so fast paced and technology driven, sitting on the beach and staring across the shores of the lake is spiritual. It grounds you back to reality and reminds you of the beauty of the planet and the good in the world. If this project goes ahead as currently planned, it will literally rip the soul out of anyone who deeply cherishes these woods. And that's hundreds and thousands of people.

It's hard to keep up with how quickly humans are leaving their mark on this planet. So few spaces remain truly untouched. At Kingswood, we always say that from our shore you don't see a single light bulb. Instead, you see the entire beauty of the White Mountains encapsulated into one single view. That this space hasn't been designated as a scenic area is preposterous.

The land surrounding Lake Tarleton is different than your standard plot of land. In no chart, in no conversation, in no circumstance should it be designated as MA 2.1. Nothing about this forest is general, or common; instead it should be unanimously reclassified as MA 8.5, or scenic. At Kingswood, we come back, year after year, like the ferns that dot our campus, drawn to this uniquely untouched and harmonious terrain. When you jump in the lake or stare across it, you become charged with electricity. You're able to forget about everything else in the world. If, however, you were to jump in the lake and become surrounded by extra sediment from run-off, or stare across it and see a patchwork forest, the experience would be completely altered, and not for the better.

It's almost unheard of these days to have such a beautiful location so spared from the ever-developing world. When on the shores of Tarleton, you are completely unplugged from the rest of the world and you can almost pretend that you are living in simpler, happier times. A time when people stopped to appreciate the mist rising over the mountains in the morning, the reflection on the lake on a still day, and the changing colors of the far shore as the sun sets. The hope, joy, and vitality people get from enjoying the untouched viewshed far outweighs any pulp, any timber, any fuel you could get from logging this area.

While it'll be argued that what's being proposed is good for the forest and area, it's impossible to predict the cascading effects of human and machine intervention on this delicate area. Right now, Tarleton's water is the clearest and purest I've ever seen. Will it be equally pure after the forests surrounding the streams that feed Tarleton are leveled? Will there not be more runoff into the lake after heavy rains (which with climate change are becoming more frequent)? We've had a couple of recent scares with blue green algae. Can it be said with certainty that the intended work won't destabilize the fragile ecosystem and make algae blooms more frequent and severe? What about our loons and bald eagles? Will the loons notice the nearby disruption of the forest and the change in the water quality and choose to nest elsewhere? Will the bald eagles lose the tallest trees they nest and perch on?

Why chose this uniquely cherished land for this project? Is there not another parcel of land where you can carry out a similar forest management plan? Can't this precious land be spared once more? The untouched view we see from our shores gives us life. It makes members of our community determined to protect our natural world. It makes us better people. It's everything to so many people. People have tattoos of this viewshed on their bodies. Homes are filled with prints and artwork of this view. I wear my Kingswood logo of the forest and mountains daily.

I was raised on this land, I was married on this land, I'm raising my daughter on this land, and if I don't die on this land, my ashes will be spread on this land and in the lake. And for eternity, this area must remain the same, sacred space it is now. It's hard to express how important this area is to anyone who hasn't spent time there. Whether you're there a single summer or a dozen summers, it forever shapes your being and your appreciation for the natural world. This land must be honored and safeguarded for the rest of time.

Sincerely,
Sara Wipfler Acharya