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Comments: The Proposed Logging Violates the Intent of the acquisition of Lake Tarleton and the Public's Trust

Twenty-two years ago, a ground swell of reaction to a planned large-scale resort development of the Lake Tarleton Forest saved it from the ax. Now, the "Lake Tarleton Integrated Resource Project" threatens, once again, to strip the trees from the land.

It is very clear what the intent of the New Hampshire Congressional Delegation, the Governor, the Non-Governmental Organizations and the 600 individual donors was in 2000 when they came together to purchase 5,300+ acres surrounding Lake Tarleton. To quote longtime Republican U.S. Senator Judd Greg at the protection celebration in 2000, "Many of us here today have worked hard for a number of years to reach the point we are at today where we can proudly say that this pristine New Hampshire wilderness has been saved." U.S. Representative Charlie Bass and representatives from the Trust for Public Land, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Upper Valley Land Trust, the White Mountain National Forest and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests all echoed these sentiments. They worked tirelessly for 5 years and raised more than $7.5 million dollars.

The White Mountain National Forest's "Lake Tarleton Integrated Resource Project" threatens to violate their intent and the public's trust.

In keeping with the intent of the original land acquisition, the White Mountain National Forest should remove this and all future threats to Lake Tarleton's surrounding forest by amending the 2005 White Mountain National Forest Plan and designating a Scenic Area in the landscape surrounding spectacular Lake Tarleton, Lake Katherine, Lake Armington, and stretching along the Appalachian Trail corridor north to Webster Slide, and Wachipauka Pond. This contiguous landscape is among the most scenic in the Granite State. And yet, the White Mountain National Forest has failed to designate any Scenic Areas west of I-93. For the benefit of the local tourism and recreation economy, and for the integrity of this treasured landscape, including Abenaki and early colonial historical resources, it's past time to permanently remove the threat of logging and development by amending the White Mountain National Forest management plan and designating a Scenic Area.

The Town of Piermont Planning Board, in 2004, surveyed the opinion of Town residents and found that 90% of respondents were in favor of preservation and conservation. When asked what they like about the town, people cited farms and the natural beauty of the environment. The Piermont Conservation Commission stated "scenic beauty should be of the utmost importance when considering how our actions and development change Piermont's topography." The NH State Parks' Lake Tarleton webpage features "the higher elevation of the park offers beautiful views of the White Mountain National Forest across the lake." The "Lake Tarleton Project," while admitting the significant scenic value of the lake and surrounding forest, does not include the evaluation of the Project's scenic impact from Piermont Mountain, the most logical vantage point. From the well-traveled trails to the summit the proposed "unlogged Beauty Strip" on the north shore of the lake would be a thin lower border to the unsightly logging beyond. The scenic values inherent in the Lake Tarleton Forest will be greatly degraded if the proposed project goes forward as planned.