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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Dear New Hampshire Forest Service,

The most sacred component of our experience at Kingswood Camp for Boys, on the shores of Lake Tarleton, are our evening council fires. As a community, we gather around the fire and sit, often in silence, and appreciate our pristine surroundings. Many campers come from cities and have never before had a moment to connect in silence and appreciation for the natural world. We listen to the loons. We watch the everchanging wave patterns on the lake. We observe the ambient color changes in the sky as the sun sets for the night. We regale the campers with stories of infamous camp hiking tales up mountains like Piermont and Moosilauke. We simply sit in awe and take in the beauty of the surrounding untouched forest.

Sometimes we send an overnight hike up Webster Cliff. The campers that go on that hike are thrilled with the unique opportunity of being able to shine their flashlights down on us at the camp from up on the cliffs. We schedule a corresponding council fire and are ready to fire back with our flashlights and chants. Seeing the reassuring lights of our campers across the lake, knowing they successfully reached the campsite, and hearing our calls echo through the hills is the sort of experience that's in short supply these days. The area between Webster Cliff and our council fire is directly on the chopping block with this proposal.

At Kingswood, our mission is to create a happy, close-knit community that treasures kindness, the natural world, and the joy of play; a place where boys develop confidence, make independent choices, value true friendship, and grow into responsible, caring young men. We hope that from their experience in the White Mountains, and especially from the majesty of being on Lake Tarleton, nestled amongst the White Mountains, our campers will grow into shepherds of the environment.

While some traditional New England summer camps place near singular emphasis on their athletic program, we at Kingswood urge campers to go on a hike. Oftentimes a kid who is a sports fanatic at home will go on a Kingswood hike and have an epiphany that will open up space in their lives for the outdoors and hiking. Generally, campers take their first hike on trails directly surrounding Kingswood. Whether that be a hike down Old Charleston Road to Lake Constance and Freddy's Pond to see completely untouched bodies of water, up Mount Piermont to get an aerial view of the mountains and forests surrounding Kingswood, or to the summit of Moosilauke to look back down at camp, the majesty of all of these trails is the feeling of being on land that's escaped the reach of human interference.

The experience we offer on the shores of Lake Tarleton positively influences the youth and staff who participate in our program, and oftentimes for far longer than the actual time they are physically on the property. As you will have noticed from the comments you've received, Kingswood's reach is international; the impact of this proposal is far further reaching than Piermont and Warren. Additionally, this project strikes right at the souls of everyone who has had a formative experience in these woods or on this lake. Please reclassify this land as a scenic area so future generations can continue the bond with this sacred parcel of land.

Sincerely,

Sara Wipfler Acharya