

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/27/2021 2:32:30 PM

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Comments: 4/27/2021

Comments concerning the Peabody West Integrated Resource Project

Thank you for inviting comments on this wide ranging set of proposals.

The USFS team is to be commended for their forward thinking approach of including growing outdoor recreation activities that are becoming an important part of the mix here in Northern NH. Coincidental to the ongoing pandemic and the resulting spike in interest in these outdoor activities, the White Mountain National Forest is well positioned to accept these new levels of interest and this set of projects has the potential to set the Forest up to be able to handle increased visitation in these new areas. With the increasing interest in hiking, mountain biking and back country skiing, new areas and trails are welcomed.

There is a lot of material to digest in the March 29, 2021 scoping newsletter. I wish there was a way to look online, perhaps through a web application to be able to overlay some of the maps included in the newsletter. There is a lot of terrain covered in these projects and it would be helpful to be able to see for example forest roads, hiking and ski trails along with existing roads, highways and known physical features all on the same map. Flipping back and forth between pages trying to figure out what's where is an imprecise methodology that can be confusing. Specific to the plans for proposed transportation management activities in figure 3 it would have been helpful to have included forest roads to be decommissioned along with those that will be reconstructed and those that are proposed to be new construction. If those roads to be decommissioned are indeed now on figure 3, they would show better if they were color coded. Appendix B lists Culhane Brook Rd as #70; on figure 3 what I think is Culhane Brook Rd is noted as #72 and there is no #70 shown.

Concerning the proposed wildlife opening changes, there is mention of the current Hayes Copp 43 and 45 being abandoned in favor of enlarging the current Spring Brook wildlife opening, but the two Hayes Copp opening are not shown on any map for reference making it harder to comment on this proposed change.

The cross country ski trails that show on figure 1 are slightly different than those shown on figure 4. Figure 4 is incomplete.

Concerning the proposal to thin the forest around the area of the Andro District offices - this is a great idea and will help the traveling public locate the offices and help them find this great resource that has been hidden in the woods since it was built.

Finally, the new mountain bike trail that will at least partially connect trails on private land to the north to activity centers further south needs to be commented on. The original intent, suggested by several if not many people at the initial Peabody West open house held in early 2019 was to connect the Town of Gorham all the way out to the Glen - Great Glen Trails, the Auto Road and The Glen House - perhaps all the way to Pinkham in the future. This complete trail would then satisfy a known advantage that rural point to point trails have, that being a sense of accomplishment, a sense of going somewhere, a way to get from one source of activity to another. It's a fact that people gravitate to areas that have features like this. Residents and visitors in Gorham could ride or ski to the activities at the Glen and vice versa.

Ending this new trail at Dolly Copp will not accomplish this. The route from the trail system at Dolly Copp to connect to the trails at Great Glen is very short and should be included in this Peabody West project. Yes, there will need to be a bridge across the West Branch of the Peabody and there is a spectacular location for that

bridge. Further, this new 9 mile plus trail should be allowed to be groomed for cross country skiing in the winter. Grooming will open it up for many more users - to specifically state that it will not be groomed for winter use is a mistake. There are organizations that would be happy to groom this trail to insure that it gets used by the widest possible audience.

The proposed new 9 mile bike/hike/ski trail currently shown plans to use a mile of the Bear Springs Snowmobile Tr to connect to the Dolly Copp area. This trail will be far more successful, especially in winter, if there can be a separate trail to cover that 1 mile that would separate it from the snowmobile trail.

Thank you for all the work that has gone into this set of projects and for inviting comments. I would welcome the opportunity to help accomplish any of the suggestions presented here.