

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/9/2022 2:28:18 PM

First name: Suzanne

Last name: Paquin

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my opposition to the Lake Tarleton Integrated Resource Project as proposed in the April 2022 updated Environmental Assessment.

This year in connection with the exhibition of a WPA mural about logging previously housed at the White Mountain National Forest headquarters in Laconia, I had an opportunity to study the history of logging in NH and efforts to protect and restore New Hampshire's forests throughout the twentieth century - through legislation and activism.

I am writing to protest plans to start logging operations in the 5,300 acre parcel surrounding Lake Tarleton. This is a grotesque betrayal of that multi-generational history of painstaking efforts to protect, restore, and steward the forests of New England. The WMNF has always included commercial logging as part of the long-term future of our forests. But so has protecting the most scenic and precious (old growth) trees and the wildlife habitat they sustain.

Logging in the Lake Tarleton parcel is an insult to all who mobilized in 2000 to protect this precious bit of old growth forest by ceding it in perpetuity to the WMNF. Raising the millions of dollars involved took a concerted effort by federal and state officials, organizations dedicated to protecting the forests, the Abenaki people whose stewardship inspires us all, and thousands of citizens from the area and beyond.

Right now, the best, simplest, and most expeditious solution is to designate a Scenic Area that includes the original Lake Tarleton parcel and the contiguous landscape that includes Lake Katherine, Lake Armington, and stretches along the Appalachian Trail corridor north to Webster Slide, and Wachipauka Pond.

The White Mountain National Forest last revised its management plan in 2005, so a new plan is overdue. Since then, there have been vast changes in science and public opinion. These include changes in our understanding of the scale, scope, and urgency of our need to protect the planet for future generations from an ever-more-urgent climate catastrophe. Forestry management and biodiversity protection play a role in such efforts. There is no room for "not in this forest" attitudes. Rather, we all have a role to play.

We are talking about an old growth forest with trees that are centuries old -- a resource that would require centuries to replace. Old-growth and mature trees form the backbone of their ecosystems, absorbing the greatest amount of carbon dioxide, maintaining genetic diversity, and providing habitats for all sorts of life.

Please grant Lake Tarleton and adjacent parcels Scenic Area status in perpetuity.