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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I spent ten summers at Kingswood Camp on beautiful Lake Tarleton, and I will always value the impact the surrounding wilderness had on my life. Growing up in New York City, I did not have much access to nature, but the Tarleton area fostered my interests and was formative in my becoming a wildlife biologist. Some of my first wondrous experiences with wildlife came from this area of the White Mountains, from seeing moose crossing the lake and bears on the roads, to hearing the eerie cry of loons in the morning, I truly don't know if I would have followed my career path without these seminal memories. Now, I have worked for multiple federal agencies and have a graduate degree in biological sciences, and I am concerned about the implications of the Forest Service's plan for the health of the environment. The ESA states that the area is in need of management but suggests that logging large areas of land and other commercial activities is the only way to do so, as if there is no middle ground and one cannot happen without the other. While some of the aspects nestled within the management plan might indeed benefit the area ecologically, I fear that the extreme plan laid forward would negatively affect the species that call this area home. To me, it seems like the ESA is brushing aside concerns of the impacts on federally listed species protected by the Endangered Species Act, including the northern long-eared bat, which relies on mature, old-growth forest for roosting and bald eagles that utilize white pines for nesting. The ESA states it will preserve the nesting trees for bald eagles, but in working with this species I know that they will often switch their nesting trees, and I'm concerned that viable nesting trees will be cut. I am also concerned about the effects of runoff into the lake, which is already of concern with algal blooms in recent years, and wetland degradation which are both addressed in generalities in the ESA. Wetlands are a rapidly declining resource across the country that are essential to local amphibian and reptile species, both groups amidst steep declines in our present biodiversity crisis, and these species are often overlooked due to their status as non-game species despite their importance to the ecosystem. While the ESA claims the action plan will benefit biodiversity in the area, I fear that it is catered to the game species of the area, such as deer and turkey, and not to the greater ecosystem function. I am also deeply concerned with the regularity of this management plan, which is not overtly transparent in the ESA, but raises significant long-term doubts about the environmental viability of this plan. This is an area of pristine beauty that serves as a haven for the local wildlife and should thus be considered a scenic area in this unique area of New Hampshire. There are no designated scenic areas west of I-93, but if any tract of land deserves such a designation, it is this majestic landscape. This plan is not in the best interests of the people of Piedmont, with 90% of residents in favor of conservation, or the wildlife populations of the area, so I hope that you amend your plan and act to conserve this area by declaring this landscape a scenic area.