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Comments: I am writing in opposition to the Lake Tarleton Integrated Resource Project as proposed in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of April 2022.

Lake Tarleton and the surrounding mountains are of a special significance to me and they are the pride of my adopted home of Piermont, NH. Began visiting Lake Tarleton with my family 31 years ago and have returned every single summer since. We were first introduced to the Lake through Kingswood Camp, where respect for the lake, the mountains, and the precarious ecosystem was central to daily life. In 2007, we invested in a property on the lake and joined a community of stewards. Since 2007 I have spent time on Lake Tarleton, Lake Katherine, Piermont Mountain, Mount Mist, Webster Slide, and the Charleston Road across all seasons. I've spent countless hours picking trash and litter from the shorelines and along Route 25C. I've inspected boats as a lake host, and I have welcomed strangers to the lake, hoping to build a place of mutual respect. I know the land within the Lake Tarleton Habitat Management Unit intimately.

First, it should be noted that the land surrounding Lake Tarleton that was donated to the White Mountain National Forest by the Trust For Public Land in 2000, should have been immediately reclassified as a Scenic Area. Its current classification in Management Area (MA) 2.1 - General Forest Management, inherently goes against the intent for which the land was donated. This is a gross breach of the public's trust and good will.

I have reviewed the proposed project and the most recent draft Environmental Assessment, and I find several shortcomings in the EA which have led to an erroneous preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):

P.5 Need For The Proposal - The EA falsely assumes that the project is following the Forest Plan. The Lake Tarleton HMU is classified incorrectly as MA 2.1 General Forest Management, therefore implementation of the Forest Plan is not appropriate.

P.5 A "Proposed Action and Alternatives" section is referenced, however no alternatives were included in the EA.

P.7 Recreation - There is a gross misunderstanding of how the area is used from a recreational perspective. Lake Tarleton gets 600+ boats per season, and the Lake Association's Lake Hosts inspect each boat at the boat launch. In recent years, it has been a struggle to keep un-inspected boats from launching. A formalized launch at Lake Katherine will draw more boat traffic to a location without full time Lake Host staffing. The proposed "improvements" will inevitably bring invasive species to Lake Katherine, and soon after, Lake Tarleton.

P.19 Recreation - The assumption that winter work will not disturb recreation is false. There is a thriving winter sport community that uses the Lakes Tarleton and Katherine in the winter for Ice Fishing, Nordic Skiing, and Snowshoeing.

P.20, P.30 Scenery - The viewpoints used for the scenery analysis fail to include the summit and false summits of Piermont Mountain (the Treasure and namesake of Piermont, NH), the dam at the north end of the lake, the "white sands" beach area at the south end of the lake, the Dartmouth Cabin site, the islands, or any point on the surface of the lake. The EA mentions 9 viewpoints, however only 5 were named and called out in Figure 5 (page 30). The EA fails to describe any of the negative visual impacts, only saying that they "can be expected" and that

they "would fade and blend over time." A vague and biased analysis for an official assessment. While they note that the effects of the timber stands have been models, the authors did not include any photographic or cartographic representations of the visual impacts. It would seem that the author intentionally omitted graphics (like the visual impact of the proposed 30 acre clear cut) that would contradict the FONSI. This analysis seems biased, hastily put together, and incomplete.

P.28, Figure 4 Proposed Travel Management Activities - The proposed travel management maintenance levels are both inappropriate for the proposed sites. The Charleston Road is a beloved trail whose beauty lies inherently in its inaccessibility. Repairing the Charleston Road will permanently and fundamentally alter the character of a beloved local recreation feature. Alternative silvicultural treatments for the Orchard that do not involve an excavator and backhoe should be suggested. Additionally, the two Piermont Mountain access roads should not be maintained. Those roads have incentivised illegal dumping of toxic chemicals, as was reported in 2019, where dozens of cans of paint and solvents were dumped on WMNF access roads.

In conclusion, the proposed project is flawed at conception because general forest management on this land goes against the intent for which the land was donated by the public. The April 2022 Draft Environmental Assessment lacks proposed alternatives and contains flawed analysis from the perspectives of recreation, scenery, and transportation management. The EA has also been written in a way that is clearly biased and misleading to the public. I oppose the proposed project, and demand that both a new EA be produced by an unbiased third party and an Environmental Impact Statement be produced.

This project and the way it is being handled is a clear violation of the public's trust and good will.