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Title:

Comments: I strongly support selection and implementation of the "No Action" alternative in the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) Pemigewasset Ranger District's revised Environmental Assessment. I suggest you pursue a Forest Plan Amendment to re-classify the Lake Tarleton/Wauchipauka Pond/Webster Slide complex as a 'Scenic Area.'

Brooke Brown, I believe you are the 'decider' here as to whether this TP moves forward with the logging plans or you set a new course for this land and go log somewhere else. I believe you have a moral decision to make here. There was a 'handshake' in 2000 that 6 years and 7.5 million dollars later spared this place from a massive resort. But why a massive resort here? Because it once was and still is a 'destination'. It is gorgeous in all its 4-seasons: the backdrop of Mt Moosilaukie, spectacular view from Mt Piermont summit looking down upon the lake and the hillsides slated to be logged but not part of your 'view analysis', Webster Slide and its access to Wauchipauka Pond, the Appalachian Trail nearby, and 4 lakes within hiking distance (Lakes Armington, Constance, Katherine and the crown jewel Tarleton). There's a deep sense of history here, the early Charleston Community, the former Lake Tarleton Resort and Golf Resort that was a destination for movie stars before Lake Tahoe drew them away, the land being bought and sold many times until the people via the Trust for Public Lands thought they secured it as an unspoiled area for generations to come. This is one of the largest lakes in the WMNF, beaten perhaps by Stinson Lake by only a few acres. But it has Stinson beat because its shores are not peppered by homes and its water quality is superior.

I've called Lake Tarleton my backyard for over 30 years even though I live 12 miles away in Warren. My husband and I considered buying property on the Lake in the early 80s, but we did not because we assumed all lakes eventually get overly developed. We were wrong about Lake Tarleton - thanks to the aforementioned efforts by the local communities, politicians, and the hard work of philanthropic people passionate about the area who fought to protect this place from projects such as these. In 2000 both Lake Tarleton and Lake Katherine were spared from massive development. The intent was to preserve this gem and keep it in its natural state - not to log 880 acres - not 'today', not 'tomorrow', and not the 'next day' - in a continual cycle of tree harvesting and resultant habitat destruction.

Lake Tarleton is a treasure that provides great recreational options for the public - swimming, hiking, fishing, boating, birdwatching, camping, winter sports, etc. The key word here is the 'public'. We've paddle with many a friend on the lake at night and there's barely a light on the lake and barely any noise but for the sound of wildlife and especially loons. It provides easy access for older folks to recreate with its short walk to the beach and nice boat a ramp. Many an early morning you'll see someone sipping their coffee while sitting by the boat ramp, or fishing, or taking pictures, etc.

I've hiked the full extent of Charleston Rd and viewed its varied habitats - fens, streams, riparian environments, hardwood forests, steep slopes, the remnants of the former Charleston Community, beautiful stone walls, an old stone well, the Lund cemetery with its burial headstones broken by skidders from a previous well-intentioned logging project, magnificent old trees perfect for the roosting of bats, nesting of birds, and production of mast....I can go on but you get the picture - a maturing forest. The riparian environments on the steep slopes that are the lifeblood of Lake Tarleton are extensive and so is the risk of detrimental impacts to the lake and stream water quality due to runoff, sedimentation, and potential herbicide contamination...not to mention the possibility of an accidental fluid leak from some big piece of logging equipment.

I care deeply about the wildlife and ecosystem that is currently there and it should be allowed to mature. If we humans keep managing forests and deciding our silviculture strategies based on future lumber harvests, they will

never mature on their own. I feel like we are going back in time - to a time when logging was rampant in the northeast. There are logging and chipping trucks all day long on the local roadways; skidders and feller bunchers are trailed through Grafton County at an alarming rate. There have been many major logging operations in the region in recent years. My point is that there is an abundance of early successional habitat readily available in this area. Please let some places be - let them rest. Let them grow and mature. Don't threaten one of the last, cold clean relatively 'wild' lakes in the White Mountain National Forest that is there for the public to enjoy - which was set aside for the public in 2000. People don't want to hear the noise and smell of logging while ice fishing or cross-country skiing in the winter. Forest dwelling animals have made nests and stored caches of food in the trees and underground that will be destroyed on the coldest and darkest days of winter by skidders and other large machinery.

As an avid birder, what other local NH lake shores can I walk and not get deterred by private marinas, homes, private properties, noxious milfoil, algal blooms, etc. And all right out of my car, not having to hike miles to destinations such as Lonesome Lake or Greely Ponds that are rightly protected by the Forest Service. Protect this area - let other generations feel the sacred feeling of being on this lake and walking its surrounding forest. It will be even nicer for them thanks to your actions taken today! To log up to 100-feet from the shore is unconscionable and will certainly destroy the boreal feel and habitat that has matured near the shore. I have documented many boreal bird species just on the trail around the lake's edge. The species list speaks to the habitat of a lake shore that sits at 1300-foot elevation in a lush evergreen forest: Swainson's thrush, Hermit thrush, Canada warblers, Magnolia warblers, Black-throated green warblers, Black-throated blue warblers, Ovenbirds, Roughed grouse, etc. These species thrive in a deep forest, shaded habitat, at elevation. The White-throated sparrow that enjoy early-successional habitat have plenty of early successional forests available to them but these boreal species are not so fortunate. You pinpoint two Canada warbler nests on one of your maps but you never once mention this species in your EA. There is another known nest along the shore of Tarleton adjacent to the boat ramp and that leads me to believe there may be many more. I will be looking for these nests as the birds return in June (they are late migrants) and I'd like the opportunity to comment on this after this comment period closes.

Another species of interest is the Northern long-eared bat. Last fall I was out for an evening paddle and of note were a couple of bats swooping down around me eating insects. I cannot be sure what species of bat, but all bats are under duress. They are likely breeding in the forest around Lake Tarleton and this needs to be further addressed by the Forest Service before the final decision on this Lake Tarleton Project, in light of the consideration by US Fish and Wildlife Service to up-list the Northern long-eared bat to federally endangered by the end of 2022.

The Biden administration recently (Earth Day, 2022) signed an Executive order directing the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture to create an inventory of mature and old-growth forests on federal lands by the end of 2022. I strongly believe this inventory should be accomplished before any decision is made regarding this Lake Tarleton project.

Like I said in my last 30-day comment (submitted 8/5/2021 at 6:46PM), "The Forest Service will never stop logging the forests, but we should keep special places like the Tarleton area off limits." I firmly believe and formally suggest that a way around this whole issue is to designate this area a 'Scenic Area'. It would be the first west of I-93. It has been relatively easy to garner opposition to this plan - this area is loved by a lot of people!

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