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First name: Richard
Last name: Andrews
Organization:
Title:
Comments: As a long-time member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, I write to inform you that I consider the proposed Tarleton Integrated Resource Project an appalling mistake.

The fundamental land management error embedded in the proposed project is the Forest Service's apparent conviction that every tract of land it owns should be managed for multiple sorts of uses, forest types and kinds of wildlife habitat. Except when applied at very large scales, this management approach prevents the evolution of intact natural forest ecosystems.

The Northern Forest as a whole has a negligible percentage of extensive tracts of undisturbed mature forest. Thus ecosystems like those that prevailed before European settlement have no chance of redeveloping.

The highest and best use of land like around Lake Tarleton is the long-term natural evolution of today's largely even-aged forests into old growth forest. This process sequesters carbon, and is compatible with the kinds of low-impact outdoor recreation that inspired protection of the area around Lake Tarleton and its transfer to the White Mountain National Forest in the first place.

I urge you to abandon the Tarleton Integrated Resource Project, and to designate the Lake Tarleton-Webster Slide Scenic Area recommended by the Lake Tarleton Coalition.