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Organization:

Title:

Comments: - I live at 34 Squirrel Bridge Road just off Ferncroft at the foot of Mount Whiteface. The Blueberry Ledge Trail, one of the busiest in the Sandwich range runs in front of my house. The much used trails are often at peak capacity.

- Is there an update on the forest plan to 2005? Much has changed since then.

- Effects of apparently-accelerating climate change are evident: large scale death of balsams and ash (due to ash borer) blight of the beech trees are just two examples. Current shifts in temperature and humidity seem more extreme than a decade ago. Particularly worrisome is alternation of dry spells with heavy rains, stressing vegetation and causing erosion. Additionally there are more frequent and more severe high wind events causing blow downs. All of these should be taken into account in tree removal. What recent studies of climate change have been considered in developing your plans?

-I encourage the consultation with local resident hiking volunteers and nature enthusiasts, who have been walking, hiking, caring for and observing the habitat for decades. Note there are many thrush species in these woods and also the White Mountain Fritillary.

- I am very concerned about the impact of forest management on wildlife habitat. The diminishing population of birds and butterflies is evident. I urge the consultation with wildlife management experts in determining which areas must be protected, when activities will be least harmful and possibly where and how wildlife habitat might be restored or encouraged. What assessments of existent wildlife populations and habitat have been conducted or consulted? What research has been considered in developing your plans?

- While the report devotes much description to the vegetation and silviculture plans, there is little about the revenue generation. What specific activities and areas are most important to the revenue generation? What is the anticipated revenue and specifically how will this benefit local economy which is mentioned in the proposal. Please provide a budget. What species of trees provide the most revenue? Please provide estimates of numbers of trees by type and age ranges. How long will it take to regenerate trees for a subsequent harvesting?

- The use of heavy equipment may create susceptibility to erosion. This has happened in the past forest projects. What efforts will be made to minimize this and ameliorate impacts when the project is complete? I am particularly concerned about access roads.

- I am assuming that in the diversification of vegetation only truly native species are being considered. was pleased to see that some invasive species will be removed, please specific which ones will be targeted.

- In whole tree removal and release treatments, will vegetation be removed out of the forest? I am concerned about this. The New England Forestry Foundation left a chaotic open floor in the Rich Forest along the access route for its vehicles. It continues to be an eyesore, a visual thoroughfare where little regeneration is occurring after some years. In what kinds of activities and in what areas will cut vegetation be removed and where left on the ground to decay?

- Where can the community see other WMNF areas where these activities have taken place in the last 3, 5 and 10 years (since the 2005 plan) and specifically where the objectives and goals on p 17 of the plan have been implemented or achieved? What has been learned from prior activities that has shaped current plans? What are the plans for documenting the impact of the project?

- There is still significant resentment in the community that persists after more than 20 years following clear cutting in the forest that was in direct conflict with the plans presented to the community and promises made. The community deserves full transparency regarding studies and research considered in determining activities and fully specific plans about activities with adequate advance time and opportunity to comment.

- The forest plan recognizes that the appearance of the forest contributes to its recreational value. It is essential that the activities be respectful of the natural beauty to ensure that recreational value is not diminished.

- What is the budget for the project both costs and revenue?

- Air quality and temperature are primary local concerns. Please provide estimates of impact of the removal of carbon-sinking trees which also improve air quality and lower temperatures. A similar consideration and evaluation should be given to evaluation of wind impacts.

- How will you decide whether an environmental analysis versus an impact statement will be conducted? Environmental concerns are a very high priority in our community and with a project of this size and scope an environmental impact statement should be conducted.

Thank you for your care and concern for our beautiful forest

Respectfully submitted.

Genevieve Christy