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First name: Elizabeth

Last name: Loughran

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: The USDA Forest Service

Date: August 27, 2023

Re: Sandwich Vegetation Management Project # 57392

I just heard yesterday about the plan to cut 6 million board feet from our Wonalancet National Forest over the next five to ten years. The project will take off from the Ferncroft Parking Lot.

Have you been to that parking lot any time recently? All parking along the road has been closed so the

parking lot is jammed every weekend and on nice weekdays as well. Since the pandemic, the use of our part of the National Forest has exploded as more and more people discover the beauty of this part of New Hampshire. How are you going to protect the hikers, small children, and dogs beginning and ending their hikes here? What will their experience be like as more roads get sliced through the woods and cuts impinge on the hiking and ski trails?

I'm sure you know that our forest is one of the few in the United States within easy driving distance of the Boston and New York metropolitan areas as well as near the heavily populated eastern corridor. How do you balance its recreational use for all those people with the small amount of revenue you will get from this sale? I understand that the National Forest must balance uses, but the particular balance needs to change over time. Since the pandemic, recreational use has become much more important to our forest and to the economy of the Mt. Washington Valley. Recreation should be a much larger priority for this particular National Forest.

I also feel that the very short time for public comment reflects that fact that your management staff doesn't value the input from the public. A month for a project for this size is totally inadequate. Please extend the public comment time and pay attention to what people are telling you. The National Forest supposedly belongs to all of us, but it's hard to believe that we matter when so little time is given for input.