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First name: Allison

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Saco District Team and USFS,

I was born in Wonalancet/North Sandwich, return often, intend to return permanently at some point and intend to facilitate the same for generations of my family to come. It's where my heart lies. I, along with many others in the Sandwich and Wonalancet areas (and beyond) have serious concerns about the USFS proposed project.

They include:

-That this proposal ignores President Biden's Executive Order in 2022 directing the Forest Service to conserve mature forests, just like those targeted for logging in the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project. These forests store vast amounts of carbon and are critical in their mature state to the health of our climate. You can't get to that mature state "quickly," it takes time and once it's been undone, it's done for a long, long, time.

- NEPA mandates that an EA describe the environmental impacts of both the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action. What are possible alternatives to logging 650 acres that could prove more beneficial/palatable to all interested parties? There is no consideration of a No Action Alternative that investigates the benefits of leaving the forest as-is. This is the bare minimum alternative analysis an agency should undertake for an EA.

- The NOPA does not address the scenery impacts. This area's scenic value, hiking trails, ski trails, etc. are treasured by those who grew up here (like me)/choose to live here and are also a HUGE part of the local economy, which would be dangerously impacted by this proposal. This project will be majorly disruptive to the local community and visitors who come to walk, hike and ski our trail system. The Ferncroft Parking lot is jammed on weekends, and nice weekdays as well. Please consider the value of NOT disrupting this thriving wilderness economy.

- What will the impact be on our treasured wildlife and the watershed?

I am concerned that this proposed project is short sighted, outdated in intent, and does not reflect a proper understanding of the history and fragility of our wilderness. I feel strongly that it should not be allowed to move forward as proposed. But with some additional assessment and collaboration with the local community, perhaps a less destructive sounding compromise could be reached? Thank you for hearing the public's concerns.

Respectfully,

Allison Read