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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for accepting my comments to Sandwich Vegetation Management Project #57392[hellip] Our family owns property on Ferncroft Road- As the second generation of family we have witnessed clear cuts and other forest management projects. In my opinion and to the best of my knowledge NONE of the previous projects has had a positive impact on the quality of the forest, health of wildlife, or the overall quality of our environment.

As a lifelong hiker and nature lover, it is obvious that the visual/scenic beauty of the affected areas will be greatly and negatively impacted. We lived through many years of an eye-sore clear cut above the Old Mast Road trail area. This clear cut damaged the views and negatively impacted the greater area surrounding the cut for twenty years (and perhaps still does). Our property, adjacent to the cut, had the resultant new undergrowth that negatively impacted the beauty and diversity of flora and fauna in the area. The proposed vegetation management project does an insufficient job of addressing the environmental impacts and needs to be reworked.

Regarding some of the specifics of the proposal[hellip] The five proposed log landings of up to .75 acres each as well as the stated harvesting machinery would have a negative impact regardless of Scott Hall's noting that spring and early summer would not occur and that on "any given day" activities would be overseen by the management. Further, the relocation of log landings during the project does not provide for public input and gives too much opportunity for commercial logging companies to make decisions solely based on their profiteering.

With regard to the impacts outside of the actual areas being "managed", the noise mitigation, traffic management, and road and dust control is insufficient. Commercial operators not only leave waste in the actual work areas, but they often demonstrate little care for the roads and areas where they operate. In my experiences in the Pacific NW as well as in New Hampshire and Vermont, the trash (including oil cans, plastics, trash from maintenance of tools and vehicles to human waste (cigarette butts, cans, wrappers, etc[hellip]) is often left behind.

To claim that clear cutting results in, "an increase in species diversity" (p. 11) is unsupported, especially if we are to consider native versus invasive species. Please rewrite this section with documentation and evidence to support this claim. Also, "patch cuts" (I appreciate that Scott then refers to them more appropriately as "patch clear cuts") are no less invasive and are extremely detrimental to the forests around them- access to the cutting area for machinery and the adjacent forests are negatively impacted. These two forms of management must be removed from the proposal.

The area next to the Kelley Brook trail should not be touched. The ancient historical value of this watershed/valley/gorge must be left untouched. Any proposed activities in this area needs to be examined more closely- the proposal does not note the unique features of the geology of this area.

In addition to the previous comments, a comprehensive review of previous projects (and evaluation of their effectiveness in maintaining and achieving a healthy environment for the local inhabitants and guests (human, flora, and fauna)) needs to be completed and presented for public comment prior to proposal approval.

Finally, while economic viability is important to the region and logging is an important part of New Hampshire's economy at this time, the selection of these three areas for commercial harvesting in the name of vegetation management is inappropriate. If the plan is truly to reduce fuel loads to prevent wildfires, then create the plan as such. If the plan is for commercial logging, then create the plan as such. BUT, don't create a plan to hide the true intentions and expect the public and stakeholders to accept it.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my comments and concerns.

Sincerely,

Roderick Cooke