

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/30/2023 4:00:00 AM

First name: Midori

Last name: Batten

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Returning the forest to more "early successional habitat" is returning it to the type of habitat that was already recovering from the extensive timber harvests of the early settlers, forests largely decimated by the early 1800s, and not its original state of the 1600s or earlier, prior to settlers having harvested much of the existing timber. That is not the yardstick we should be using to measure the health of the forest or the wildlife. And should certainly not be a justification for further timber harvesting. I'd like the public forest in the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project, along with the entire White Mountain National Forest, "managed" the way New York's Adirondack Forest Preserve is managed - protected and designated Forever Wild. It's a healthy, thriving forest demonstrating how well a forest can "manage" on its own. When revising the USFS proposal for the Sandwich Vegetation Management Project, consider that as an alternative plan - a designation of that public land as protected and Forever Wild. That would be true stewardship.

Suggested modifications to the current proposal:

Take a pro-forestation approach, letting the existing trees grow into mature and old growth. Allowing fallen trees to create snags and their own early successional habitats, naturally - the way they have done for millennia before people arrived assuming that they knew better.

Reintroduce beaver populations to help with water retention and management.

No forest management that includes timber harvests of mature growth or older as it inevitably causes biodiversity to suffer, water quality to suffer, excessive release of carbon, soil disruption, and erosion.

Protect the habitat of the species such as the endangered Northern Long Eared Bat, which is threatened enough from White Nosed Syndrome - the least we can do is support their preferred habitats to give them a fighting change.

Go back to square one on the proposal's 2005 (almost a generation ago!) out-of-date science, and bring it up-to-date with current research and data incorporating the effects and repercussions of the proposed management on the climate and above & below-ground carbon.

And keep the trees standing. Just keep them standing. Work to save them, as they work to save us.

Thank you for the opportunity to commen