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Comments: Hello,

I am a longtime resident of New Hampshire, and have been an avid hiker for all of my adult life. I have long enjoyed the White Mountain National Forest, and take great pride in New Hampshire's vast and uninterrupted stretches of miraculous land. In my hometown of Stratham, NH, I spent my youth riding mountain bikes through the trail system. When significant logging began, somewhere around the 2013-2015 range, I was heartbroken. The trails that once brought so many of us immediate joy and wellness, now was tinged a sense of sorrow. Long stretches of trails had been deforested, turning the complex trail layout into more a bowl of spaghetti, distraught and exposed. I do not want that for my home state of New Hampshire. Many of us do not want that. I, and many other long-term residents of New Hampshire, believe that the White Mountain National Forest is the pride and jewel of our state.

If we allow logging and deforestation to take a place, even at a slowed rate, then in fifty years what will be left? If we allow the destruction of our pride and jewel to take place now, then how will it be treated in fifty years? It is a sad sight, to see that which we care about eradicated just because those making decisions believe it is the simplest solution. If we do nothing now, then in fifty years our children's children will have less land to explore, less to love about New Hampshire. If we do nothing now, then nothing will be done later when another logging proposal surfaces. Continuing with this plan is an affront to the essence of our State's very identity, and it would be a shame for us to simply let it happen. It would be a failure of our duty both as residents and protectors of the great State of New Hampshire.

Just last week I hiked Mt. Whiteface. I am working on my 48 4K's. Located at the southern end of the White Mountain National Forest, the Sandwich Range is enjoyed by a plethora of people. It took many years for the forest to regrow after the deforestation that took place in the 1800's. Any avid nature-lover will be able to tell you this simple fact: an old-growth forest carries a near magisterial beauty, one that generates reverence within any who are lucky enough to step on its path. They carry well-adapted critters, well-developed root systems and mycelial networks, and well-established defenses from invasive species. We do not need to restart the Sandwich Range. It was nearly completely cleared all those years ago, and it is our duty as New Hampshireites to make sure it can grow stronger. Relatedly, in a 2022 Executive Order signed by President Biden, mature forests were given additional protections. To log the Sandwich Range is to defy the spirit of that Executive Order. Even if the letter of the law does not prevent the logging of this forest, it does not mean that we should log it. It should also be noted that the destruction of forests leads to the release of substantial carbon dioxide. Our species has too many times taken action because we can, not because we should. If we have the opportunity to make intelligent decisions that account for the future wellness of the State, as well as that of the residents, then we should. We can say no to the logging.

And what of a No Action Report? Why has there been no report published with this proposal highlighting the effects of keeping the Sandwich Range intact? Why are we not discussing the benefits of doing nothing? What of the Northern Long-eared Bat? This animal is federally-endangered and is presumed to reside in the Sandwich Range. Are we to just plow ahead, push it deeper into the White Mountain National Forest? And when the next proposal comes for our children, and they push it deeper as well because we didn't give them a better role model... What then? We can go a different direction with this. We don't need to sell out the heart of what makes this so great. There are so many perks to the presence of these old-growth forests. There are so many benefits to the citizens and the State. This is worth looking at. It is worth analyzing. Otherwise it will be gone, and our grandchildren will not know what has been lost. We can make decisions now that make a better world tomorrow. Lastly, I'd like to address the fact that the White Mountain National Forest management plan has not been updated since 2005. At that time, climate change and environmental developments were not given a significant platform in the public eye. At that time, Lobbyists were still doing a fantastic job at keeping ecological effects under wraps. The average citizen was not paying attention to climate change. We had too much going on. Well now, we are paying attention, and we have the opportunity to take a stand. At the very least, it is unjust and

reckless to continue with forest management when our management plan lacks the foresight that 18 additional years of climate data can provide. It is irresponsible, and our children's children may suffer due to our ignorance and greed. There are other ways forward. We do not need to further execute the evisceration of our land. Altogether, I truly hope this plan does not go forward. I hope to spend many years enjoying the White Mountain National Forest, free of the soul-biting knowledge that is the willful destruction of our home. I hope to show my children this land, and show them what makes us resilient, brave, and judicious. I hope to pass on the traits that this land has passed on to me. And this cannot be done if our land is being picked at like roadkill by vultures. I believe in the State of New Hampshire, and I believe in the people of New Hampshire to make the right decisions, to trust their knowing.

Thank you