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First name: Katie

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings,

I am 54 years old and have grown up in North Sandwich my whole life and currently live on Bennett Street in N. Sandwich, NH in the shadow of Young Mountain and look directly at Whiteface Mountain. Flat Mountain is on one shoulder, Mt. Israel at the other, so I am literally in the middle of this management "project." For the past year, I, like many of my neighbors and friends here on Bennett St., in Wonalancet, and beyond have been sharing ongoing concerns and voicing strong opposition to the harvesting of 650 acres of trees in our pristine forests (not to mention the acres that will be destroyed as these as they are harvested), along our gorgeous hiking trails, and in the habitat that supports so many species of animals, birds, and flora unique to our area. Last year, one of my neighbors wrote:

"Given the state of the world, the idea of taking DOWN trees [is] counter intuitive to the health of our planet and this state. My family has been trying desperately to protect these woodlots our whole lives," as our backs are literally to the forest where these lands are being threatened by widespread cutting. Many of us are concerned that the end goal is for profit rather than "management" of our forest environment? Multiple neighbors have been approached by independent logging firms over the past two years asking for our timber; some succumbed to the price tag, and others, like me said no. The horrendous conditions left behind by these companies is an atrocity ruining large animal and bird habitats for decades to come. "

I agree with her statement 100%. The words of my neighbors, friends, and others who visit this magical place clearly demonstrate the absolute need for a full stop on this project. It is a dishonorable project. It is a project that is being pushed for the sake of blatant financial gain and in its current form has no positive impact on our environment, whatsoever. It is a project that will ruin our back yards, our joy of hiking in these beautiful woods and mountains, and it will undoubtedly impact the economic stability of local businesses whose livelihood relies on an integrated relationship with these mountains, forests, and trails. My yoga studio and retreat center looks directly at Whiteface and the surrounding mountains. Many of my guests visit precisely to enjoy these views, enjoy the peace and quiet, and go on guided hikes with me in the very woods this "project" aims to destroy. Numerous local venues and lodgings throughout the proposed "project" area receive guests who come to enjoy the views, the trails, and the peace and quiet of this sanctuary. And those guests also support myriad unrelated businesses here; let's not underestimate the negative impact this "project" will have on so many of us who are lucky enough to live and work here in harmony with this landscape.

Most of all, this "project" threatens the quality of life of those who simply live here to enjoy its beauty. Hundreds upon hundreds of families each year come to this area each year to celebrate weddings, family reunions, and to return to quiet camps and homesteads that have been in their families for decades--just to be here in these forests, mountains, and vales. 5-10 years of logging trucks, skidders, horrific noise, and the dreadful zipping noise of each lopped tree that took decades or even hundreds of years to grow... it makes my heart sore just thinking about it. And when it's over, the scars this "project" will leave behind will take hundreds of years to diminish. We and our children and children's children will be long past by the time any new forest will rise up enough to reclaim the skidder's demolition. Once chopped, it is irrevocable. To call it a "project" completely undermines what is truly on the docket here. It is a proposed vast destruction of a place we all hold dear, sacred, and vital to our wellbeing.

"I speak for the trees, seeing as they cannot. If we continue to take down trees over and over, pretty soon, we will lose the magic of this amazing place."

Respectfully submitted,

Katie O'Connell
Whiteface Intervale
North Sandwich, NH