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Comments: I write in support of the project, prompted by an article appearing currently on nhpr.org regarding those who are in active opposition. Those referenced base their opposition on traditional objections which are largely aesthetic, but their passion is now compounded by valid and legitimately heightened concerns about climate change. Unfortunately, they do so without considering the science and what for me is relatively new information which is increasingly available and vitally important to the discussion.

My views are my own and I do not represent any organization. I will disclose that I have been a Board Member of SPNHF (2 terms plus 2 years as Treasurer), NHTOA (2 terms), and NHPR (4 terms), among others. I write instead as the owner of over 900 acres which are actively and professionally managed by a private forester, subject to a detailed strategic forest management plan most recently updated in 2022. I have for over 50 years served my community as the owner of a small real estate brokerage company, and in that capacity have encouraged countless landowners to enrich their ownership experience by pursuing professional forest management, and to care for their lands while looking to the future. I encourage people not to fracture ownership for the exploitation of the land, but to maintain parcels large enough to be enjoyed and managed, without treating our most precious resources, including our land, as commodities. I believe in this, and I practice it.

I also believe in the extraordinarily important role our forest resource plays in combating climate change through the sequestration of carbon, and the release of oxygen. Unfortunately, many of those who oppose forest management, like that practiced by the Forest Service in the WMNF and as proposed for this project, are behind in the science on this subject, including the importance of harvesting mature forests and allowing and encouraging new growth for its more effective rates of sequestration. I recognize that where there is opinion there is controversy, and controversy can only be settled by fact if those engaged can listen and negotiate. While maintaining demonstration parcels of old growth forest create opportunities for study and enjoyment (until they deteriorate from natural decay and are lost altogether), they cannot be the goal of beneficial forest use and management, including its economic role in land preservation.

I happened upon a display by the Fairbanks Museum (of natural science and history) in St. Johnsbury, VT while sharing its rich displays with my grandson this summer. To enhance information about an addition the Museum is building with Mass Timber (Cross Laminated Timber), a detailed display was created for the Museum to reveal the environmental and economic benefits of our forests. Without attempting to share the entire display here, I want to share the following as highlighted in the Museum's independently commissioned and thoughtful display:

1. To grow a pound of wood, a tree consumes about 1.47 pounds of CO₂, and releases 1.07 pounds of oxygen. A single tree can absorb CO₂ at a rate of 48 pounds per year.
2. Young trees absorb carbon rapidly. Mature trees absorb carbon slowly. To combat climate change effectively, trees should be harvested at maturity when carbon content is at its peak. Harvesting trees locks CO₂ into the timber, and keeps it there as it is transformed into products and buildings.
3. On average, North American wood producers use 98% of every tree brought to a mill for processing. Mining annually extracts 67.3 billion tons of materials (metals, nonmetals, coal etc.). Of that amount, 30 billion tons are waste. The cost of transportation of mining materials is generally greater than 50% of a mine's total operating cost. Not so with wood products.
4. Wood products make up 47% of all industrial raw materials manufactured in the US, yet consume only 4% of the total energy needed to manufacture all industrial materials.
5. Timber is renewable, while other resources are depleting and becoming more difficult, more costly, and require more energy to extract and process. Due to sustainable forest management, today's forest growth exceeds harvest by 40%. The average standing volume of wood in the US is 50% greater than it was in 1952.
6. Decaying trees release carbon, which is reabsorbed into new trees if new growth is fostered.
7. In the US, forests and forest products, which lock in carbon, store enough each year to offset approximately 10% of the nation's CO₂ emissions. Careful harvesting yields a healthier forest, less carbon release and more

carbon capture.

8. Turning trees into products and buildings locks in carbon. Using wood substitutes could save 14 - 31% of global CO₂ emissions and 12-19% of fossil fuel consumption. Concrete uses 24 times more energy than wood to make, and steel 5 times more energy than wood. Yet, while wood products have negative net CO₂ emissions, concrete is the 3rd largest source of greenhouse gases.

9. Cutting trees sustainably under good management is key to forest restoration efforts. It encourages regeneration and maintains forest health and vigor.

It would be a callous mistake, and a strike against efforts to fight climate change, to turn away from well-conceived management plans. These plans may initially have been intended to focus primarily on the forest, but now focus even more responsibly on what is best for the planet. The forest resource is no longer something to be prioritized for human satisfaction, or for the economy, but for our satisfaction, our economy, and our survival.