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Comments: PUBLIC COMMENT FROM RICHARD KNOX I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the US Forest Service's proposed forest management and commercial logging project for the White Mountain National Forest. I offer it after attending the Forest Service's public presentations and discussion sessions at the Sandwich Town Hall and its Wonalancet field trip, as well as reading many of the previously posted public comments and participating in discussions with family members, friends, neighbors and interested parties. This project has sparked remarkable public engagement. That speaks volumes about the deep concern the wider community has for this precious natural resource and the close attention citizens have paid to the Forest Service's proposal. I urge the Forest Service and USDA to look beyond specific comments voiced in meetings and written comments and to weigh the extraordinary volume of public expressions of concern in making a final determination on how to proceed. As the public discussion shows, the proposal stretches beyond forest management to raise complex matters of soil ecology and hydrology; wildlife habitat; preservation of recreational integrity; and, certainly not least, emerging concern about climate change. I have concluded that the Forest Service should pause implementation of the proposal to reconsider its purpose, scope and justification. Many have noted that the plan dates back to 2005. Since then there have been profound changes in both science and public concern about the best way to preserve federally protected forests. Forest Service personnel have acknowledged as much in their presentations. For instance, at the September 11 Sandwich Town Hall presentation, one participant noted the absence of consideration of the impact the proposal may have on carbon sequestration and climate change. "I don't disagree with you at all," District Ranger Innes responded. He added that he has asked for permission to include a carbon in/carbon out model as part of the exercise, "but I haven't gotten it." Further consideration should address not only the current elements of the proposal but its widely noted omissions. In addition to climate change those omissions include: [mdash] Lack of consideration of Executive Order 14072, which prioritizes the preservation and protection of old-growth and mature forests on federally owned lands; [mdash] Insufficient attention to recreational integrity, include setbacks of forest cuts from hiking trails beyond the 33' to 66' buffer zones referenced by Forest Service personnel; [mdash] More thorough-going and publicly accountable consideration of environmental impact; and [mdash] More presentation and analysis of mandated reasonable alternatives to the proposal. A final comment on Executive Order 14072: District Ranger Innes has commented that the Forest Service does not yet have detailed guidance from USDA on how to implement the President's order. However, in view of the Forest Service's expectation that guidance should be forthcoming soon, it would be wise to pause the project while waiting for it. Proceeding without taking that into account would cause irretrievable damage. As I referenced in a separate email a moment ago, here is a copy of what I emailed to you yesterday on the advice of Gary in the Forest Service's Conway station. If it didn't land in your inbox, I wonder if it's still possible for you to include it in the public comment file. Would it be possible for you to confirm receipt of this email and let me know if my comment can be registered?