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First name: Maura

Last name: King

Organization: Wonalancet Preservation Association

Title: President

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

We are writing to you as representatives of the Wonalancet Preservation Association of Tamworth, NH, an association of property owners neighboring the Sandwich Range, within the White Mountain National Forest. Our association was founded in 1973 with the mission of protecting the natural beauty of our area from commercial development and degradation of the environment. Our part of the White Mountain National Forest has been protected and managed by the Forest Service for over one hundred years. It contains the southernmost ridge of the White Mountains, and includes some of New Hampshire's most iconic scenery, including stands of mature trees with a very popular network of hiking and skiing trails.

We are writing to express our strong support for your proposed amendment of "all land management plans for units of the National Forest System to include consistent direction to conserve and steward existing and recruit future old-growth forest conditions and to monitor their condition across planning areas of NFS." We believe this management plan amendment is most urgently needed because of the present crisis of carbon build-up in earth's atmosphere and the potential of older forests to perform crucial carbon capture, a vital rescue process for the salvation of all life on earth. It would be, of course, only one part of what is needed to reduce carbon build up and all of its climate change consequences. But this forest management rule change can provide a wonderful tool for advancing against disaster. And at the same time, it can benefit all Americans who love to explore their wild lands.

We know that in NH there is not a vast amount of old growth forest, because early settlers and private loggers ravaged the virgin timber here in the early years of our young country. But we do have many stands of mature forest, including in our Sandwich Range. We fervently believe that tending our National Forests now so they can mature further and be recruited to future old-growth forest conditions will make them even more valuable to our planet's future than they are today.

This is a matter of urgent concern to our Wonalancet community, because the Forest Service is currently moving forward with the " Sandwich Vegetation Management Plan" #57392, which calls for logging on many acres of mature forests in the WMNF. We as resident landowners, are active stewards of this forest: many of us have created conservation easements to protect the woods, and we actively care for the local hiking and ski trails. We oppose the SVMP#57392 as currently drafted, and have urged the FS to amend the Plan so that it includes conserving and stewarding our existing mature forests---so they can be "recruited " for future old-growth forest, just as your proposed rule anticipates.

Please adopt this rule change and add to it provision for setting aside great tracts of National Forest lands to be free of any logging so as to allow them to become precincts of mature trees, the most effective carbon capturers nature can produce.

Thank you for weighing the benefits of this rule change, and we hope you can see the great sense of it for all of us on earth.

Respectfully yours,

The Wonalancet Preservation Association Board

Maura King, President

Sally Mann

Doug McVicar

Ruth Moscovitch

John Waite

Mary Breasted Smyth

Pat Read

Jacalyn Thompson