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Comments: I am absolutely opposed to the Sandwich Vegetation Project. I attended public meetings and read the project proposal. First off, I did not at anytime hear any compelling reasons for this project to go forward. And there are many reasons why it should not: recent research has shown that this kind intrusion into a forest area of moderate age causes more harm than good - it would be best to leave the acreage alone to grow as it will and continue to absorb and process carbon. It has been stated that most of the trees harvested will become firewood - double jeopardy on the carbon issue.

It has been proposed that in order to facilitate the project including the necessary movement of the heavy equipment involved, roadbeds that have not been navigable for 50 years or more will be "re-opened". This will create erosion and drainage problems and will release additional sequestered carbon from the forest floor.

Again, there is no compelling reason for this project to proceed. The proposal is based on forest management strategies that were put into play prior to 2005 - they are long out of date. This project should not even be considered until forest managements policies are brought in line with the current research. This reassessment is in process across the country and will take into account climate change.

When I inquired if an environmental impact study had been completed on the project - the reply I received was misleading: Yes, of course. Well not an official Environmental Impact Study, but we've looked into all those things. The proposal is riddled with qualifiers such as "we don't foresee any issues", "it doesn't seem likely that", "we don't anticipate..." etc. etc. It would seem that the entire proposal was generated in house and has not undergone a peer review.

The Sandwich Range is a highly valued area for recreational activities, primarily hiking. Yet two of the areas concerned will be accessed and developed around two hiking trails: the Liberty Trail up Mt. Chocorua and The Old Mast Rd in Wonalancet Intervale both of them heavily used.

The project cannot avoid being deeply intrusive to the residents of the area, the animal populations, and the very terrain itself.

I am a descendant of Frank Bolles whose love for the Sandwich Range area has been well-documented. His daughter Evelyn Bolles Phenix gifted 200 plus acres to the Nature Conservancy to be maintained as a wildlife preserve. That land borders on the southern slopes of the Sandwich Range. I believe they both would be strongly opposed to the Sandwich Range Vegetation proposal.

As I am, too.

The Sandwich Range Vegetation Project should not proceed at this time. There is no tenable or justifiable reason for it to go forward now, or ever.

thank you for your attention in this matter.

Peter Whipple