

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/14/2025 10:41:11 AM

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Comments: Although I do not live in New Hampshire, as a life-long New Englander, the White Mountains have been an important place for me in many ways. That landscape, including the area proposed in this project, are one of the few places to find solitude in one of the most densely populated parts of the country.

More than 90% of the logging proposed in the Lost River IRP is planned to take place in Inventoried Roadless Areas, which provide the benefits of Wilderness without the designation. In the east we already have so little public land as compared with the western half of the country. As for Wilderness and land with wilderness characteristics, it is few and far between. We must conserve what remains of our old forest, or forests on their way to reaching a more wilderness-like quality. Inventoried Roadless Areas are logically the first places to start by permanently protecting them. This project will degrade those areas and remove the potential for full Wilderness protection.

Countless plant and wildlife species rely on undisturbed areas like the Lost River region, including the federally Endangered Northern Long-Eared Bat and threatened Canada Lynx. Projects like the Lost River IRP actively destroy habitat and fragment populations of wildlife already facing numerous other threats.

As a nation, very little of our forest products come from public lands. In fact, much of the wood harvested in the United States gets sent abroad. Why then should we harvest a forest with the qualities seen in the Lost River, where we have one of the few remaining tracts in New England that could qualify as Wilderness?