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Comments: Please accept these comments on the proposed Peabody West Integrated Resource Project #55659.
Comments are with reference to the updated scoping newsletter dated March 29, 2021.

(p. 3) "This project is needed to provide a sustainable range of quality recreation opportunities consistent with forest plan direction." Quality recreation opportunities need to include multiple use trails that are graded and hardened to accommodate use by people of all abilities, not just hikers and mountain bikers that are athletically inclined.

(p. 11) "About 9 miles of existing and proposed National Forest System Roads (system roads) would be reconstructed, and about 3 miles of unauthorized road in the project area would be added to the Forest Service road system. About 0.6 mile of new road are proposed for construction". Reference to Figure 3 identifies roads or portions of roads to be reconstructed including FR 72 (Culhane Brook), FR 263 (Libby South), FR 2318 (currently unauthorized), and FR 264 (Jacknife). These road reconstructions, constructions, and improvements should be made such that a non-motorized multiuse trail is available that traverses the project area from the Great Gulf Trail in the south, along FR 72 and FR 263, to the northern border of the project area (to be extended by others into the Town of Gorham).

This multiple use corridor needs to be graded, hardened, sufficiently wide to accommodate groomers and two-way pedestrian use, and suitable for use by people of all abilities including families with children, seniors, and persons that require mobility aids.

Such a multiuse trail in this vicinity has been proposed and discussed over the last two or three decades (if not longer). It not only would provide alternative recreational use for people visiting and staying at Dolly Copp Campground, but also day use by WMNF visitors looking for casual, family-friendly, close-to-nature experiences. Multiple use and easy-access trails are not easily found and rearely present on the WMNF, and the USFS should honor their responsibility to "provide a sustainable range of quality recreation opportunities".

The developed facilities of Dolly Copp Campground attract visitors of all ages and abilities who should be able to enjoy this area even if they are not capable of a strenuous hike up Mt. Madison or without having to drive a vehicle to Triple Falls or Pinkham Notch.

Furthermore, connectivity to current and planned recreation paths to the north (Gorham and Randolph) - and conceivably a connection to the multiple use Presidential Range Rail Trail - cannot be realized if the USFS does not provide the amenity on their land. An eventual extension southward to Great Glen Outdoor Center and the AMC Pinkham Notch Visitor Center may be a distant goal, but cannot be achieved without a corridor through this project area.

Please include plans for a multiple use corridor from the Great Gulf Trail to Gorham using Forest System Roads that are being reconstructed as part of the Peabody West Integrated Resource Project.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.