

Northern Appalachian Restoration Project
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June 28, 2001

To The Friends of the Sandwich Range:

The Northern Appalachian Restoration Project wholeheartedly supports your proposed Wilderness extensions in the Sandwich Range:

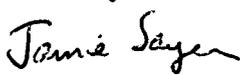
- 1) You have followed the most important tenets of Conservation Biology in your proposal. By increasing the size of the Wilderness area, you significantly improve the chances that it will more effectively protect native biological diversity. Larger reserves protect ecosystem integrity better than smaller reserves.
- 2) Fragmentation of habitat is significantly reduced. Fragmentation of habitat isolates small populations of species and jeopardizes gene exchange between such populations. Fragmentation dooms the chances of larger species and wide-ranging species. Fragmentation also increases a small reserve's vulnerability to stand destroying natural disturbance. Your proposal assures that such rare, but inevitable, events—wind and ice storms, for example—will enhance landscape diversity rather than flatten the entire stand.
- 3) Edge Effect is minimized. Your proposal has substantially increased the amount of interior forest, thereby reducing the amount of forest vulnerable to invasion by weedy species. Interior dwelling species, especially many declining species of migratory birds will thank you.
- 4) Ecological reserves: New Hampshire is developing a statewide network of ecological reserves, and Wilderness areas in the WMNF, whether or not they are formally enrolled in the state reserve system, will play a vital role in protecting, preserving and restoring native biological diversity and ecosystem integrity. Your proposed enlargement of the existing Sandwich Range Wilderness area is a major contribution to the welfare of the state's and Northern Appalachian region's biological integrity.
- 5) Local Grassroots participatory democracy: Opponents of Wilderness (and wilderness) always claim that wilderness is bad for local economies and that local citizens oppose further additions to Wilderness designation. Your organization's sustained dedication to protecting the integrity of the Sandwich Range demonstrates quite the opposite, namely, that citizens in this beautiful region care deeply about the welfare of species other than humans, and, in the process, that they care deeply

about the welfare of humans, both living and unborn. Your concern for the welfare for others beautifully expresses the highest values of the dominant political and religious traditions of our society, and stand in stark contrast to prevailing anti-social special interests.

- 6) Public subsidies on timber undermines the free market: Timber coming off public lands, especially when subsidized by the taxpayer in “below cost timber sales” undercuts the price a small private landowner can get for her timber. This can have the harmful effect of forcing caring landowners to cut their lands unsustainably in order to make ends meet.
- 7) Wilderness teaches us our most important lessons: Wild, natural ecosystems teach us more about our home than any other potential instructor (such as books, nature movies, industrial forest plantations, clearcuts, herbicided forests, suburban lawns, or shopping malls). Direct experience is the greatest teacher, and if we are to survive as a culture and a species, we must learn to read the mountains of home, both for our spiritual and cultural welfare, and for our ability to develop human institutions—including a locally-controlled, value-added, sustainable, low-impact timber economy. In voluntarily renouncing our dubious right to exploit all of Nature, we demonstrate a maturity and generosity to others that is the foundation of healthy culture. We discover true freedom when we abide by appropriate limits, especially ecological and physical limits. In the long run, our current democracy, dominated by corporate cash, must evolve to local, watershed-based democracy that gives genuine standing to the non-human species that sustain our lives. When we develop a biological democracy that respects the rights of humans and non-humans and future generations of all species, then we’ll have healthy communities and viable, vibrant, enduring, evolving democracy. Wilderness protection is an essential step in respecting and protecting the rights and needs of others as well as teaching us to acknowledge and abide by very real, non-negotiable, physical and ecological limits.

Thank you for your vision, imagination, persistence, wisdom, and generosity. If we have a future as a culture, it will be because local inhabitants cared enough to make the dream a reality. The Friends of the Sandwich Range are an inspiration, and we sincerely hope that the White Mountain National Forest adopts your proposal *as written*. Please contact me if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jamie Sayen

Northern Appalachian Restoration Project