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## Environmentalists oppose more plans to log in White Mountains

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Associated Press

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CONCORD, N.H. - Hours before President Bush left office, three environmental groups filed an appeal in hopes of halting plans to log in a protected area of the White Mountain National Forest.

The Center for Biological Diversity and the Vermont and New Hampshire chapters of the Sierra Club oppose the U.S. Forest Service's plans to rebuild roads and cut trees on protected land between the Sandwich Range Wilderness and the Kancamagus National Scenic Byway. This logging and road-building plan, known as the Kanc 7 Project, includes logging, maintenance to existing roads, trail reconstruction and fixing camp sites. According to public documents outlining the project, the U.S. Forest Service has determined it will have no significant affect on the quality of the environment and is within the guidelines set by the forest plan.

But these groups disagree.

The Center for Biological Diversity has said some of the proposed 80 acres of clear-cutting will be visible from the Kancamagus Highway, a popular scenic drive along the Swift River.

In his final days in office, President Clinton created the "roadless rule," which protects large swaths of

wilderness across the country by restricting road building, mining and logging. Under the rule, the protected land is solely reserved for public recreation.

The Bush administration had a different interpretation - which drew criticism from conservationists - that allowed logging and mining in some roadless areas. Dissenting court decisions on using the land from federal court have confused the matter further.

President Obama has said he supports the roadless rule, so the groups are calling on him and Congress to ensure it is fully implemented. The groups said in a statement released Wednesday, they hope this will be their the last appeal of a logging project in a roadless area.

The groups had already appealed plans last month to log in the Kilkenny roadless area near Stark.