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White Mountain loggers win in court

By PAULA TRACY

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A federal appeals court in Boston has denied the Sierra Club's request for a preliminary injunction to halt logging in White Mountain National Forest.

"It's good to see that in Boston they recognize that we do know what is best for our forests," said Sean Sullivan, communications manager for the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association. "It recognizes that the management plan has been well thought out."

The Sierra Club, Wilderness Society and Center for Biological Diversity (formerly Forest Watch) appealed the first two timber sales allowed under the new forest plan.

The projects, in Warren and Jackson, began last week and involve removing 1,800 truckloads of timber from the forest. Yesterday's ruling means the logging won't be halted; the appeal is being expedited in the First Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston. Oral arguments will likely begin in November, a lawyer for the Sierra Club said.

The three conservation groups have argued that the environmental impacts from the timber sales were not reviewed adequately and the sales violate federal law. The lower court ruled against them and refused a restraining order, which is now being appealed.

Catherine Corkery, chapter director of the New Hampshire Sierra Club, said the two logging projects include roadless areas that have been otherwise protected from logging.

"This case will set national precedent as to whether roadless areas will continue to be protected," she said.

She added: "The roadless areas in question house regionally unique habitat for plants and wildlife in the Whites."

Will Abbott, who directs policy for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, said the time to have the discussion was during the years when the forest plan was hashed out by the public and a wide range of user groups. The only entity that can eliminate logging from the White Mountain National Forest now is Congress, he said.

For almost a century, logging on the White Mountains has been a part of the state's \$2.5 billion timber industry, New Hampshire's third largest manufacturing industry. Ken Desmarais of the Division of Forest and Lands said about 10 percent of the timber harvest has been on portions of the 800,000-acre forest.

Executive Councilor Ray Burton of Bath, whose district includes all of the national forest, said the most important thing people can do to save logging jobs is to vote Nov. 4 and send a message to Congress that "New Hampshire people believe in harvesting trees."

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What many people dont realise is the "National Forest" system was not set up for recreation or conservation purposes. It was designed to protect and develop a commercial resource. The recreatoinal uses are a great benefit but job one is still the growth of timber.

Congress and the Department of Agriculture, have fine tuned this mission over the decades but these tracts are still not part of the network of "National Parks."

- **Ken S, Merrimack NH**

Also, we must think about the rampaging wheat farmers. These people will stop at nothing to lay waste to acres of wheat that should be left standing in the fields to be harmlessly photographed.

Admittedly, a shaft of wheat is much smaller than a tree, but it's the principal of the thing. Let nothing be disturbed!

Frank

- **Frank Leslie, Palm Bay FL**

I don't know much about logging, but 1,800 truck loads seems like quite a bit of lumber. The two locations that are being logged are about 30 minutes away from me in opposite directions, so this doesn't personally affect me. I just don't like hearing about logging even if the forest will grow back, potentially healthier.

- **Jon, Lincoln**

Unfortunately "Yesterday's ruling means the logging won't be halted; the appeal is being expedited in the First Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston. Oral arguments will likely begin in November"

That means the forest industry must waste valuable time and money defending something that was already approved as part of the PLAN to manage the WMNF.

- **Bob D., Nashua**

Sorry Sierra Club! HaHaHaHaHa.

- **Mike Bodruk, Manchester**

Finally, sanity prevails!

- **Brian, Farmington**

The title to the article is extremely misleading. It makes it sound like a small group of roughnecks out to to destroy the forest won the right to continue doing so. It ought to read "Forest products industry wins in court" The industry is the second largest employer in the state and is comprised of many different players encompassing not only logging companies but sawmills, veneer mills, biomass energy plants etc... When the environmental movement wins these cases a myriad of businesses and their employees, throughout the the state, suffer. In these trying economic times this is not something that should be allowed to happen when the situation is entirely preventable.

- **stuart bevin, meriden, nh**

Hey Ms. Corkey, a few questions for you...

-How is it that there are already logging roads built in the "roadless" areas?

-How many times have these areas been cut previously?

- Did the trees grow back?

- So is it possible for an area to turn into "pristine" forest after it has been logged?

-Where was the Sierra Club when the plan was being developed (by groups including the AMC and NHTOA)

- **Paul, Gorham**

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