

**From:** [Karlene Schwartz](#)  
**To:** [DNCR: Mt Washington Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Balance Conservation and Visitation in Master Plan  
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Dear Commissioners, Mount Washington Commission,

The Mount Washington Summit Master Plan is an opportunity to plan for the future of this unique and cherished place. The draft Master Plan outlines a variety of potentially competing goals, such as capital improvements, protecting sensitive vegetation, enhancing visitor services, and furthering weather and science work conducted at the summit. Overall, I urge the Commission to plan for activities that uphold Mt. Washington's critical ecological role in the northeastern alpine zone and its iconic place in the recreational and scientific fabric of our region.

The Commission should carefully consider the carrying capacity of the summit and plan for facilities that accommodate an appropriate number of visitors. Allowing for or encouraging a significant growth in the number of visitors would place an undue burden on the unique alpine ecology of this site, where sensitive plant species have already been significantly impacted by heavy use.

The Commission must plan for improving the physical accessibility of summit facilities and the visitor experience should be enhanced for all persons when considering any user fee proposals for future access.

The summit improvements should be informed by a comprehensive set of environmental studies that must be completed to understand potential impacts. A summit assessment should incorporate these environmental studies, to avoid, minimize and mitigate any potential impacts on Mt Washington's alpine ecology.

The Master Plan must seek to manage a sustainable footprint on Mount Washington that includes achieving net zero emissions and minimizing waste, noise and light pollution, and scenic impacts of current and future operations.

Finally, the Master Plan outlines additional studies, site plans, and operational plans that will need to be developed. These plans and their implementation should be done in close coordination with the United States Forest Service and other stakeholders to ensure the greatest degree of planning across a larger, integrated landscape.

I suggest that only electric vehicles, including rental vehicles, be allowed to drive on the road to the peak. An enhanced visitor center at the base of Mt. W., with, for example, films about the mammals, birds, wildflowers, geology, history, impact of climate change might substitute for an actual journey to the peak.

Regards,  
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