

From: [David Engelhardt](#)
To: [DNCR: Mt Washington Comments](#)
Subject: Balance Conservation and Visitation in Master Plan
Date: Friday, August 12, 2022 10:46:23 AM

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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.

It has been decades that I led young summer camp hikers from Mt. Madison over Mt. Washington and to the Lakes of the Clouds Hut. I do remember hiking through clouds with visibility less than 6 feet. I do believe there should be well marked pathways (possibly using electronics) for hikers, which can help prevent wandering off the beaten path (and damaging fragile alpine zones of life) and safeguarding hikers in poor weather.

Regards,
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