

**From:** [Angers, Shelly](#)  
**To:** [Stewart, Sarah](#); [Hamilton, Shawn](#); [Housman, Michael](#)  
**Subject:** Conway Daily Sun: Coos board approves Cog plan for Waumbek Station  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 21, 2022 11:31:03 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)  
[image003.png](#)

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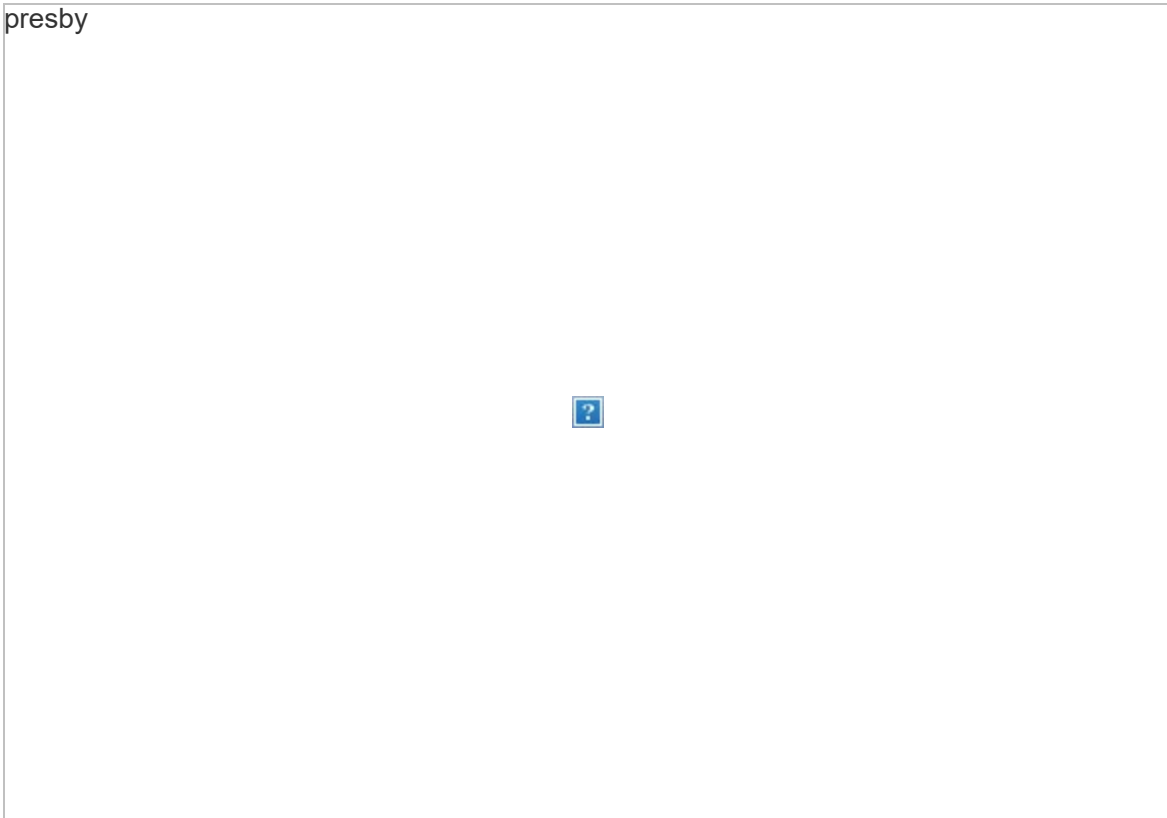
[https://www.conwaydailysun.com/business/local/coos-board-approves-cog-plan-for-waumbek-station/article\\_1678afa8-382e-11ed-8742-dbab18d787f1.html](https://www.conwaydailysun.com/business/local/coos-board-approves-cog-plan-for-waumbek-station/article_1678afa8-382e-11ed-8742-dbab18d787f1.html)

# Coos board approves Cog plan for Waumbek Station

- [Barbara Tetreault](#)
- Sep 20, 2022 Updated 18 hrs ago

1 of 3

presby



Mount Washington Cog Railway owner Wayne Presby (seated) listens while his attorney Earl Duval explains his application for a variance to the Coos County Zoning Board last week. (BARBARA TETREAUULT PHOTO)

waumbek rendering



A rendering shows how the Cog Railway plans to improve Waumbek Station. (COURTESY RENDERING)



The Cog Railway posted this photo of work at Waumbek Station on its Facebook page on Aug. 19. (FACEBOOK PHOTO)

LANCASTER — The Coos County Zoning Board of Adjustment at its last meeting approved a variance allowing the Mount Washington Railway Co. to increase the width of the train platform at its Waumbek Station.

Representing the Cog at the Aug. 30 meeting, attorney Earl Duval explained that the Cog wants to expand the platform and build a new deck at Waumbek. The station is at about 4,000 feet elevation and is the stopping point for passengers during the winter months and when the weather is too bad to go to the summit.

Duval noted the Coos County Planning Board last fall gave site plan approval to the project, including expanding the length of the platform to 120 feet.

But the planning board said the Cog would have to get a variance from the zoning board to expand the width of the platform from 18 to 28 feet because the platform would then not meet the required 25-foot setback from the lot line.

In the Cog's application, owner Wayne Presby wrote that the platforms used at Waumbek are very small and passengers end up walking on and standing on rocky and sometimes muddy and most often snow- and ice-covered mountain.

"The new platform will be free of ice and snow and will provide guests with a safe venue to disembark and enjoy Waumbek," he wrote.

The application noted the passengers disembark for 25 minutes, and there are hot refreshments, warming huts, a fire pit and stunning views for their enjoyment. Some choose to cross-county ski or snowshoe back to the base.

Reviewing the criteria, Duval said the project would not violate the spirit of the ordinance or be harmful to the public. Instead, he argued it would make the platform safer.

Duval said the only abutter is the White Mountain National Forest and he outlined the project to two White Mountain National Forest officials and they said they had no problems with it. He said he included that in the application.

Jon Swan of Whitefield asked if the Forest Service had provided the board with a written statement that they do not oppose it. Duval said they had not but also noted that no one from the Forest Service was at the meeting to oppose it. Coos County Administrator Jennifer Fish confirmed a notice of the hearing was sent to the Forest Service.

Duval argued the project met the criteria for a variance — the general public would benefit from it; the platform is consistent with present use of the area; and it will generate additional property taxes for the county.

Swan said the project did not meet the criteria. He said denying the variance would

not create a hardship for the applicant, noting the Cog is taking people up and down the mountain safely. He said it sounds like more of a want than a necessity.

Swan said the Cog has announced plans to offer overnight accommodations on top of the mountain with its Lizzie's Station and pointed out there is considerable opposition to the plan and to further impacts to the mountain.

Abby Evanhow of Gorham urged the board to reject the request. She noted the new platform would benefit the Cog's passengers and not the general public.

She said the planning board had to ask the Cog to come before them to review the lean-tos after they were already built. She said she concurs with others who believe granting the variance "can lead to a slippery slope of unintended precedences."

Board member Roland Theberge moved that the request be tabled to allow the board to view the Waumbek Station. One board member said he had never ridden on the Cog Railway.

Presby asked that the board to move as quickly as possible if it wants to view the site. After viewing the site, he said the board will have to schedule and advertise another meeting.

Presby said it starts getting cold at 4,000 feet now and the Cog would like to finish the project before winter.

Board member Mark Evans said he felt the zoning board had all the information it needed and moved to approve the variance. Theberge voted in favor, while Vice Chair Scott DeBlois voted against. Two members were absent.