

To the Mt. Washington Commission,

the Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program [Report](#) appears to be an excellent guide for the Commission. The Harvard group recommended that the Commission *“engage a facilitator to guide conversation regarding unresolved major questions including developing a shared vision for the summit... Outside facilitators bring a skillset to consensus building that is unlikely to be replicated by the Commission attempting to overcome these obstacles alone.”* It would be helpful if this facilitator were present at all Commission meetings. Sections of this letter in italics are from the HNMCP report.

It was unfortunate that Senator Bradley did not inform the members of public who made the effort to attend the Commission’s March 25th 2022 meeting that their comments would be accepted at the end of the meeting. (*“Although regular Commission meetings are open to the public, we heard and observed that broader public participation in the meetings remains limited.”*) This might have encouraged those who left before the end of the meeting to stick it out and say things that some of the members of the commission appeared afraid to say (*“members do not always feel comfortable speaking and instead withhold their views.”*) It would also have removed the bystander guilt of those of us who remained silent while some members of the Commission talked about what they wanted to do to the Mountain, and no one spoke for the Mountain; for restoring its ecology, integrity, intactness, flora, fauna, silence, wildness.

The Committee needs to solicit public input during the Master Planning process and on its Draft Master Plan. (*“... public participation should be an essential ingredient in master planning.”*) The public needs to be able to submit comments on-line and the committee should host a public input meeting in each county. (*Ideas included public hearings across the state and requests for comments on the Commission’s website.”*) Public input might resolve the lack of a “common vision” for the Mountain within the Commission. (*“Some interviewees noted that public attitudes could be critical in resolving important questions such as how to prioritize uses of the summit and whether to institute a carrying capacity.”*) *“No matter how good an agreement is by some standards, if it was reached by a process that was not regarded as fair, open, inclusive, accountable, or otherwise legitimate, it is unlikely to receive support.”*

There was no discussion of global warming and the sixth great extinction. (*“...we have found that short-term issues occupy individual Commission members’ attention.”*) There were no questions from the Commission after Georgia Murray’s presentation on climate data. The Mt. Washington Commission, in developing a master plan that assumes and promotes the continued use of the Cog Railway, Auto Road and the summit buildings, appears to be showing an unwillingness to incorporate the science of climate change into the Master Plan. A Master Plan that fails to commit to at least a 50% reduction in the carbon footprint of Mt. Washington State Park by 2030 will fail as a guiding document. The Cog and Auto Road should also commit to this carbon reduction goal.

The [Summary of Comments](#) states: **“The alpine environment of the Summit and surrounding landscape is restored, protected, and preserved.”** To accomplish this the Master Plan needs to

consider the phase-out and eventual removal of the summit buildings, with the exception of the Tip-Top house and a place for the observatory. Severe reduction of the septic system needs to be considered. The fragile alpine environment is no place for disposal of [sewage on the ground](#), above the alpine research area. Since the sewage is [“high strength wastewater”](#), the causes of this need to be remedied. To understand the degree to which the existing infrastructure and visitors are degrading the Summit, the Commission needs a thorough, independent environmental and climate assessment for the State Park complex, Cog, Auto Road and entire Mountain. This document must provide very concrete definitions/guidelines of what constitutes overuse/damage and what the responses to overuse/damage will be. The Commission should consider if DNCR’s insistence on convenience and consumer products is at odds not only with protecting the fragile alpine environment of the summit, but with visitors’ **experiencing it.**

Chair Bradley should consider limiting Wayne Presby’s and Phil Bryce/DNCR’s domination of discussions. (*“We heard that... certain members hold more sway on the Commission than others.”*) The Commission should *“structure deliberations to actively solicit input from each participant”* and enable a *“safe space to start having conversations.”*

Wayne Presby and Howie Wemyss should be encouraged to find uses for the Cog and the Auto Road that do not contribute to the environmental degradation of the mountain and to the climate emergency. Decreasing or eliminating motorized use of the Cog and Auto Road could solve the summit infrastructure capacity issues.



[Summit around 1860](#)



[Summit in 2013](#)

<https://www.nhstateparks.org/getmedia/0feb2d36-a36e-48c2-8e43-cebb565f8d75/HNMCP-MWC-Final-Report.pdf>

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March 28 2022

