WMNF, Town of Easton, and Northern Pass

(Addendum, including Recommendation)

Presented to Supervisor Tom Wagner, WMNF

By Easton Conservation Commission

Campton, NH

November 4, 2013

Key Findings Since 6/10/13 Meeting Between WMNF and ECC

- Despite assurances since July, Northern Pass (NP) has not met with ECC, nor answered any of 26 due-diligence questions posed by ECC
- Confirmed sighting of Canada Lynx tracks in the vicinity of Kinsman Pond by NH Fish and Game in Spring 2013, potential trigger of the Endangered Species Act, as amended, and US Federal interagency agreements
- NH Audubon's EIS scoping comments warn of broad-based impacts of NP, and specific threats to migratory bird species on the western slope of Kinsman Mountain and in the Bog Pond area
- NP's new application, including plans for an Easton helipad and secondary "safety" landing spots within WMNF, threatening wildlife through loss of critical habitat and noise
- Lack of public access to ROW in Easton, and rough terrain, will require helicopter delivery of materials in many parts, resulting in as yet undisclosed noise, soils, wildlife, and safety impacts
- ECC's inventory of High Value Vantage Points, supported by AMC's recent visual analysis (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIBwL25wqhE), indicates 20+ key views from public places, not just the two identified by NP
- NP's announced plans to bury the line in North Country validates viability of burying around Easton and WMNF – the roughest and highest valued natural terrain along the entire route
- Completion of landmark, four-town, Cooley Jericho Community Forest (with major funding support from USFS), reaffirms Easton's commitment to conservation

Easton High-Value Vantage Points

* Inventory includes only views from public roads, trails (not private property). NP has currently identified only two views of importance in Easton.

Bog Pond wilderness: Exceptional High Elevation Habitat

Canada Lynx – Federally Threatened, New Hampshire Endangered

Tracks confirmed in the vicinity of Kinsman Pond (Spring 2013) – three miles from the ROW along Kinsman Ridge

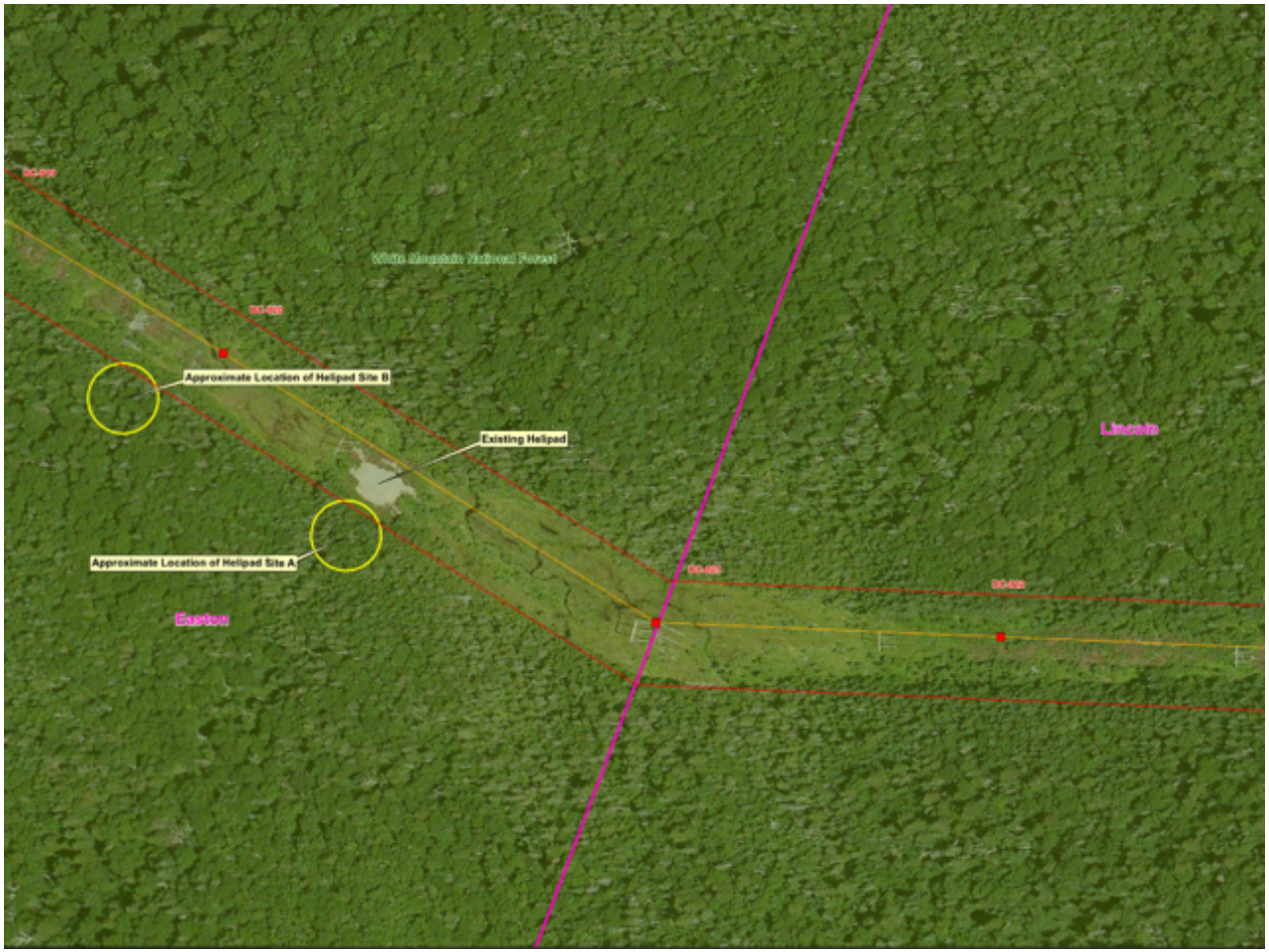
3 Miles

Confirmed Canada Lynx Tracks

ROW

Bog Pond

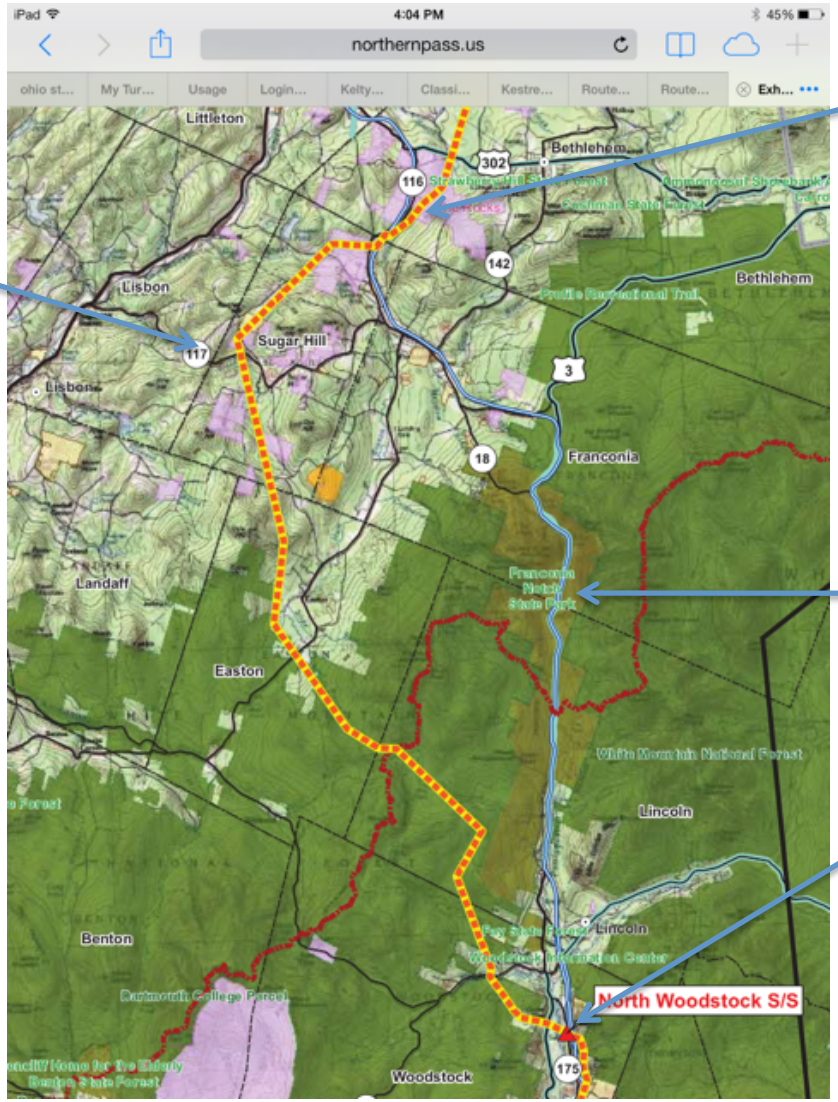
Proposed New Helipad Sites (outside ROW)*



* NP's revised proposal indicates need for additional safety landing zones

ECC Alternative: Utilize State Owned Transportation Corridor to Avoid WMNF

Northern Pass Proposed Route



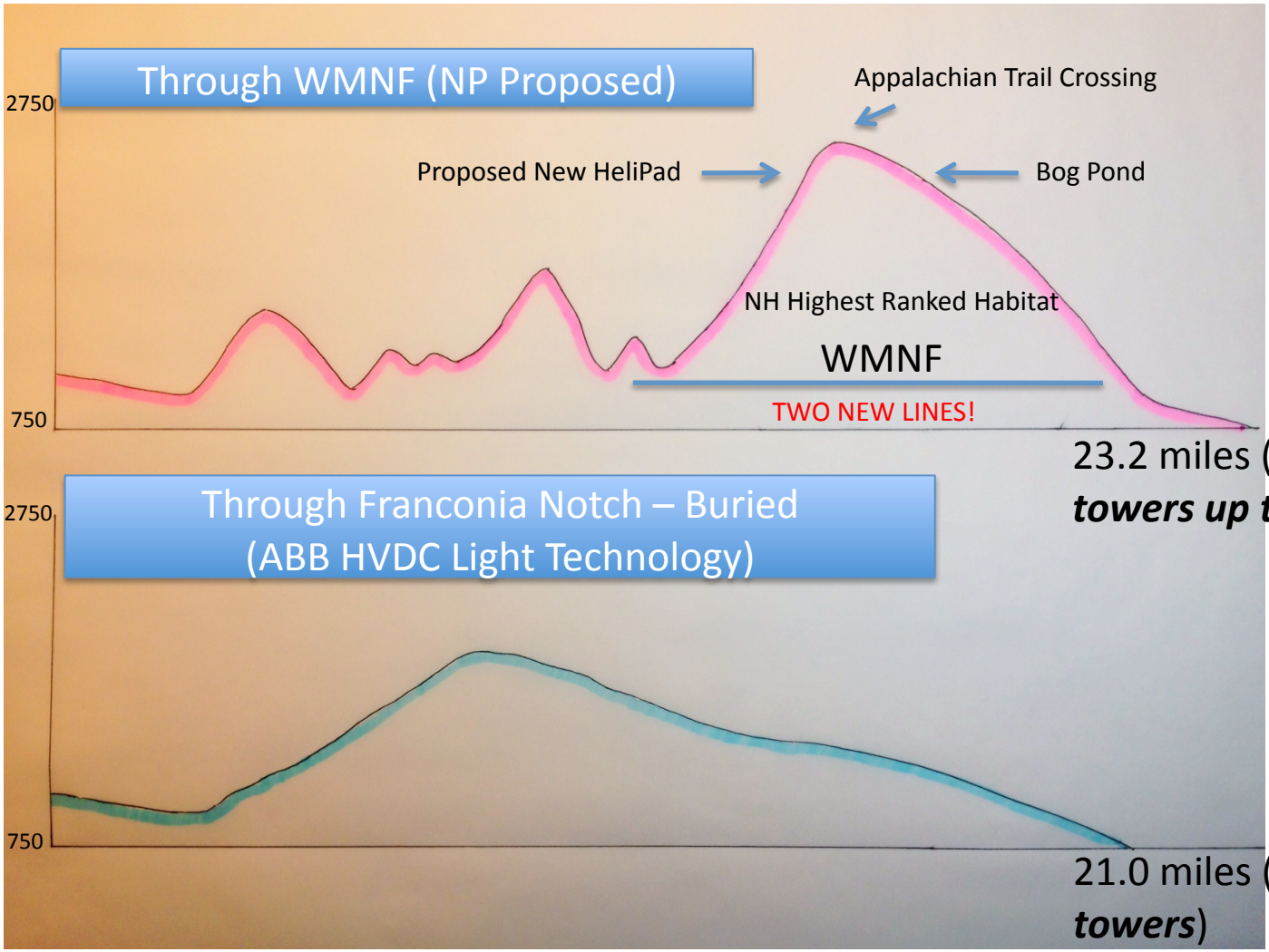
Begin: Profile School, Bethlehem NH (proposed line would run in close proximity to Easton's regional school, raising serious health concerns)

I93: Alternative Corridor (Buried)

End: I93 Transmission Crossing, Woodstock NH

ECC Alternative Route From Profile School (Bethlehem) to I93 Transmission Crossing (Woodstock)

Elevation (feet above sea level)



Vertical +/-
+3090 ft
- 3340 ft

23.2 miles (***336 new towers up to 125'***)

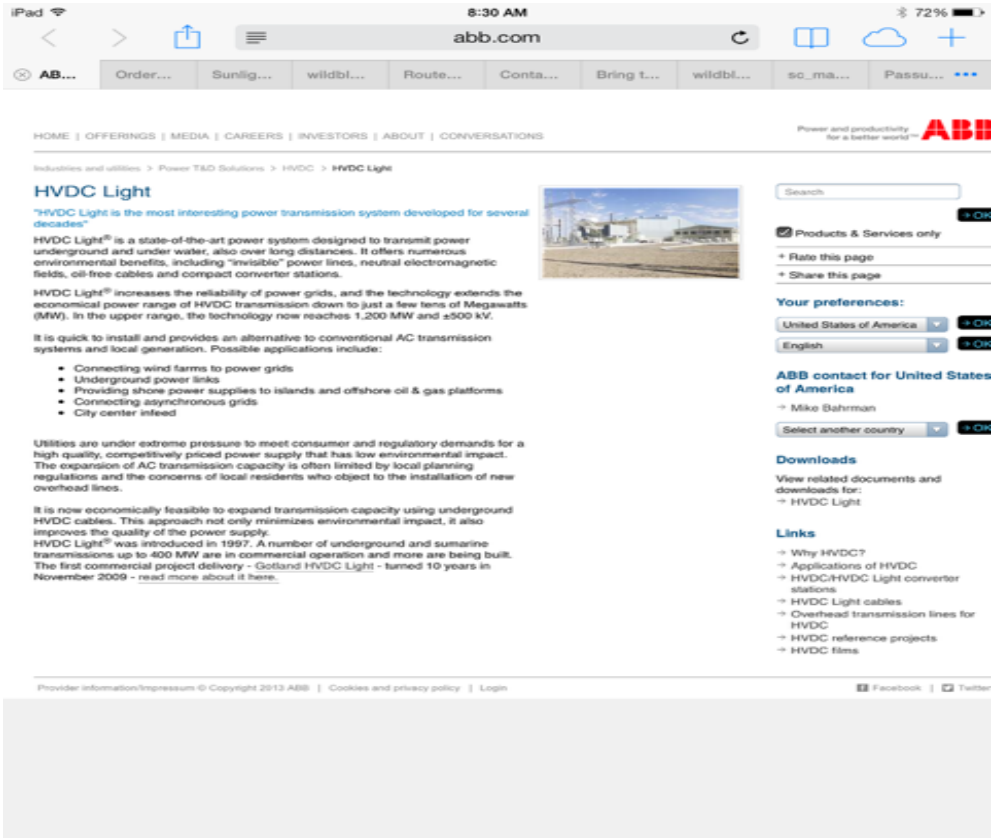
Vertical +/-
+1100 ft
- 1450 ft

21.0 miles (***no new towers***)

Northern Pass claims that HVDC technology is limited to 1100MW, and that the technology is not suited to the elevation gain/loss of I93 (Bartosewicz 10/23/13). ABB indicates otherwise.

(http://www.abb.com/industries/us/9AAC30300394.aspx)

Conclusion: Northern Pass is denying the feasibility of the obvious, sustainable alternative in favor of ROW-based profit



Northern Pass claims that the cost of burial is too high.

Consider:

- ❑ The I93 alternative route is 10% shorter, already graded and softened
- ❑ Dramatic gain/loss of elevation in rough terrain would also raise cost
- ❑ The NP proposal includes <u>two</u> new lines in the WMNF
- ❑ Access to remote sections would require heavy duty helicopter

removal of substrate and delivery of cement, structural steel, cable, personnel - 2-3 times more expensive than average per mile project cost

Conclusion: Burial of the line along the I93 corridor would be <u>less expensive</u> than the proposed route through Sugar Hill, Easton and Lincoln, with far less environmental and social impact.

Easton Conservation Commission Recommendation:

Bury Northern Pass along the I93 corridor, between Profile School in Bethlehem, NH and the interstate crossing in Woodstock, NH, bypassing Easton and WMNF. The alternative route would be less expensive than the proposed route through Sugar Hill, Easton and Lincoln, with far less environmental and social impact.

The best-case scenario for WMNF would be to bury a second line along the alternative route, to replace the existing above-ground line – allowing the Pemi District, Bog Pond and Appalachian Trail Corridor to revert to pre-electrification wilderness.