

# WMNF, Town of Easton, and Northern Pass



Presentation to Supervisor Tom Wagner and WMNF Staff  
By Easton Conservation Commission

Campton, NH  
June 10, 2013

Easton Conservation Commission  
WMNF Presentation – Northern Pass Project  
6/10/13



Thank you for welcoming us!

Easton's Conservation Commission:

- Roy Stever, Chair
- Kris Pastoriza, Vice-Chair
- Ned Cutler
- Steve Sabre
- Debbie Stever
- Anita Craven\*
- Maria Hynes\*
- Mike Platt (Alternate)\*

\* unable to attend



## Easton and Conservation – Resident Engagement

- Protection of Quality of Life, Way of Life
- Strong engagement w. WMNF – abutters, visitors and volunteers
- Unanimous support for town funding of Cooley Jericho Community Forest (#1 USFS ranked project), residents deeply engaged in planning
- Pro-active Conservation Commission, equipped with updated data
- Strong connections with SPNHF, AMC, ATC, CLF, ACT, REAL, elected officials
- Residents unanimously opposed to Northern Pass, passed RBO prohibiting unsustainable corporate practices
- 69% of Easton lies within WMNF, most live within Proclamation Boundary



## Easton and WMNF Program Activities

- Apple Orchard Release (both as participants and trainer)
- Fisheries and Wildlife, Habitat Restoration Initiatives
- Archaeological Field Surveys - Wildwood
- Approval for a large parking area off of Route 116, providing access to Mt. Kinsman Trail (the land was generously donated by a town resident, and the residents voted at Town Meeting to approve funding for improvements of this extensively used trailhead – access to AT, Bald Knob and Kinsman/Cannon Range)
- Trail Stewardship
- Comments on Forest Management Plans, Harvesting Plans
- As Visitors!



## Easton Conservation Commission – Current Priorities

	Research, Development, and Inventories	Stewardship and Conservation	Outreach and Education	Advocacy
<b>Northern Pass</b>	Monitoring Sites, Cultural Resources	Vote of Opposition, WMNF Initiative, NE Utilities	June 9, REAL Meeting, Next Steps P&P	EIS Letter, State Officials, Other Town CC's
<b>Energy</b>	Easton Energy Baseline	Energy Conservation in Town Buildings	Energy Questionnaire	New Town Ordinances?
<b>Local Agriculture</b>	Inventory Local Growers	Micro CSA	Farm Field Trip Meadowstone 6/22/13	
<b>Fauna</b>	Emerald Ash Borer, Spruce BudWorm		Invasive Species Exhibit	
<b>Flora</b>	American Chestnut Intro, R&E	Apple Release		
<b>Cultural</b>	Landaff Document Inquiry, Cultural Inv	Document Duplication	"How our ancestors lived"	EIS/NHDHR Letter
<b>Cooley-Jericho Community Forest</b>	Planning Committee	Town Appointee to Advisory Board	Forest Field Trip	



## Our Research – Stewardship Documents

- Town of Easton Natural Resources Inventory (2012)
- Town of Easton Taking Action for Wildlife (2011)
- Town of Easton Master Plan (2010)
- Town of Easton Right to a Sustainable Energy Future and Community Self-Government Ordinance (2012)
- Town of Easton Public & Private Right of Way Easements
- Town of Easton Historical Documents
- Good Forestry in the Granite State (DRED, 2010)
- White Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA, 2005)
- Northern Pass Visual Impact Assessment (Appalachian Mountain Club, 2012)

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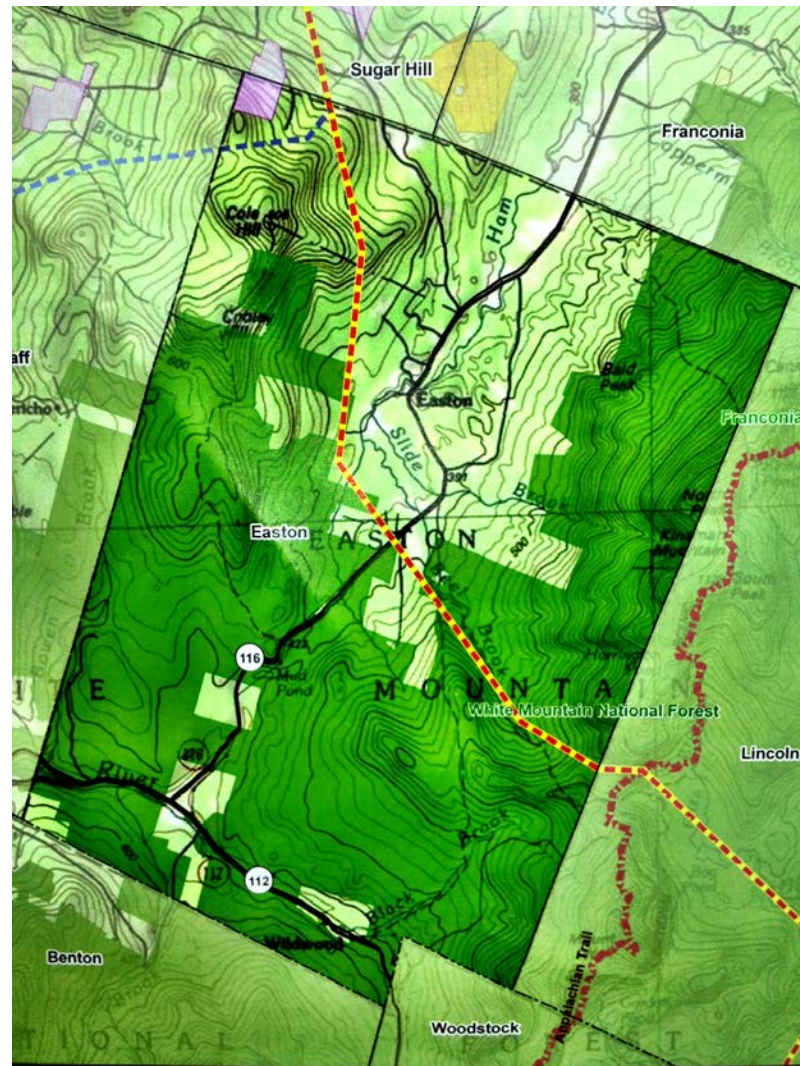
## Northern Pass Impact Assessment

Doc/Study Impacts	Easton Master Plan	Easton NRI	Taking Action Wildlife	Good Forestry in Granite State	RBO	Heritage Docs	Easement Docs	WMNF L&RMP	AMC Visual Impact Study
Water Quality	13-19, 31,35, 37 39-42, 79-80	Key sectors (8-9), Stream (23), Pasture (28), Vernal Pools (30), High Elev.	Critical Habitats & Associated Species, Easton Map	Best Practices - Silviculture and Harvesting, Protection of Water, Forest Health, Wildlife Habitat and Sensitive Areas	3(b,c)			Comprehensive, specific, rigorous, and validated management document protecting a public resource	
Wildlife		Spruce/Fir & Northern Hardwood			3(c)				
Habitat		Conifer Forests (36-38)			3(c)				
Scenic Values					3(d)				4-Mile Buffer, Handbook 701
Recreation					3(d)				Trails, AT, Bald Knob, Tourism
Heritage					3(d)	Easton Cultural Resources Map	Easton/WMNF Transmission Map		Sense of Place, "Severe Long- Term Adverse Effect"
Public Lands	24-25, 29, 37								Easton: 69% within WMNF





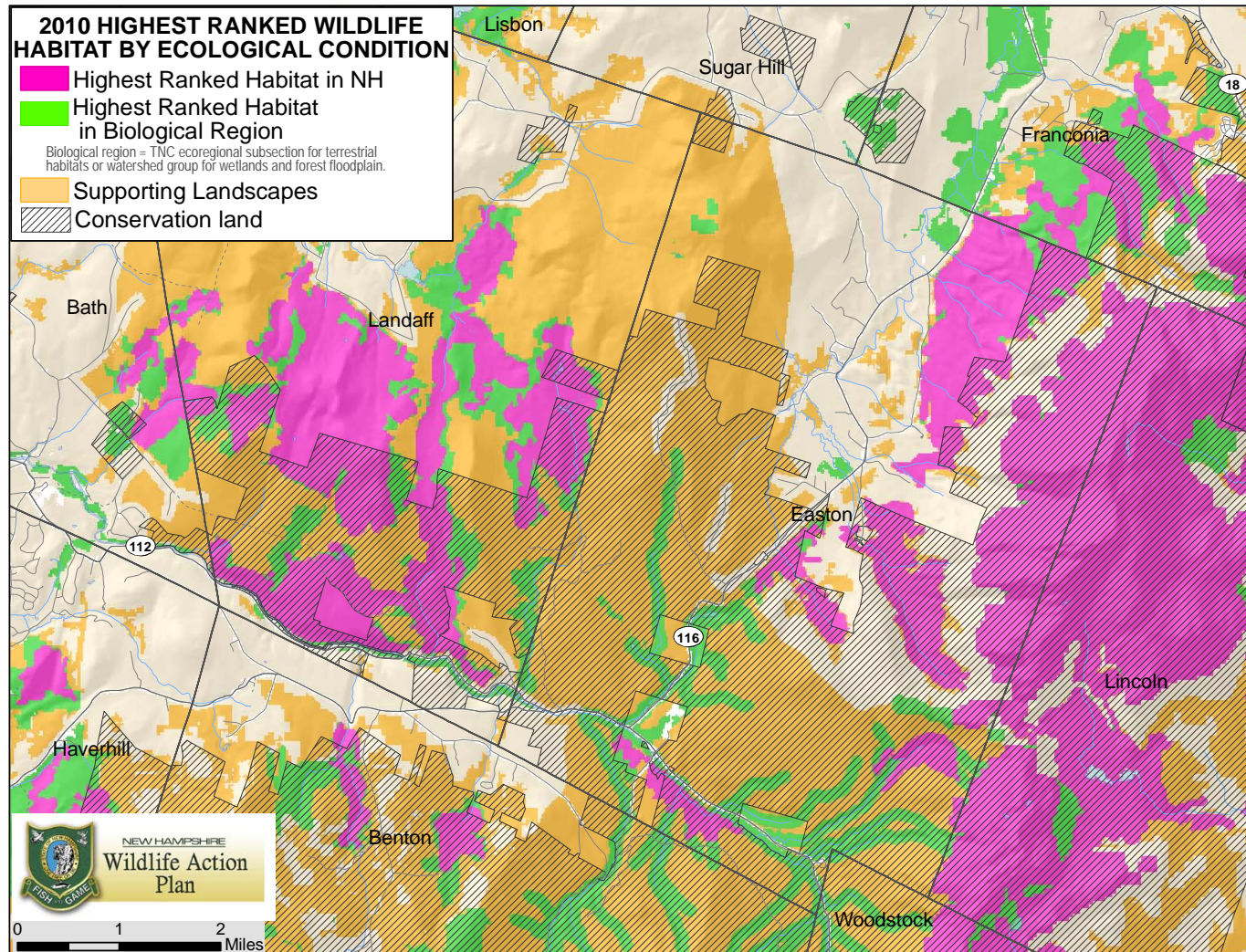
## Northern Pass Route







## Easton Wildlife Scoring



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## Easton/WMNF Transmission Detail

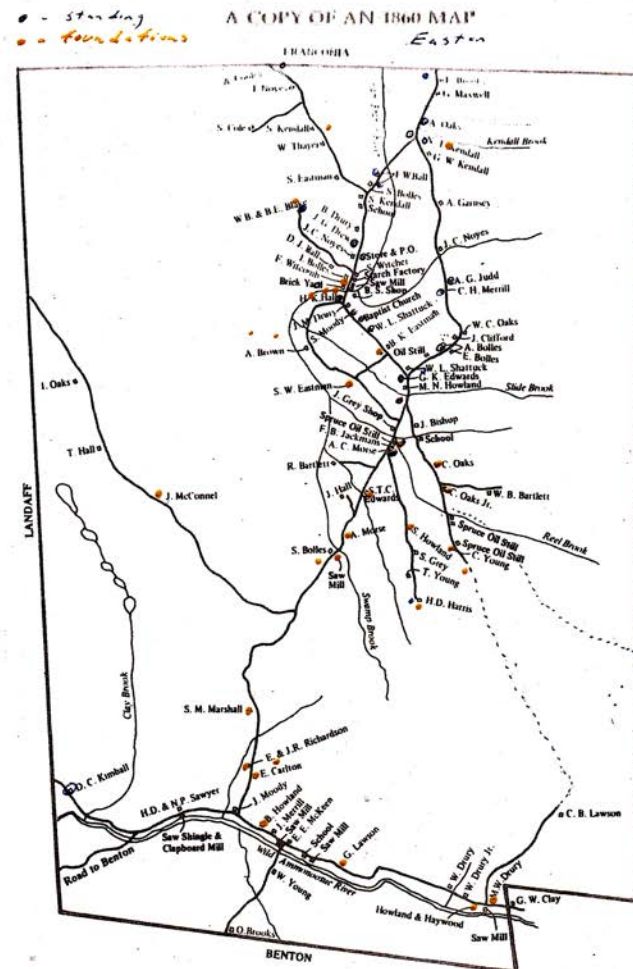




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## Easton Cultural Map



Easton Historic Resources

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## High Value Vantage – Bald Knob 1 (summer)





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## High Value Vantage – Bald Knob 2 (summer)



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## High Value Vantage – Bald Knob 1 (winter)





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## High Value Vantage – Bald Knob 2 (winter)



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## High Value Vantage – Cannon Mountain (summer)





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## High Value Vantage – Cannon Mountain (winter)



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## High Value Vantage – Black Mountain

(what we are trying to avoid)





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## High Value Vantage – Cannon Mountain

(what we are trying to avoid)





## Conclusion:

***Based upon the overwhelming evidence found in our research, supported by local ordinances and the unanimous sentiment of our WMNF encircled community, we strongly oppose crossing of Easton by Northern Pass. Based on our understanding of WMNF's stewardship obligations, we further believe that WMNF must deny the Special Use Permit. Northern Pass is a merchant-sponsored transmission project, with no established public good, not qualified as a potential use of internationally-recognized White Mountain National Forest.***



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Key Concerns

1. Multiple riparian/wetlands crossings represent a serious threat to **water quality and habitat** in Easton, perhaps most difficult to manage in the remote, rugged areas of WMNF along the headwaters stream Reel Brook.
2. Expansion of the transmission line through WMNF would have no positive impact on any WMNF core objective (e.g. edge for wildlife, visual experience), and only increase the threat of **erosion, forest fire and terrorism** in a very remote region.
3. The **patchwork of ownership** between WMNF and private landowners in the Easton Valley presents a planning and legal unknown. Tower design and ROW specifications dictated by WMNF may not meet private landowner approval, and would be subject to multiple, diverse easement documents.
4. Proposed towers would have a devastating effect on the **quality of life in Easton**, destroying the beauty and rural character of the town. The impact would be an irreplaceable loss to residents and extend to all who use the Easton Valley for recreation, or touring along a designated scenic and cultural byway.
5. **High-value vantage points** routinely visited by residents and thousands of WMNF visitors each year, such as Bald Knob, would be severely compromised by new towers and expanded ROW's, either within or outside WMNF boundaries. Note: AMC's Northern Pass Visual Impact Assessment used lower than announced maximum tower heights and as-is ROW widths, suggesting that actual construction would seriously exceed projected impact.
6. Northern Pass is an optional, merchant project with no over-riding public need, **out of USFS' scope**. Consideration of an expanded transmission corridor through WMNF in the latest (2005) forest planning process would have met overwhelming opposition. The DOE/EIS process is highly flawed, and lacks transparency.
7. Easton residents and town elected officials are highly engaged in the Northern Pass opposition, raising concern over **how the town would react** if WMNF grants the Special Use Permit.



## Alternatives:

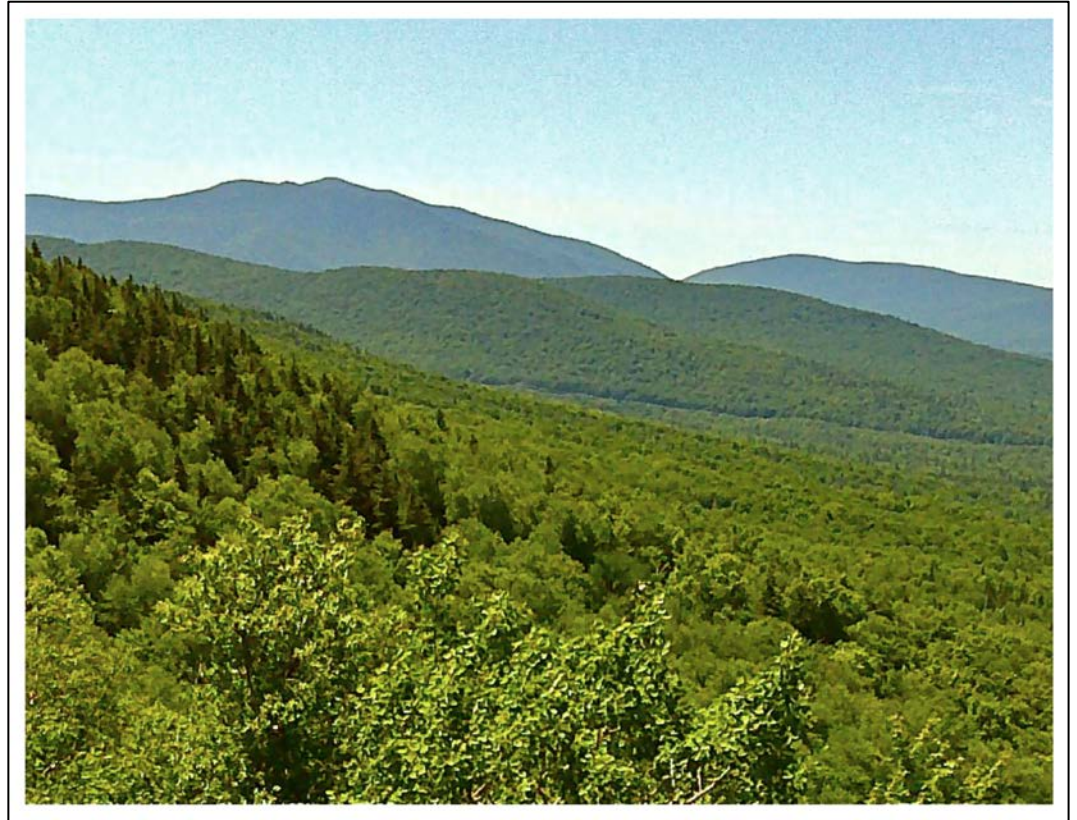
1. Source electricity needs, properly validated, through existing transmission ROW's feeding the northeast grid
2. Site Northern Pass transmission underground in existing, softened transportation corridors



## Our Questions

1. Is WMNF evaluating Northern Pass as a merchant proposal, or one needed for reliability and the public good?
2. Given the apparent severe visual impact of the towers on high-value WMNF vantage points like Bald Knob, would you consider the entire land area of Easton, or at least the full Proclamation Boundary, in the Special Use Permit process?
3. Since Northern Pass has shared tower designs with WMNF that have not been presented to Easton, how can we best anticipate the visual impact and legal complexity as the towers cross back and forth across WMNF and private holdings?
4. Do you see an opportunity for an optimal alternative that calls for the co-location of Northern Pass and the existing line outside of WMNF altogether, restoring Reel Brook, Bog Pond and other sensitive areas to a more natural condition?
5. Are there baseline research studies that we need to take cooperatively to determine potential impact on sensitive habitats or species? Do you have enough information from us? As our partners in stewardship, what have we missed?
6. We are committed to continuing our positive relationship with WMNF. How can Easton and WMNF best collaborate on Northern Pass?

# Thank-You!



For any follow up to this presentation, please contact Roy Stever at:

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