

**From:** [Cody Williams](#)  
**To:** [DNCR: Mt Washington Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Balance Conservation and Visitation in Master Plan  
**Date:** Friday, August 19, 2022 10:59:13 AM

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Dear Commissioners, Mount Washington Commission,

An ideal master plan would eliminate the vast majority of paved surfaces and all motorized access, knowing this will never be achieved the next best thing is to guarantee no net increase in the square footage of developed land on the entire mountain. The needs of Mt Washington, as it stands today, are inherently in contradiction: noise pollution due to motorized access impedes the ability to experience most of the Presidential Range as wilderness except when the auto road is closed; ease of access due to the auto road and the cog places significant strain on an already popular destination; pavement, buildings, water treatment, waste etc are all completely at odds with protecting the fragile alpine ecosystem etc. Right now the balance of \*ease\* of access and \*quality\* of experience is too far skewed to the side of \*ease\* which has only further been strained by COVID and the desire for outdoor experiences. Again, an ideal master plan would totally remove the cog, auto road and all but minimal monitoring equipment at the summit and along all slopes but knowing this is an impossibility, the master plan should absolutely reflect a greater protection for the environment above all else, secondarily for non-motorized low-impact recreation and access, with all other uses taking a far distant and trailing third place. Damage to the mountain will last forever, the plan can either continue this trend, hindering enjoyment for generations or can begin to unwind some of the shortsighted decisions of the past.

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.

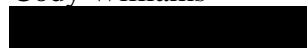
The summit improvements should be informed by a comprehensive set of environmental

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.

Finally, the Master Plan outlines additional studies, site plans, and operational plans that will need to be developed. These plans and their implementation should be done in close coordination with the United States Forest Service and other stakeholders to ensure the greatest degree of planning across a larger, integrated landscape.

Regards,  
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