

From: [Davis Barnett](#)
To: [DNCR: Mt Washington Comments](#)
Subject: Balance Conservation and Visitation in Master Plan
Date: Friday, August 12, 2022 10:46:45 AM

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Dear Commissioners, Mount Washington Commission,

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.

I think carry capacity/visitor capacity is important. While it is nice that many want to visit the summit via motor vehicle/cog, I think a people density/count should be considered to not overwhelm the area. I personally have only visited the summit by hiking there or by racing my bike up, and I usually keep my stop at the summit very brief because of the tourist feel/sense of many ride to the top visitors, which detracts from the natural wonder of being on the summit.

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. This looks like a call to raise fees on ride-to-the-top visitors - and that makes sense to me, they are the majority of users of the facilities.

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. Yes, agreed - the visitor impact to the environment is key and probably hard to manage unless you hire or get volunteers to guide visitors appropriately through the surrounding areas.

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. This sounds great!

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. Agreed!

Regards,
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