

1 **Q: Please state your name and role.**

2 **A:** My name is Justin James Preisendorfer and I am a consultant on wilderness and
3 outdoor recreation planning and management. My testimony is reflective of my
4 professional opinion and is not associated in any way with my primary employment with
5 the USDA Forest Service.

6 **Q: Is your experience consistent with Robert Meyer's remarks about snowmobilers'**
7 **attitudes toward power lines (Page 2, #4 in its entirety)?**

8 **A:** Not entirely. I have worked in trail management for 24 years with all of that time in
9 Maine and New Hampshire. From my experience snowmobilers tolerate overhead
10 powerlines and have not complained about riding under them for a reason. With 620
11 miles of trail within CMP corridors snowmobilers understand the benefit of working with
12 a large-scale long-term landowner. There are dozens of "Powerline Trails" across the
13 state in part because maintenance of snowmobile trails benefits utility corridors and vice
14 versa. Snowmobile trails are also notorious for being plagued with dynamic landowner
15 access issues and stability is a precious commodity afforded with a long-term landowner.
16 Despite the benefits associated with coincident trail and power line alignments, and after
17 working with state trail agencies and dozens of snowmobile clubs I have yet to meet a
18 snowmobiler that prefers an industrial utility corridor experience over one that involves
19 natural settings and primarily undeveloped landscapes. They might accept a trail in a
20 utility corridor when no other long-term solution exists but would they support building
21 power lines in the viewsheds of their trails where such scenic impacts formerly did not
22 exist? I wouldn't think so. I find it hard to believe that the snowmobile community would
23 be indifferent or supportive of a proposal to add power lines to the largely undeveloped

1 landscape that they travel from all regions to enjoy and am curious where Mr. Meyers did
2 his sensing. Neither the Maine Snowmobile Association website nor their Facebook page
3 contain any photos that include power lines or obvious utility corridors. The truth is they
4 are bad for marketing because they're such an obvious example of what people are trying
5 to get away from when they travel to northern Maine to snowmobile.

6 **Q: Does the issue of habitat fragmentation as discussed by Rob Wood and Bryan
7 Emerson on behalf of the Nature Conservancy (pages 2-5 in entirety) have an
8 impact on scenic character and existing uses?**

9 **A:** Habitat fragmentation has a clear and connected adverse impact on not only fish and
10 wildlife populations as described in Wood and Emerson's testimony, but also on the
11 existing uses that are based on those fish and wildlife populations. Exhibits 1 through 3
12 submitted by the Nature Conservancy (TNC) provide a visual indicator of why the
13 Project Area serves as a destination for hunters, anglers, birdwatchers and others engaged
14 in wildlife-related activities. Habitat connectivity is high and the region serves as a
15 destination for activities that depend on its fish and wildlife populations.
16 The families that come to raft the Kennebec River want other activities to enhance their
17 time and wildlife viewing is a top attraction. As I mentioned in my February 28, 2019
18 testimony, the Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan shows that between
19 1995 and 2009 the New England region added 2.1 million participants in the activity of
20 "viewing wildlife (besides birds)." No other category added as many participants making
21 this activity New England's quickest growing. While the regulatory standing of whitetail
22 deer has forced mitigation measures for that species there are hundreds if not thousands
23 of species of vertebrates and invertebrates that would be impacted by the Project and

1 have not generated similar protective measures. Reduced opportunities for wildlife
2 viewing can be expected when wildlife populations decline as a result of habitat
3 fragmentation and any businesses that are based on wildlife viewing in the affected
4 region are therefore at risk as a result of this proposal.

5 Habitat fragmentation has adverse impacts on wildlife populations and thus on the
6 hunters that pursue those animals and businesses surrounding hunting. According to a
7 report commissioned by the Maine Office of Tourism and the Maine Department of
8 Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, spending related to hunting and the multiplier effects of
9 that spending in Maine contribute \$191 million to the state's gross state product and a
10 total economic output of \$338.7 million. By impacting the habitat on which game species
11 depend it would be reasonable to expect hunting quality to suffer and the economic
12 impact of hunting to go down.

13 Much of the same can be said about the cold water fisheries within the Project Area.

14 While some mitigation measures have been proposed, the applicant has chosen not to
15 follow MDIFW's recommendation of a "100-foot buffer be maintained along all streams,
16 including perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams, within the Project area." (March
17 15, 2018 MDIFW project review comments, p. 12). They have also proposed woefully
18 underfunded mitigation measures for stream connectivity as discussed in Wood and
19 Emerson's testimony. (Page 8, 2nd paragraph of section titled "Cold Water Fisheries
20 Habitat"). The adverse impacts on the cold water fisheries within the Project Area will
21 therefore negatively impact existing use in the form of fishing, both recreational and
22 commercially guided.

1 The Wood and Emerson testimony states that the “fragmentation will have unpredictable
2 implications for the health and viability of wildlife and plant species over time, and that
3 such implications could be significant.” (Page 4, first paragraph of section titled “Habitat
4 fragmentation effects of the proposed NECEC corridor,” last sentence). Dr. Malcom L.
5 Hunter Jr.’s testimony also states “the [Nature] Conservancy strongly asserts that the
6 project will have significant cumulative and long-term impacts on the region’s wildlife,
7 and that the compensation and mitigation currently proposed are inadequate and not
8 commensurate with those impacts.” (Page 2, 4th sentence of section titled “2. Role in this
9 Project”). Because the Project could have significant adverse impacts on wildlife species
10 and thus the existing uses that depend on them, I contend that the Applicant has not
11 demonstrated that the Project will not unreasonably interfere with existing uses as
12 described.

13 **Q: Wood and Emerson made a suggestion that the Applicant should develop an**
14 **alternative that considers a greater amount of line burial. (Page 7, 2nd paragraph).**
15 **Would development of such an alternative reduce impacts on scenic character and**
16 **existing uses?**

17 **A:** The development of such an alternative would surely reduce some of the Project’s
18 impacts on scenic character and existing uses should that alternative be approved. A
19 greater amount of burial should have been considered and built into the alternatives based
20 on recent history with Northern Pass and New England Clean Power Link. These projects
21 showed that line burial was not only logistically, technologically and financially
22 practicable, but also a reasonable way to address concerns with scenic impacts and
23 existing uses.

1 **Q: Do you agree with Joseph Christopher’s statement in his testimony that “There**
2 **also should be little impact from the Project upon users of other rivers, streams,**
3 **ponds, lakes, and waterways for rafting, boating, fishing or other activities” (Page 3,**
4 **last paragraph, 1st sentence.)?**

5 **A:** I completely disagree with Mr. Christopher’s statement on the matter but understand
6 that his perspective is largely based on the impacts, both positive and negative, that are
7 likely to affect his business if the Project were approved as proposed. As a member of the
8 Board of Directors for the Western Mountain and Rivers Corporation, Mr. Christopher
9 has a formalized relationship with the Applicant documented in a Memorandum of
10 Understanding (MOU). Under this MOU Mr. Christopher’s business and many of those
11 most directly tied to the Kennebec River are best positioned to benefit from the
12 Applicant’s mitigation efforts. While these efforts would provide financial support to the
13 region’s outdoor recreation economy they fail to adequately address impacts across the
14 broader region in a meaningful way. A total of 724 waterbodies are intersected under the
15 proposed alignment and only the Kennebec River crossing has been discussed as being
16 considered for burial. That means that any recreation occurring on the other 723
17 waterbodies would have the potential to be impacted in a visual fashion. This includes
18 canoeing on a stream, trout fishing in a brook, or hunting in wetlands. Presence of
19 development including utility lines degrades the user experiences associated with these
20 nature-based activities and as such there would be obvious negative direct impacts on the
21 existing uses associated with those waterbodies intersected by the proposed route.

22 **Q: Do you believe that the enhanced recreation access provided through the MOU**
23 **and discussed by Joseph Christopher in his testimony “will actually enhance scenic,**

1 **aesthetic and recreational enjoyment of these new resources as well as other**
2 **resources that are adjacent to the NECEC facilities” (Page 6, last sentence of Section**
3 **III)?**

4 **A:** I do not agree with this statement. There may be improved access which may enhance
5 recreational enjoyment at the site of improvement, but this is done at the cost of the
6 scenic and aesthetic values that draw people to the region. The visual impacts may not
7 necessarily be present at the site where access has been enhanced but they would be
8 within the context of the landscape. As a result it is hard to understand how a proposal
9 including a 145-mile transmission line would enhance scenic enjoyment of the region. I
10 believe that this statement reflects a focus on the site-specific benefits without a regard
11 for the greater regional context.

12 **Q: Do you agree with the statement “The Project will preserve the existing scenic,**
13 **aesthetic, and recreational integrity of lands affected by the Project” as made by**
14 **Larry Warren in his testimony? (Page 6, 1st full paragraph, 2nd sentence).**

15 **A:** I do not. Merriam-Webster defines preserve as “to keep safe from injury, harm, or
16 destruction” with a second definition “to keep alive, intact, or free from decay.” It is
17 unclear to me how the proposed development would not harm the scenic or aesthetic
18 integrity of the area. Mitigation measures have been proposed by the Applicant because
19 the proposed developments would in fact harm the scenic integrity and they seek to
20 minimize associated impacts. The scenic and largely undeveloped landscape that the
21 region is known for would not be kept intact. It would be permanently sliced in two by a
22 new 54-mile utility corridor and much of the remainder of the 145-mile path would be
23 subject to developments (wider clearing, taller poles) that do in fact have visual impacts.

1 The application covers visual impacts from a number of locations and the associated
2 analysis states that the visual impacts would not have an unreasonable impact on the
3 scenic integrity of the area. I disagree with this assessment and find the impacts to be
4 unreasonable and compromising to the scenic integrity of the region.

Date: 3/15/19

Respectfully submitted,

By: [Signature]
Print Name: Justin J. Preisendorfer

STATE OF New Hampshire
COUNTY OF Grafton

Personally appeared before me on the above- named Justin Preisendorfer who being duly sworn, did testify that the foregoing testimony was true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief.

Before me,

[Signature]

Notary Public/ Attorney at Law

My Commission expires 2/11/23

