

October 7, 2024

Dear Mayor and Town Council,

I ask the Town Council to postpone making the precipitous decision to cut the proposed Eastern Red Cedars marked by yellow and orange dots in the aerial view of the Washington Grove Conservation Meadow (WGCM).

Cutting down Eastern Red Cedars would be inconsistent with the *2013 draft Operation and Use Plan* that includes the following Objective on page 10;

“4) Create areas within the meadow with woody, early successional vegetation to provide wildlife refuges.” (highlighted in yellow in the attached)

I note that Eastern Red Cedars are specifically cited in the [2013 Draft Operation and Use Plan \(PDF\)](#) under “Area 1: Meadow Habitat” on page 11, in the section that says,

“d. Keep all existing shrubs and trees that are taller than the deer browse line (approx. 4-5’) to provide a variety of habitats within the early successional meadow for birds and wildlife. Species to retain:
i. Eastern Red Cedar” (highlighted in yellow in the attached)

The yearly mowing since 2013 has meant the number and location of Eastern Red Cedars within the WGCM are the same as existed in 2013. There are not more cedars. Aerial photos show this clearly (see #1 & #2 in attached PowerPoint). Additionally, when Ryan Colliton of the M-NCPPC Park Service explained their ‘rule of thumb’ for a meadow to be an area with less than 25% tree cover, and he then looked at the aerial photo (#2 in attached PowerPoint) of the WGCM, he did not disagree that there is less than 25% tree cover. So why do anything? What is the objective?

The Town needs to better define the Town’s long-term goals for the management of the WGCM and the relative objectives we are trying to achieve. Some of these might be the following, and I wonder which are more important objectives in managing the WGCM:

- Wildlife habitat for a variety of fauna,
- Species of flora that support pollinators,
- Vistas across and within a meadow,
- Noise mitigation from I-200?

I believe we should revisit the *2013 Draft Operation and Use Plan* to get the Town and the Parks Service to develop and agree on a more updated and focused document for management of the 12 acres before proceeding.

Thank you for your consideration and services to the Town,

Signed,

Tom Land





