

# Visual Impact – A Clear-Eyed View

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One of the most common questions asked about the project is “What is it going to look like?”

Fortunately, a process is in place that will provide an accurate answer.

The Northern Pass project will produce a Visual Impact Assessment as part of the State permitting process with the NH Site Evaluation Committee. In addition, we expect the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will prepare its own Visual Impact Assessment as part of the Environmental Impact Statement it prepares in conjunction with the processing of Northern Pass’ application for a Presidential Permit. The Northern Pass project’s Assessment will include an “inventory” of views from public vantage points from which one will be able to see the project—that is, its structures and conductor. Importantly, the Assessment will also include many visual simulations that will accurately portray views of the project from those areas. There will be multiple views, showing the project from various vantage points and at various times, to account for changes in background conditions. The Assessment will follow the guidelines set forth in the U.S. Forest Service’s Landscape Aesthetics – A Handbook for Scenery Management and the National Forest Landscape Management series Volume 2, Chapter 2 entitled Utilities, Utility Vegetation Management.

We raise this issue in part because a staff member of the Appalachian Mountain Club recently provided misleading and inaccurate information to the media about the process of assessing visual impact in the project area and what has been done to date.

To be clear, no Assessment has yet been produced by The Northern Pass.

The visual simulation photographs that have already been produced by The Northern Pass and shared publicly were prepared to help inform community officials and members of the public as to what the project might look like. While the simulations do not constitute a Visual Impact Assessment, and have not been presented as such, they were produced by an expert firm, highly skilled and experienced in the production of Assessments using the U.S. Forest Service criteria.

Data collected by The Northern Pass as part of our analysis will be publicly available and will be provided to the DOE.

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