

WANT vs NEED

The Air National Guard *needs* to train its pilots. No question.

The Air Guard *wants* to train its pilots here over Maine for several good reasons. They have done a fine job of explaining them so I won't repeat them.

We, the residents of western Maine **NEED** our quiet, our minimal intrusion, our nearly uncluttered sky, and the economic injection that comes to us specifically due to this quiet, this relative isolation.

The EIS does not give realistic weight to this topic.

Our economic base has been shattered in the past decade. Our manufacturing base of wood products, pulp and paper, and the shoe industry has all but vanished. With every paper machine's temporary or permanent shut down we lose employment hours or whole jobs. Of the 30 or so wood turning mills, lumber saw mills, heel mills and paper companies we had in the 80's we have only a shrinking jobs base at New Page and Verso, a small turning mill in New Vineyard and a couple of owner operated saw mills left.

We **NEED**, desperately, the economic injection that tourists bring thru local Bed and Breakfasts, ski areas and their related partners, lake side resorts, golf, river rafting and other leisure pastimes. Without this injection we are literally without employment, without income, without any means of supporting the rest of the residents that sell groceries, insurance and other everyday goods.

Some say that they have nothing against the sight and sound of fighters scrambling across our skies. I don't particularly dislike them either.

The important thing to remember is that my opinion, and yours, is of no value! The only opinion that matters, in this specific conversation, is that of the tourists!

Many visitors climb out of their 4 x 4's and tell us that they have no problems with jets roaring about over head. If we check

the credit card records of these visitors we will discover that they spend a modest amount of gas, dining and motorized toy repairs here.

Other visitors climb out of their Land Rovers and Escalades and loudly complain of the slightest invasion of their privacy, comfort or disturbance of the ambiance. When we check the credit card records of these visitors we learn that they buy summer homes (tax base), season passes plus day passes for their friends at Sugarloaf, Saddleback and Sunday River and the golf courses, enormous amounts of expensive foods, wines, chartered air plane time, on and on and on.

And the vast majority of these well-heeled visitors **will** object to having their peace and quiet unzipped by the activities of the ANG. They will display this displeasure, but not by objecting to the Air Guard pilot's training. That would be 'unpatriotic.' Instead, they will display this dissatisfaction by going somewhere else to buy summer or winter cottages and take white water raft trips and guided hunts or fishing expeditions. There will be no great outcry, no calls to their congress people. Just a silent evaporation of customers and a steep drop in the value of second homes and the loss of all the support that these 'summa people' now pay for.

The Air Guard pilots require training. That can be provided in other places. Less convenient locations perhaps, but it can be provided.

We **NEED** the income that the rest of the world brings to us thru tourism and the recreational industry that Western Maine has developed. We **can't replace** it with anything else. We possess no other resource that will take up the slack. We have no choice.

The EIS offered by the Guard doesn't reflect this. It doesn't even admit to the existence of the enormous and irremediable hazard to our economy. To the Guard we don't matter.