

USDA Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project

Comment and concerned submission

Henry F Haefner
71 Lookout Road
Pittsfield Vt 05762
Haef7120@gmail.com

1. Phasing

- a. Why is so much going on seemingly suddenly and why has it taken so long to mitigate the issues with the forest since the clear-cut debacle of the 1800's?
- b. Is the project going to be phased and what sections of work are scheduled to begin 1st?
 - i. What is the expected duration of the entire project.
 - ii. Is there a proposed schedule of work available?
 1. Does/will this include sub-phases of any phased section?
 - iii. Home/Landowner's should be notified in reasonable advance of any planned sections of work.
 1. Project contact coordinator information must be made available to homeowners.
- c. Will certain sections of work take place simultaneously? For example, will there be clear cutting and shelterwood clearing taking place at the same time at or near the same logistical location?

2. Management

- a. General/Administrative Issues
 - i. Regardless of how good of a job one does, there will always be complaints. In a project such as this there will be many.
 1. How will these be channeled?
 2. How quickly can a response be expected?
 3. How is anticipated responses be executed?
 - a. Phone
 - b. Email
 - c. Publication
 - d. Other
 - ii. When work is scheduled in a certain area will there be a period of questions and answers offered to the local residents?
 - iii. What considerations have been considered for residents, businesses, municipalities and infrastructure?
 1. Additional construction traffic
 2. Traffic and traffic safety concerns

3. Litter
 4. Smoke from the “controlled” burns.
 - a. Actually the “controlled” burn in and of itself.
- b. Environmental Controls
- i. This work is in mountainous terrain often/all times on steep slopes the toe of which terminate in or at a stream, river and or tributary.
 - ii. What have we learned since the 1800’s?
 - iii. What measures/specifications/requirements will be enforced for the follow concerns:
 1. Erosion control (installation and maintenance)
 - a. Silt fence-check dams-water bars-plunge pools-etc
 - b. Storm flow control on steep slopes?
 2. Siltation protection of our streams
 3. Steep slopes lacking vegetation – shear factor?
 4. Potential to heat and or clog streams – fish population
 5. What mitigation plans are in place for these and other potential erosion issues?
 - iv. Have/will clearing limitations be adopted such that clearing occurs during non-active periods of endangers animal species?
 1. Timber Rattle Snake
 2. Indiana Bat
 3. Northern Long Eared Bat
 - v. Reference Map 2a – Timber Harvest.
 1. Areas 9, 22 and 24 represent clear cutting, they are approximately 20, 49 and 28 acres respectively. All are located on steep slopes draining towards Townsend Brook.
 - a. Will these areas be cleared during the same period?
 - b. Was phasing within each parcel considered?
 - i. Limiting clearing to 5 acres unless a waiver is granted?
 - ii. If clearing areas greater than 5 acres or so on slopes erosion becomes a very serious concern, the larger the area the more difficult the task becomes, almost in an exponential way.
 1. What is in place to mitigate/regulate this concern?
 2. Shears/slides
 3. Rills in the hillside.
 - c. Combined these areas approximate 100 acres on slopes draining to a stream. A slope barren of trees will likely warm the earth more. How will this potential of added

heat effect any streams with a cold-water fish population, (trout)?

c. Inspections

- i. How is work controlled
- ii. There are several varying types of work going on, from clearing to burning.
 1. How frequent are inspections performed to monitor the specific work taking place?
 - a. Daily, Semiweekly, weekly, monthly?
 - b. Upon complaints?
 - c. Upon emergencies/eminent problems/issues?
 - d. Upon completion?
 - e. Ever?
 - iii. Must contractors submit a safe work plan?
 1. This should be mandatory in areas where folks live, walk their pets with timber hauling trucks driving down their dirt road.
 2. There must be a plan in place to mitigate traffic and noise concerns.
 3. Rutting of secondary gravel roads is very concerning
 4. How will dust control be mitigated on gravel roads?
 5. What are the anticipated working hours?
 - a. Will work be permitted on weekends?
 - b. Will work hours be regulated by/subject to the governing townships' town code?

d. Logistics/Recreational conflicts

- i. Are restrictions in place so as not to disturb or minimize disturbance of existing trails (hiking-biking-snowmobiling-etal) unless trail upgrades are planned?
 1. Upgrades meaning new/realigned/improved/etc.
 2. If trail upgrades are planned, will they be phased such that they occur during the off season of the specific trail design if in conflict with an existing established trail?
- ii. What considerations have been established to local town ships affected by these activities, subject but not limited to the list below?
 1. Additional traffic on local semi-improved roadways.
 2. Noise abatement.
 3. Traffic restrictions.
 4. Weight restrictions.
 5. Hours of operation restrictions.
 6. Mud and dust control.

- iii. What considerations have been established for local clubs/affiliations in respect to new trails, combining trails, decommissioning trails, clubs currently maintaining trail systems, clubs losing trails?
- e. Trail Decommissioning
 - i. *Snowmobile trails – Darning Needle*
 1. *Clubs have been working long and hard to improve this trail and its connectivity. There has been a lot of effort over several years, avoiding unnecessary stream crossings and or conflicts with the Long Trail.*
 2. *Snowmobile Clubs maintain the trails (bicyclists do not).*
 3. *This is a very scenic trail to lose it would be hurtful to the club and all recreational snowmobilers alike.*
 4. *Snowmobiles have little impact on the trail system, once the snow is gone so too are the sleds leaving little disturbance to the existing terrain.*
 - a. *Bicycles erode the earth*
 - i. *What affects can be expected from the disturbance caused by bicycles, rutting, and general erosion?*
 - ii. *How will this be mitigated if necessary.*
 5. *Why are trails being decommissioned for the sake of a new trail accommodating a different recreational activity? Why give one for the sake of another? Certainly, a way can be designed to share especially when each activity takes place during a different season. I along with others are very much against loosing this trail along with the work that has been taking place over the years. This trail offers better connectivity to Chittenden, offers better connectivity for fuel, may and will likely help limit snowmobile traffic on some of the shared winter trails such as cross-county skiing making it safer for all. With all the resources of the USDA surely there is a way to make this a win win for everyone.*

Respectfully Submitted
Henry F Haefner