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Comments: To Whom It May Concern:

I am both an avid fan of outdoor recreation and a proponent of use-centered conservation, when appropriate, to take into account the reality that land is a resource, the resource can be managed, and that management can benefit both people and the natural world. When this management causes significant physical changes (canopy thinning above 20%) and is in an area of high human visibility and recreation, the necessary justification for the management decisions should be rigorous, clear, and appropriate. The justifications for this project fail to meet those guidelines. To take two specific examples, huckleberry habitat is a weak foundation upon which to build an entire forest management strategy, and the justification that thinning increases old-growth COULD be solid but is not sufficiently justified in your documents. The documentation, while substantial, ends up feeling like a wordy bolstering of weak logic for a project that must, I am left to assume, be a foregone conclusion. If this is the case, this period of public commentary is a sham. If the project is actually open to question, your rationale should be much more solidly constructed if you want us, as an informed public, to buy it.

Taking care of our forests is no small challenge. Balancing recreation, conservation and commercial use is an enormous challenge, one we entrust you to navigate with care. These forests are beloved by many, and I ask you to reconsider your proposal given the weak justification and the significant impact to the local and recreation communities. Harvest, sure, but do so carefully, and with better justification than huckleberries and vague encouragement of old-growth.

Sincerely,

Hannah Chapin, PhD