

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/4/2023 11:01:22 PM

First name: Timothy

Last name: Howard

Organization:

Title:

Comments: We own a cabin on Camp 12 Road in Pittsfield, just inside the boundary of your study area. Thank you for the detailed information provided on the Telephone Gap plan. We are active users of National Forest property, mostly for hiking and skiing.

We support the discussion and plans concerning recreation enhancement, including expanding scenic views, expanding the mountain bike infrastructure, and allowing the permit for the South Pond Hut. Please ensure the potential for backcountry skiing is not explicitly excluded in the plan. The backcountry skiing at Brandon Gap is a tremendous resource and if you are approached by a similar group for a similar activity within the Telephone Gap study area they should be given the opportunity to explore this recreational activity here.

Concerning the active forestry management proposed. Certainly pests and pathogens will continue to alter our forested landscape and staying ahead of this will be important in some areas. Similarly, wood is an important resource and timber extraction/working forests should continue to be a component of our landscape.

However, in light of our climate crisis, carbon sequestration should also be an exceptionally high priority for the USDA Forest Service and the Telephone Gap project. I found a small reference to sequestration on Pages 10 and 11 (in the Notice of Proposed Action). This doesn't do justice to the importance of the function of forests in this matter. As I expect you know, young forests rapidly update carbon, but newer research suggests that older forests continue to have high carbon sequestration rates, high carbon storage, and continued sequestration in the soil. Yes, (as you note on Page 7), there is exceptionally little old growth forest remaining in the study area, however, there certainly are late successional and maturing forests that can contribute significantly to the carbon sequestration picture. We strongly recommend you keep working forests in areas with existing plantations and relatively recent harvest activity. Please keep the older forests and allow them to do their job, despite the possible presence of poor 'timber quality' trees. Older forests also support unique biodiversity -- a complement to the aspen stands and young forests that got significant attention in this plan.

Thank you for your consideration.