

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/13/2023 10:53:16 AM

First name: Eric

Last name: Webb

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The prodigious research, time, and effort poured into scoping and detailing the Telephone Gap project by the Rochester and Middlebury Ranger Districts is commendable. The results convince me that the best action is to create as little disturbance to the project area as possible. Individuals may draw different conclusions from the same science, but mine is that there is too much commercial logging and attendant surface damage involved in the first version of the plan.

Other commenters have written well about the technical elements of the plan, so my comments are brief.

I recommend that the plan eliminate all 540 acres of clear-cutting. There is no value in clear-cutting. The claim that a clear-cut enhances diversity is misleading. The argument that a clear-cut is good for deer and other wildlife is equally shallow. The deer will find browse without help from us. That is especially true given the abundant shelterwood cuts in the plan.

Balancing the equation between the carbon capture advantage of younger trees and the sequestration advantage of older trees is difficult. My recommendation is to err on the side of sequestration. That is the more conservative investment strategy. I recommend judiciously eliminating about half of the cutting you propose in mature tracts.

Knowing very well the mission of the National Forest Service, I applaud you for attempting to serve multiple masters. As foresters and researchers, you know what's at stake, and your efforts are worthy, if not always embraced by all.