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First name: Pamela

Last name: Darrow

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to offer my thoughts on the Preliminary Environmental Assessment, so carefully and laboriously created by your team.

I am very excited about the effort to establish oak and other possibly climate resilient trees, although the disturbances deemed necessary for the oak seem extreme/violent to other plant life.

I am also excited about plans in Alternates C and D to enhance late successional areas to move them toward older growth characteristics. Realizing this is still of an experimental nature, I believe

Telephone Gap could be an excellent laboratory to further test the effects of these treatments .

Other things I like in the proposal are: the dam removal, some trail obliteration and erosion remediation, the effort to lessen diseased beech sprouting , and culverts for aquatic critter passage.

I am not thrilled about the Hut and the Velomont Trail, but here they come. Trails for bikes and other vehicles have a much larger footprint and impact than do simple footpaths. Even small groups of people tend to be noisy and disruptive of a relatively remote spot. The cost of the fancy bikes and hut reservations say to me that these amenities are for the wealthier set. However, these things do add to diverse recreation opportunities in fairness to all National Forest users.

In general I am not in favor of harvesting a rich northern hardwood forest, but I did find interesting the perspective that it exists as such primarily due to previous softwood removal.

My impression is that you are trying to fix what humans screwed up before, an unnatural imbalance, as you see it. . So, are there any provisions to regenerate, favor or plant softwoods ?

I am only half-convinced of the " need" for humans to manage forests for their health, resilience and wildlife habitat. For timber, certainly ! The forest products industry is vital for Vermont and a major reason many land areas remain forested. I support timber harvesting done well and not overdone. Because as a whole, the project - especially when combined with activities outside its borders - seems a huge, disruptive enterprise, I would like to see Alt. C or D chosen for implementation since there would be less harvesting, less unfortunate impact on this rich and beautiful area.

In my previous comment to the scoping document, I think my main concern was potential for (the inevitability of) non-native invasive plant introduction. At least this is now on the radar, to try to prevent and/or mitigate such. Believe me, I understand the difficulty of controlling plants that constantly threaten from your borders ! I hope your design and implementation measures to minimize risk via travel corridors and other disturbances are strong and effective and include monitoring and rapid response.

I have learned a lot by reading the document. I am pretty well convinced that the NFS intends to steward our national forests for the benefit of all. Increased awareness and greater understanding of issues not addressed by a forest plan conceived in 2006 have made for a much improved proposal. Alternative C ! Or D ! Thank you for your consideration.