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Organization: Got Weeds?

Title:

Comments: Two irreversible consequences will follow the implementation of this project as it is currently proposed with Alternatives B, C, and D. Unless human activity of all kind is contained and limited and well-managed, invasive plants and earthworms will establish. Timber harvesting and recreation involving constructed trails will accelerate, drastically, that colonization and establishment of the invasive species.

This will lead to the second consequence of failed forest regeneration. This pattern and sequence is already playing out in many eastern states; Japanese stiltgrass and wavy leaf basket grass are the primary concerns, initially, and no states have yet successfully stopped their relentless spread. Grasses, vines, earthworms, and deer equal no more complex, biodiverse forests.

I outlined this concern in my comment of one year ago. There are only so many stresses a system can handle over time before a collapse of some sort is inevitable. We are at that point, and it is troubling that the academics do not bring this issue to bear.

Several weeks ago I listened to Forest Service colleagues and professionals discuss the real possibility that forests of the future will feature stunted and stressed trees that never again reach the heights we are accustomed to seeing. Climate change, intense storms, aggressive insects, invasive plants, and altered soil regimes will lead to completely different forests. You know this will happen, does it not matter?

Is it the intent of the GMNF that Vermont's local, revered forestscapes be set on a path to pulpwood production? If trees do not grow into reasonably straight sawlogs, will the focus be on wood pellets and pulpwood for engineered lumber? Does it no longer matter whether the forest regenerates to some semblance of its traditional, healthy splendor? These are big questions that reveal major societal, economic, and ecological impacts, impacts deserving of an EIS. Without a fair and balanced EIS, the Forest Service is just another contributor to the eventual decline.

Thank you.