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Organization:

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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I support option C in the forestry portion of the plan. There are significant portions of the area with forest in less than optimal condition for wildlife. There is too little early successional habitat, too little softwood, and too little complexity and too few age-classes, so much of the area is less valuable to wildlife than it should be. Doing nothing will leave the entire area and our wildlife's needs unaddressed. Option C creates some much-needed early successional habitat, while also allowing for protection of some areas that are functioning as old growth, and allows for forestry to enhance old growth characteristics in other areas. This is the best option to support biodiversity and all of our wildlife, especially from the perspective of climate resilience.

I also do not support further backcountry huts in areas which are not already heavily developed. These relatively pristine areas are the most valuable portions of the national forest only because they are undeveloped. It would be a profound loss to develop these areas when there are already plenty of accommodations and opportunities for recreation in the more heavily developed areas of the national forest.

I remain very concerned about heavy trail development in the plan. It is not the trails themselves I worry about, it is the dramatic increase in traffic on these trails that disturbs wildlife and degrades the ecological integrity of these areas, while detracting from the recreational opportunity of other users. In other areas in Vermont with dense, heavily used trail networks these negative effects are already well-established. Please limit construction of new trails to areas which are already heavily developed, such as immediately surrounding existing campgrounds and other areas that will not impact existing off-trail recreational and management use such as hunting, and which will not disrupt areas which are currently more remote. Please refer to [https://www.uvm.edu/femc/attachments/project/999/annualMeeting/2021/presentations/Meredith\\_Naughton.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/femc/attachments/project/999/annualMeeting/2021/presentations/Meredith_Naughton.pdf) for more detail on the effect of human traffic on wildlife.