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Comments: Regarding Wilderness Standard Forest Plan Amendment-Trail Management #63551:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Considering the current state of the environment, and issues related to biodiversity in particular, I am concerned that the proposed changes will have a negative impact on both population density and diversity. Research confirms the detrimental effects of trails, roads, and any other incursions into wilderness and roadless areas on flora, fauna, water and soil structure (including carbon storage), etc. Reducing the oversight on trail work, creation or relocation, is contraindicated if the health of the ecosystem is important. There is so little wilderness currently that there should not be any actions that could result in reducing its quality, its health, or endangering it in any way. There should not be an amendment to allow new trails or trail relocation in Wilderness. Any new trails and trail relocations should be evaluated and include an EA or EIS, and should not be considered at all in a Wilderness area unless it is within an established trail corridor. Additionally, the designation of existing, unauthorized trails and their associated corridors into the trail network should not be included or allowed, because trails do not have a positive impact on Wilderness character, but actually have a distinct negative impact on Wilderness ecosystem health.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Joy Lipton, Ecologist, Chester VT