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Comments: I think the assessment for the Escarpment is solid.

Indeed our second and really successful burn for oak management was in East Middlebury. We had the first oak management field workshop for practitioners there and for college field trips for many years to share the successes. Anyway I think you've done a good analysis with best and current science.

The inventories I did in the oak belt in 1980 and then in 1990 showed such loss of oak communities due to defoliation and subsequent Armillaria root rot, it was very alarming and sad.

For people concerned with species diversity, unique forest types and associated TES plant communities, No Action is the poorest choice of all. Using an opinion on abundance of azalea is somewhat disingenuous as where it, moccasin flowers and paninis thrives is where we conducted Rx fires, Oak silviculture and even Chestnut research silviculture.

I think your plan is solid and you're doing the right thing to propose actions to hang onto those oak, red pine, pitch pine communities I first noted in 1977 and in 1980-81 inventories on the Escarpment.

While incorporating Glyphosate into the management scheme is legitimate in forestry operations, it is a hard sell given the nature of VT citizens and the bad press it has in Europe and elsewhere. The forest went through various periods of some herbicide use, then no use at all. I think given the risk of losing the shrinking oak and pine communities, the low probability of any of it leaving the project area into water ways, risking human or ecological damage from it makes it an appropriate tool to have in reserve. It will help overall project success and is just what the agency should be doing. Taking an aggressive stance on active land management for rare and disappearing forest types.

The footprint from the project overall is modest. The tools you're proposing have proof they work. As always bringing along a skeptical public and gaining their trust has been and will be difficult. I'm confident the current staff has the skills, knowledge and passion to bring this about. The field trips and monitoring data tells the tale and provides facts in the face of the nay sayers.