Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/13/2023 4:00:00 AM
First name: Lisa
Last name: Thornton
Organization: VT Dept Forests, Parks & Recreation
Title: Stewardship Forester
Comments: The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is concerned that the mountain bike trails connecting to the Pesky Cairn Trail that are proposed in the Telephone Gap IRP could exacerbate existing parking issues at Gifford Woods State Park, which is the only existing trailhead for the network on the west side of VT-100. Current trailhead parking at Gifford Woods State Park is limited, and the increasing popularity of the existing mountain bike trails is impacting park operations. Trail censor data gathered over the past few years illustrates the popularity of the trail. During that time 8,000 to 15,000 bikers per year used the Pesky Cairn Trail. We are concerned that the impacts to park operations could increase with the proposed connection to the Velomont Trail especially if alternate solutions to parking and trail access are not implemented.

The Department is supportive of providing recreation opportunities, including mountain biking, through Gifford Woods State Park. However, we must ensure that adequate parking is provided, and that park operations and the camping experience are not negatively impacted. We would like to collaborate with partners to find a solution to the growing demand for trail access at the State Park trailhead. We request a meeting with trail partner organizations including the US Forest Service, the VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation, Killington Mountain Bike Club and the Town of Killington to discuss and scope out potential solutions for how we might address parking and mountain bike trail access in the area.