



April 8, 2022

Martina Barnes, District Ranger
Green Mountain National Forest
2838 Depot Street
Manchester, VT 05255

Re: Early Successional Habitat Creation Project

Dear Ms. Barnes,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and as a local resident and sportsman who relies on the affected area for hunting and fishing access and other recreational pursuits, please accept the following comments on the draft Reduced Roads and draft Unit Pool Acres Adjustment Supplemental Information Reports for the Early Successional Habitat Creation Project on the Manchester Ranger District.

CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislators to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. CSF has a strong track record in Vermont, working with the Vermont Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and conservation partners to protect and advance Vermont's sporting heritage by supporting pro-sportsmen legislation and state fish and wildlife management objectives.

CSF works on behalf of Vermont's sportsmen and women, the chief funders of state-based conservation efforts and significant contributors to Vermont's economy, that rely on access to the Green Mountain National Forest to pursue their outdoor pastimes. In 2020 alone, Vermont's sportsmen and women contributed \$14.76 million to conservation funding generated through hunting and fishing licenses and excise taxes on sporting-related goods, the "user pays – public benefits" American System of Conservation Funding. Additionally, Vermont's 254,000 sportsmen and women have a significant economic impact in the state spending more than \$442 million, supporting more than 6,810 jobs, and generating more than \$50 million in state and local taxes.

Young forests and other early successional habitats are important for ruffed grouse, American woodcock, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, black bear, and snowshoe hare. These habitats, which

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are in short supply on the Green Mountain National Forest, are also critical for supporting nongame species including Canada warbler, rusty blackbird, and rock vole which are all identified as High Priority species for conservation in Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan.

We therefore strongly oppose any reduction in timber harvests, including the proposed reduction in total pool harvest acres for potential treatment from 17,435 acres to 14,270 acres.

Additionally, we oppose the proposed exclusion of harvest acres beyond one-half mile from existing permanent roads. Excluding timber harvest beyond one-half mile is short-sighted, as resource management decisions should be based on forest health and wildlife habitat needs, not an arbitrary predetermined distance. Further, we oppose the proposed elimination of permanent road system construction for harvest area access and the proposed reduction of temporary road construction to 8.6 miles to access harvest areas. In addition to providing important habitat diversity as linear wildlife openings, roads provide access for sportsmen and women and are essential for maintaining management capabilities.

Thank you for considering our comments, and we look forward to continuing to participate in the process as the project is finalized.

Sincerely,



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