

Todd Waldron
Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society
Northeast Forest Conservation Director

September 7, 2023

Christopher Mattrick – District Ranger
USDA Forest Service
99 Ranger Road
Rochester, VT 05767

**The Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society Supports the Green Mountain National Forest
Dutton Brook II Oak/Chestnut Release**

Dear Mr. Mattrick:

Thank you for allowing us to submit comments on the Dutton Brook II Oak Chestnut Release Project.

RGS & AWS strongly supports this project and applauds the Green Mountain National Forest for your efforts to promote forest resiliency, wildlife habitat diversity and healthy and functioning forest landscapes. We support science-based forest management and silvicultural activities like those incorporated into Dutton Brook II Oak/Chestnut Release proposal and we're available as a conservation partner to help the Forest Service move these projects forward.

RGS & AWS unites conservationists to improve wildlife habitat and forest health for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and all forest wildlife. We promote forest stewardship for our forests, our wildlife and our future. We envision landscapes of diverse, functioning forest ecosystems that provide homes for wildlife and opportunities for people to experience them. Ruffed grouse and American woodcock are bellwethers of forest condition – they can only exist in healthy, diverse forests. These same forests clean the air, filter water and support local communities. Together with the American Woodcock Society (established in 2014), we work with government agencies to restore wildlife habitat diversity using science-based conservation approaches.

Our comments regarding the proposed vegetative management activities follow below:

The vegetation management recommendations proposed in Dutton Brook II Oak/Chestnut Release are aligned and consistent with the forest-wide goals and objectives relating to ecological diversity found in Section 2.2.2 of the Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service 2006). Specifically, Goal 2 of the Forest Plan, which is to "maintain and restore quality, amount, and distribution of habitats to produce viable and sustainable populations of native and desirable non-native plants and animals." This includes numerous objectives associated with forest structure, composition and age class diversity. The proposed treatment is a science-based pathway to achieving the Forest Plan goals and desired conditions.

RGS & AWS supports and applauds the Dutton Brook II Oak/Chestnut Release Project. As a national and regional conservation partner with members and a chapter in the Green Mountain State, we support the Forest Service's efforts to initiate this project and we look forward to working with the agency as a key partner and stakeholder.

On behalf of our members and supporters, we thank you for your careful consideration and action to support healthy forests, abundant wildlife, climate solutions and promoting a conservation ethic in Vermont. RGS & AWS would be happy to comment further or address questions on these considerations.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd H. Waldron

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