

Mature and Old Forests Help Protect Us from Climate Change. Stop This Massive Logging Job in Vermont's National Forest!

In Brief

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is proposing to log 11,800 acres of mostly mature and old trees in Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) east of Brandon. This massive "timber sale" is part of a management plan called the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project (TGIRP).

The Telephone Gap timber sale has been called one of the ten worst projects in the U.S. by Climate Forests, a national coalition of 120 environmental groups. This massive and highly destructive logging job would devastate an area larger than the entire City of Burlington. It would endanger the water quality of Chittenden Reservoir, introduce invasive species, and destroy habitat needed by threatened and endangered species.

National Climate Impact

The areas proposed for logging have major concentrations of trees between 80-160 years old, which science shows accumulate and store the most carbon in the fight against climate change compared to young trees. The GMNF has greater carbon density than most forests in the Eastern US; we should manage this public land for the benefit of the climate and biodiversity, not cut it down.

The largest 1% of trees store 30% of all aboveground forest carbon in the US. We should not be spending our tax dollars to subsidize cutting old trees. Our children and grandchildren alive today will bear the brunt of the climate catastrophe that is happening all around us. The International Panel on Climate Change states that time is running out for action. On the global scale, forest protection represents approximately half or more of the climate change mitigation needed to hold temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Research also shows that New England's forests could store two to four times more carbon if we just let them grow old. Letting these old trees stand is one of the most effective things that Vermonters can do. We must put our public forests on a different path.

Please Act Now

The public has through Monday, March 13th to submit a comment for the Telephone Gap project. The USFS has already approved 40,000-acres of logging over the next 15 years, more than at any point in the past three decades. Your voice must be heard to stop or reduce the amount of logging. Here's what you can do:

Attend the open house on Feb 9th from 6-8:30pm at Barstow Memorial School located at 223 Chittenden Road, Chittenden, Vermont, 05737

Submit a comment (or several, if so inclined. There's no limit to the number of submissions)

- Use the talking points on the next page for guidance
- Use the US Forest Service comment submission form,

Go to this link: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=60192>

Or scan this QR code:



Telephone Gap trees uphill from Chittenden Reservoir



Clearcut on GMNF near Rochester, Vermont



Commenting Suggestions and Talking Points

Make your comment personal

Whether or not you've ever stepped foot in the Green Mountain National Forest, make your comment letter personal by describing your connection to the landscape or why you care about protecting public forests for the climate, clean water, and biodiversity.

Reckless and out of touch

Mature and old-growth forests excel at removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. And yet, 92% of the areas proposed for logging in the Telephone Gap timber sale are classified as mature or old by the Green Mountain National Forest, violating President Biden's historic Executive Order from Earth Day 2022, which directed the US Forest Service to protect these forests for the benefit of the climate and biodiversity. In December, the US Forest Service withdrew a timber sale in Oregon called "Flat Country" because it targeted mature forests of up to 150 years in age. Telephone Gap proposes logging forests up to 160 years in age. If Flat Country was important to withdraw, why is the Telephone Gap timber sale moving forward?

Species on the brink

The Northern Long-eared Bat is a species that is teetering on the edge of extinction. The US Fish and Wildlife Service listed the bat as "endangered" in November 2022. The Northern Long-eared Bat prefers mature and old-growth forests for roosting and foraging – exactly the sorts of areas that are proposed for logging. Much of the Telephone Gap project area is suitable habitat for this endangered bat.

Headwaters at risk

The Telephone Gap timber sale threatens important headwaters for Otter Creek, which flows into Lake Champlain, as well as the White River, a tributary of the Connecticut River. Logging threatens water supply areas like the Chittenden Reservoir, and risks exacerbating flooding in downstream communities. Imperiled brook trout and reintroduced populations of Atlantic salmon depend on cold, clear water flowing from these high mountain streams.

Wildlands on the chopping block

The Telephone Gap timber sale proposes nearly 2,600-acres of logging inside the 16,000-acre Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area, second largest in the entire Green Mountain National Forest and one of the largest wildlands in Vermont. Straddling an undeveloped and rugged section of the Long Trail from Brandon Gap south towards Chittenden Reservoir, this area is important for wildlife habitat and connectivity as well as quiet recreation.

After you submit your comment, please contact Vermont's congressional delegation to tell them that you oppose the Telephone Gap project:

Rep Becca Balint: (202) 225-4115

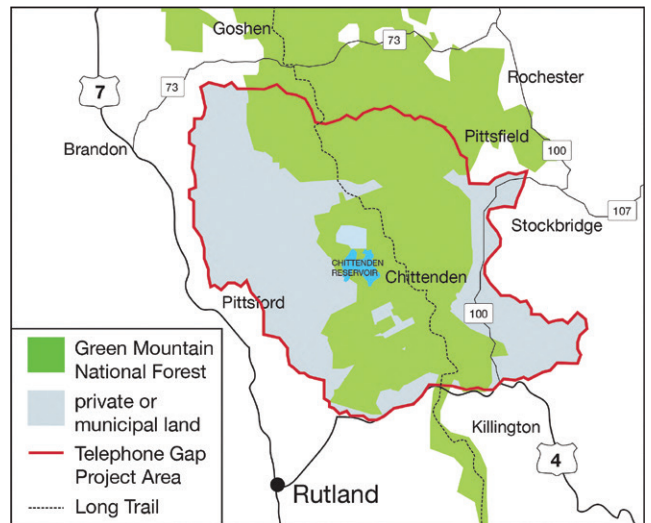
<http://balint.house.gov/contact/>

Sen Bernie Sanders: (202) 224-5141

<http://sanders.senate.gov/contact/contact-form/>

Sen Peter Welch: (202) 224-4242

<http://welch.senate.gov/share-your-opinion/>



General location of Telephone Gap logging project



Hikers near Telephone Gap

