

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/12/2023 11:06:55 PM

First name: Matthew

Last name: Orchard

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project. I am local to Vermont, but more importantly, hyper local to the proposed project. I live in Brandon, Vermont, and frequent much of the forest the Forest Service is proposing to "manage" through logging. I fish and camp at Chittenden Reservoir, I hike the trails near and around Brandon Gap and often explore the long trail and its many tributary trails and paths within the Telephone Gap area. I would personally be devastated to see any extractive practices such as logging occur within this beautiful landscape. The recent logging that occurred directly across from the entrance to the Chittenden Brook hiking and camping area on route 73 was extremely upsetting and has resulted in me no longer using the trails near that area. I would hate to have to repeat this behavior due to further logging in areas where I go to interact with natural landscapes unscarred by human activity.

I'm a carpenter here in Vermont and have an appreciation for our need for timber and wood materials, however, I cannot understand how in the context of climate change, that landscapes set aside for the public would be considered as appropriate for harvest. It would seem reasonable to me that we could set aside our public lands and the forests within them to perform their natural roles while using privately owned land as a source of lumber for our needs.

Furthermore, it seems that your proposal uses parameters set by a forest plan that was written in 2006. Much of our current understanding of the risks of climate change, including the speed at which our climate is changing and the roles that trees can play in mitigating future climate change has been studied and updated since then. How then, in today's age of vast information and rapid change in scientific understanding, can you feel comfortable creating such a large impact plan based on science that is almost 20 years old? You may feel there is great benefit from your proposal to local industries and to the bottom line of your agency today, but I beg you to consider what the long term impact of your decisions will have on our children, grandchildren and generations to come. We are quickly running out of time to make a significant impact on future climate change conditions and this proposal will only exacerbate the challenge to our natural landscapes to sequester carbon and to help keep our planet and home cool.

There are many things we can do to try and minimize the impacts of climate change, and leaving our current forests standing as they are is perhaps one of the biggest roles we can play as Vermonters in stabilizing the current climate.

Please reconsider your proposal. Please reconsider the contribution to climate change this project would result in. Please reconsider opening roads for machinery in areas where our forest are currently unimpeded from this type of damaging infrastructure. Please reconsider the impact you will have on the many species of birds, mammals and fish who rely on our intact forest for food and habitat. Please put the forest first and not the economic bottom line. We as humans only have a few more years to make any attempt at keeping atmospheric levels of CO2 at safe level for humans, animals and forest to thrive.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Orchard

Brandon, VT