

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/17/2025 8:48:35 PM

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Comments: You will make the right choice,

When I received Jay Strand's email on December 3, 2024, I cried. Tears of despair and "how can this be so" ran down my cheeks. Where do I go to find solace when I'm feeling this low? The woods. Specifically my local forests - the very ones you wish to destroy. We do not stand for it.

District Ranger Christopher Mattrick blindly prepared a draft Decision Notice; I oppose his "Finding of No Significant Impact for the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project." There is significant impact, and our previous comments and objections were not adequately considered. Please listen to not only us objecting the Telephone Gap project, but also to all the birds living in nests, the lynxes roaming, and the trees standing tall here. They are all also crying out, not to be "managed" for they do not need to be managed. Mother Nature has all the necessary work history to do an excellent job of it herself. Step outta her way, get outta your fog, and DO NOT LOG.

There are so many more people in addition to me that have a deep connection, if not ancestral, to this land. We demand that this logging project be canceled, and the proposal entirely shut down. I live in Rutland, Vermont, on stolen Abenaki land, mostly because of the natural climate, of which we are so lucky to still have left. The beauty. I'm sure that's part of why you are in this position, too. If you take this away from us, you are losing your community, and negatively impacting thousands of humans, millions of animals/insects, and countless lives in the forest and those who go to the forest to heal, breathe, and live their best and only precious lives. We are all connected, and this project, if seen through, would be like cutting off my legs, your legs. This is not an exaggeration, for we are so thoroughly reliant on what this forest provides. It is inexcusable to bring this project forward, as it does not provide resources or public benefit - it is destruction.

You say this project would "improve wildlife habitat, restore soils and wetlands, a sustained network of roads and trails, increase recreation opportunities, and timber harvesting to provide wood products for the local and regional economy while enhancing forest health and diversity," but this is doublespeak and a mirage. It would negatively impact wildlife by removing habitat. Fact. It would put a road in a place that needs not a road, but fewer footsteps. Putting a road in to log is a waste of resources, an eyesore, and destroying the magic of this roadless place. One of the few we have left. A more accurate impact statement would be that this project would be a tragedy. Our local economy is struggling and improving in other ways and the wood for regional products is not a necessity. The economy, or a few loggers profiting in the short-term, is not a good reason to log. Think about the long-term goals for Vermont, the climate, tourism, your 'grandchildren'.

There is no healthy way to meet your project's objectives, you have to reassess your objectives and listen closely to the public comments. Start from scratch if you have to, because that is what you'd be doing to these old-growth forests if you were to cut them down. You'd be forcing them to start over, from nothing. There is only about 2,000 acres left of old-growth in our Green Mountain National Forest, an already terrifyingly small number, and it must be protected. We are the green mountain state after all. This provides rare habitat and is super important to so many species, only one of which is the human species. Not to mention the huge amounts of CO2e that this project would release into the atmosphere. The climate impact alone should have warranted significant impact. Reassess. Stop the Telephone Gap project.

When I open your email come March, I will be delighted to hear that this project is no longer on the table. The table that is, underneath your working hands, probably made from wood. Touch it, remember where it comes from, how it has sacrificed its life to serve you. And let it be the last sacrifice for you, for the "economy" that takes

already too many lives in its service, for something abstract and negligible in the big picture. Hug a tree instead, and look up at the sky, and breathe.

Sincerely,
Bianca Amira Zanella
The Paper Poet