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First name: Bob

Last name: Atchinson

Organization: Declare Emergency

Title: Core Team Liaisons Organizer

Comments: Project: Telephone Gap Integrated

Resource Project

Responsible Official and/or Ranger:

Christopher Mattrick, District

Ranger, Rochester and Middlebury

Ranger Districts, Green Mountain

National Forest

Dear Christopher, Citizen of the Planet and Lover of Nature,

It is with great urgency that I submit my objections to the latest plan for Telephone Gap. I am a native Vermonter, born in Newport, and have loved the forests of our beautiful Green Mountain State, since I was a young lad. Later in my life, I worked as a high school X-country ski coach and brought young skiers to adjacent touring centers at Blueberry Hill Inn in Goshen, Rikert Ski Touring Center in Ripton, and Mountain Top Ski Touring Center in Chittenden - as well as the Long Trail, which weaves through the Green Mountain National Forest. I love skiing in the forests in the winter and hiking and paddling in warmer seasons. These moments of recreation and beauty are an anchor to my physical wellness and my soul, as I am sure they are for you.

I find it an insult that this project, even purportedly backed by the convoluted environmental statement, is still hell-bent on going forward. You and your peers know, as well I do, that we do not have a long future on this Planet, if we do not start treating it with respect.

This means:

Respect for biodiversity of species in the Telephone Gap and all public lands in Vermont: It is interesting that the appearance of the Canadian lynx on your headquarters security camera has blown your statement that there are none in the area - (whoops!). My take is that the biodiverse population of our forests celebrate what habitat we have left for them and don't need to have harvesting in their back yards, (nor ours.)

Old Growth: The 817 standing acres of old growth that the Telephone Gap logging project would cut is more than a third of the remaining 2,000 acres of old growth in the 400,000-acre Green Mountain National Forest. In other words, only 0.5% of the entire forest is old growth, and the Telephone Gap project threatens this extraordinarily important and rare habitat. Given the collective carbon-sequestering capabilities of these forest giants, how could you even think that this is a sane plan, and that anyone in their right mind would consider performing this act of insult to Nature?

Climate Impact: From your own, commissioned environmental study, (BTW, thanks for sharing the info,) the Telephone Gap project would release 254,556 tons CO₂e, the equivalent of driving more than 60,000 average passenger vehicles for a year. This is the climate impact from just one of the National Forest's logging projects - the Early Successional Habitat Creation, Robinson, Somerset, and other recent projects are all on a similar scale, and conceivably are already releasing similar or greater amounts of climate pollution. As an energy coordinator and auditor in the town of Plainfield, our team celebrates the savings of reducing the fuel costs/carbon by a third in any structure, and I find it personally insulting that your proposed "treatment" project flies in the face of the hard work that we do to make our Planet more habitable and survivable for all of human and animal kind. This year, our Planet has exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius. At this rate of exponential warming, there is doubt among the scientists, (of which are one), that we will not get out of this next decade without exceeding 2.0 C, which will bring pain and suffering to all species.

So, together, as a civilization/citizens that care for one another's well-being, we all need to ACT NOW, while we still can. ACTING NOW means taking a hard look at what the USFS is risking here, and graciously cancel this crazed project. There is no second chance to get it right.

Fierce Love for all Species,
(Signature as image below)

Bob Atchinson,
Declare Emergency,
Energy Coordinator
Climate warrior
Plainfield, VT