

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/6/2023 4:06:20 PM

First name: Claudia

Last name: Damon

Organization: K4ZNBV

Title:

Comments: Rescheduling nearly 12,000 acres in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF), over 90% of which is classified as old growth, for clear-cut is an enormous mistake, indeed even an abomination for a number of reasons, including the following.

We are in a climate crisis and trees, especially older growth trees and the forest community surrounding them, provide efficient carbon sinks that must be maintained.

Forests often contain more than 60,000 different species that are displaced or destroyed during logging. Significant research results (obtained by scientists like Suzanne Simard) have taught us about the complex mycorrhizal network that connects life in forest communities. This fungal network connects trees, shares nutrients, and offers communication between multiple species. That would be destroyed by logging.

Of the nearly 12,000 acres proposed for logging, 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. Have you ever hiked there?

The Chittenden Reservoir is threatened by this project. It's a water supply source and should not have to face the risk of diminished cleanliness or clarity of its waters.

My family lives along Otter Creek in Vermont. We drive along the White River to get there. We often cross the Connecticut River and have spent time canoeing all three rivers. The proposed logging threatens the headwaters of Otter Creek, which runs into Lake Champlain, and the White River, which runs into the Connecticut River. The proposed logging threatens the clarity and cleanliness of the river waters and thus threatens imperiled fish like Brook trout and Atlantic Salmon.

I have a friend who is a renowned expert on bats and she tells me that the Northern Long-Eared Bat, listed as "Endangered" by U.S. Fish and Wildlife just a few months ago in November of 2022, prefers mature and old-growth forests like those of Telephone Gap for foraging and roosting. How is it remotely justifiable to destroy such important habitat for endangered bats?

It's crazy that we, as the most intelligent species on the planet Earth, are hell-bent on destroying the planet that provides our living conditions. That would make us suicidal. Let's not do that.