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Comments: To whom it may concern,

The proposed logging of Telephone gap will have direct negative impact on our local environmental and human health. This stands against our current state and national goals to alleviate pressures on natural systems. The forest itself is a place where diversity of not just plants and animals, but also, microbes abound. Vermont is a small and quickly redeveloping landscape. After a century of forest regrowth, we are now losing forest to land clearing and building development statewide. Much of this is due to the natural resources and beauty that allure people and business to the green mountain state. If we do not adamantly stand up for our narrow swath of protected land, what forests will rest undisturbed to house our local biodiversity and keep our recreational and tourism industries alive. Biodiversity is the key to building soils, fighting erosion, and maintaining healthy organisms(like us). The watershed of the White River is one of only a couple in the state that has no current dam. This is of great benefit to the ecosystem, however it produces greater flood potential with no control of the river flow. This area was hard-hit in hurricanes Irene and Sandy. Many people lost their homes and livelihoods. The logging of higher elevations in the watershed would only exacerbate problems of erosion and flooding in the next major weather event.

If we do not cater to the microbial diversity in our landscape (which has disappeared from our managed lands), there will be little ability for plants and animals to rebound after a disturbance (such as logging). We will find ourselves with even worse flooding (hard to imagine). We must fight to maintain at least some old forests to host our plant, animal and microbe friends (like the endangered long ear bat). Log elsewhere, lower elevation and on private land to alleviate the physical and financial pressures that logging Telephone Gap will have on our local economy and health.