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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a native New Englander, the Green Mountain National Forest is dear to my heart. It is a wonderland for connecting with nature, and protecting our public forests is vital.

Mature and old-growth forests excel at removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. And yet, 92% of the areas proposed for logging in the Telephone Gap timber sale are classified as mature or old by the Green Mountain National Forest, violating President Biden's historic Executive Order from Earth Day 2022, which directed the US Forest Service to protect these forests for the benefit of the climate and biodiversity. Telephone Gap proposes logging forests up to 160 years old.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Northern Long-eared bat as "endangered" in November 2022. This bat prefers mature and old-growth forests for roosting and foraging - exactly the types proposed for logging. Much of the Telephone Gap project area is suitable habitat for this endangered bat.

The Telephone Gap timber sale also threatens important headwaters for Otter Creek, which flows into Lake Champlain and the White River, a tributary of the Connecticut River. Logging threatens water supply areas like the Chittenden Reservoir and risks exacerbating flooding in downstream communities. Imperiled brook trout and reintroduced populations of Atlantic salmon depend on cold, clear water flowing from these high mountain streams.

The Telephone Gap timber sale proposes nearly 2,600 acres of logging inside the 16,000-acre Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area, the 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, connectivity, and quiet recreation.

I oppose this disastrous project.