

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/7/2023 4:39:52 PM

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Comments: Since the Telephone Gap project was announced publicly in 2021, members of Extinction Rebellion Vermont have spent countless hours attending public meetings, participating in USFS field trips, meeting with elected officials, joining coalitions of concerned citizens, consulting with scientists, staging rallies, and so on. In every interaction we've had with the Forest Service, we've encountered knowledgeable and polite staff. We acknowledge the Forest Service is tasked with an enormous challenge of accommodating the needs and interests of a variety of stakeholders - not the least of which are the forest flora and fauna that cannot speak for themselves.

We are confident that now, nearly two years later, the Forest Service is well aware of a large and growing opposition to the possible logging of Telephone Gap. This opposition is rooted in current, peer-reviewed science, and it's nourished by the well-reasoned emotional energy of the forest-loving general public, of Indigenous people, of youth, of recreation enthusiasts, and of parents and grandparents who care about the generations of the future. Extinction Rebellion Vermont fully supports this opposition to logging in Telephone Gap.

Despite the unmistakable public resistance to the logging of Telephone Gap, the USFS summarily ignored nearly every concern raised over the past two years in their Proposed Action filed on January 27, 2023. This suggests to us that the Forest Service is in denial about the climate crisis and/or is too committed to the timber industry to acknowledge that life on Earth is inextricably linked to an ever-dwindling population of mature and old forests like that which is found in Telephone Gap.

These trees are Worth More Standing. The forest ecosystems of the Green Mountains are some of the best in the world at sequestering and storing carbon. No matter how the Proposed Action spins it, there is no justification for destroying these invaluable stands as the planet surges toward climate catastrophe.

By submitting this letter, Extinction Rebellion Vermont continues to follow the "right" way of expressing disapproval of the Telephone Gap project. While treading this path, we also express our intention to do everything in our power to maintain these invaluable ecosystems. We will not compromise in defense of this forest and of the human and non-human communities that rely upon it.

Extinction Rebellion Vermont