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Comments: I would like to request that the leadership at Green Mountain National Forest withdraw the current proposal for cutting at Telephone Gap and devise a plan more cognizant of the connection between abatement of climate change and the carbon-uptake of our oldest trees. Vermont is at the forefront of efforts to adopt public policies that take climate change into consideration. In forestry, transportation, and home energy-use alike, our little state has a highly visible role in the national conversation. Please reconsider the current plan from this perspective.

With a regular hiking partner who lives in the town of Chittenden, near the proposed cut, I have explored the woods around Telephone Gap. There are only a few forests left in the Green Mountains with comparable stands of mature trees. As a sugarmaker, I am well aware of how little one is paid for timber from our selective cutting. Furthermore, with fewer and fewer mills operating in Vermont, much of the wood that does get cut ends up going to mills in Canada. What does stay in Vermont is likely to go into chips for large-scale electric-generation projects, which have been shown to contribute an alarming amount of carbon into the atmosphere.

For all these reasons, it seems wise now to reconsider the Telephone Gap proposal.