

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/11/2023 5:00:01 PM

First name: Wallace

Last name: Elton

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I write to express my opposition to the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project #60192 as currently proposed. Actually a massive timber sale, this project targets primarily mature and old forests. In light of the growing climate change and biodiversity crises as well as Biden administration guidance, this proposal defies common sense. More than 90% of the area of the project contains such old forests that are more valuable to humans and the planet standing than as logs. They store carbon, reduce flooding and the impacts of drought, protect clean water, and provide habitat for numerous less common wildlife species. Only about .3% of our New England Forests are more than 150 years of age, so it is beyond understanding why we would want to cut those included here.

In addition, this project would:

1. Include an inventoried roadless area south of Brandon Gap that should be protected.
2. Jeopardize water quality in the popular Chittenden Reservoir.
3. Contribute to the potential spread of invasive species.
4. Harm a wonderful opportunity to educate people about old forests and trees and for Vermonters to soak in the peace and tranquility to be found among big trees.

The Forest Service has canceled other timber sales on the basis of administration guidance and should do so here for even more reasons.

At the very least, the Green Mountain National Forest should dramatically scale back the logging aspect of this project, if not end it entirely, particularly in light of the fact that the Forest already has an unusually large amount of logging projects approved for the years ahead. A previous forest plan that I participated in the development of called for preserving future options. That is still a good goal. And we know far more today about the values of old forests than we did then.

I urge you to shift your focus to helping Vermonters enjoy and appreciate the old forests we still have.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.