

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/11/2023 6:18:52 PM

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Comments: My concern about the proposed timber sales in the Telephone Gap in the Green Mountain National Forest is my concern for maintaining the biodiversity of the forest.

I have learned that ninety-two percent, or 10,855-acres, of the proposed Telephone Gap area are classified as mature or old (up to 160 years of age). These are exactly the forests that President Biden's Executive Order of 2022 to conserve mature and old-growth forests is intended to protect.

I am very concerned about the following: large trees sequester a great deal of carbon, they anchor the soil and prevent erosion, they protect water quality, they provide a home for multiple insect species which are food for songbirds, and they protect the other wildlife that depends on trees for food and shelter. Furthermore, taking out large trees allows more room for invasive plants, which then make the forest less beneficial for wildlife.

I agree with many people and groups that the Telephone Gap review needs to consider more recent scientific studies than the 2008 studies that are being used for this project.

Ultimately, I believe we need to leave our National Forest land forever wild so that it can anchor the biodiversity that the Earth needs to survive. Continuing with our historically human-centered approach to the natural world is potentially catastrophic. Prioritizing management of

our National Forest for industrial resources should be secondary to maximizing its health and biodiversity. It is time to re-examine our thinking. The forest will give us everything we need if we first give it everything it needs.

We must err on the side of giving our forests more than we think it needs because the opposite is recipe for disaster.