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Comments: I was a resident of Vermont for 4 years, my partner for 5 ... it is absolutely ludicrous to think that a government agency with a mission of "sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations" has proposed a project as ecologically destructive as the logging of the Telephone Gap of the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF). It is even more ludicrous, yet not surprising, that this project could be brought to fruition despite more than 13,000 public comments from Vermonters and individuals living elsewhere, opposing this potential action from the United States Forest Service (USFS).

Those who have taken the time to comment on the Telephone Gap logging proposal certainly take pride in conserving the natural ecology of Vermont, and it has been outlined that the USFS's plan would fail its very mission on all fronts. Trees drawing and storing carbon are our best bet at mitigating climate change across future decades, and 92% of the trees being targeted are considered mature; chopping these down would not only be discouraged due to their increased carbon density, but also illegal. The logging of mature trees was recently outlawed under President Joe Biden's 2022 Earth Day (April 22) Executive Order. Taking away the one resource that would best protect future generations only inflicts harm to the very forests the USFS vows to protect and sustain!

In addition, this proposal would also negatively impact both the fauna and human communities living within or around the GMNF respectively. The Northern Long-eared Bat is a prime example of a species being reliant on mature and old-growth forest; recently reclassified as endangered in November 2022, this small mammal will need beneficial intervention (no, extracting their homes from the forest does not fall into this category) in order to stave off extinction. If the trees they reside in are to be taken away, nearby waterways will have a greater chance of flooding and disrupting wildlife and human habitat.

The way in which the systems of our planet are all connected is becoming increasingly evident with the progression of climate change; the actions we take to destroy our only home have many consequences, and I hope whoever reading this comment can understand how the logging of the GMNF Telephone Gap would impact every facet of life within the beautiful state of Vermont and beyond. To those at the United States Forest Service ... I say, "no, let it grow!"