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Comments: I would like to voice my objection to the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project - specifically the proposal to cut thousands of acres of this beautiful mature forest. At a time when we are facing a true existential threat to humanity and the planet we must re-think our old models of what got us into this mess. We have to listen to the current clear and hard science which is urging us to protect old forests and consider climate friendly alternatives to intensive cutting as is detailed in this proposal. My friends at US Forest Service - I call on you to do what is right and reject this proposal.

At the moment the world is experiencing the 6th mass extinction of all forms of life on the planet. We are seeing the dramatic decline in biodiversity on virtually every continent, extreme weather events have become the norm with unprecedented droughts and flooding every year in the North East. The EPA has reported that New England is among the fastest warming places on the planet. Forests like the Telephone Gap wilderness offer a multitude ecological services and is our greatest hope in the fight to counter climate change. These forests and their older mature trees sequester the most carbon dioxide from the atmosphere - currently storing half of the world's above ground carbon. This reason alone is enough to disregard an out dated proposal which did not take climate and sustainability into consideration. Furthermore, forests such as that at Telephone Gap provide resiliency in the case of flooding and drought. Environmental assessments show that logging this area will negatively impact the Otter Creek and White River and will exacerbate flooding in downstream communities and farmlands. The Telephone Gap wilderness is one of the largest wildlands we have in Vermont and we are deeply blessed to have this healthy maturing ecosystem. It is a vital hot spot for multitudes of migratory birds which depend on this forest and its young and old trees, as well as its dead and dying trees. Many of these species are or are soon to be threatened or at risk species. Vermont is seeing a loss in its native bat populations and a cut such as this will prove devastating to some of our most vulnerable bat populations. Not to mention negating all the hard work that communities and conservationists have done to help these populations begin to make a comeback in our lands. Needless to say this area provides crucial habitat and connectivity to a great array of wildlife and is home to threatened and endangered species.

We must change the way we view our forests and our landscape in general, away from the capitalist-commodity view. We need to recognize just how valuable these wild places are, as they are, serving the greater good of us all and of all life. I hope we can adopt this view now when mature forests are more valuable to sustaining life on earth then they have ever been before. I encourage the US Forest Service to stop this project until it can demonstrate compliance with President Biden's 2022 Executive Order to protect mature and old forests and make proposals that follow suit. Furthermore, I would like to see the US Forest Service working with local communities that live within the greater landscape of these environments, along the watershed and bordering forests where intensive logging is in question. I look forward to more transparency in regard to our public lands with Vermonters in the conversation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.