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First name: Lynne

Last name: Bailey

Organization:

Title:

Comments: This, and the plans for cutting old-growth across the country, ARE INSANE and totally at odds with President Biden's historic Executive Order from Earth Day 2022, which directed the US Forest Service to protect these forests for the benefit of the climate and biodiversity.

I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO STOP THIS PLAN !!

1) It is extremely RECKLESS AND OUT OF TOUCH

Mature and old-growth forests excel at removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. And yet, 92% of the areas proposed for logging in the Telephone Gap timber sale are classified as mature or old by the Green Mountain National Forest. In December, the US Forest Service withdrew a timber sale in Oregon called "Flat Country" because it targeted mature forests of up to 150 years in age. Telephone Gap proposes logging forests up to 160 years in age. If Flat Country was important to withdraw, why is the Telephone Gap timber sale moving forward?

IT PUSHES MORE SPECIES INTO EXTINCTION

We need to preserve the biodiversity of our forests. The Northern Long-eared Bat is a species that is teetering on the edge of extinction, and was listed as "endangered" in November 2022. The Northern Long-eared Bat prefers mature and old-growth forests for roosting and foraging - exactly the sorts of areas that are proposed for logging. Much of the Telephone Gap project area is suitable habitat for this endangered bat.

HEADWATERS AT RISK

The Telephone Gap timber sale threatens important headwaters for Otter Creek, which flows into Lake Champlain, as well as the White River, a tributary of the Connecticut River. Logging threatens water supply areas like the Chittenden Reservoir, and risks exacerbating flooding in downstream communities. Imperiled brook trout and reintroduced populations of Atlantic salmon depend on cold, clear water flowing from these high mountain streams.

WILDLANDS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

Of the 11,800 acres proposed for logging, the Telephone Gap timber sale proposes nearly 2,600 acres of logging inside the 16,000-acre Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area, second largest in the entire Green Mountain National Forest and one of the largest wildlands in Vermont. Straddling an undeveloped and rugged section of the Long Trail from Brandon Gap south towards Chittenden Reservoir, this area is important for wildlife habitat and connectivity as well as quiet recreation.

WE THE PEOPLE WANT TREES IN OUR FORESTS - LOTS OF OLD-GROWTH TREES!