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Comments: We understand that The Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project (TGIRP) plans to harvest nearly 12,000 acres of over 100 year old forest, create new access roads, and replant areas harvested. (We were disappointed that we were unable to download explanatory documents on March 12 from the fs.usda.gov Website)

For over a century this area has been performing what forests naturally do without human intervention or management: it has been splitting the carbon atom sending oxygen to the atmosphere and sequestering carbon with only solar energy via the miraculous photosynthetic process. The forest community has been doing precisely what is necessary for helping to keep the Earth's atmosphere and surface temperature suitable for all life, while at the same time providing food and shelter for the animal world of which we are a part.

If the TGIRP were to be approved much fossil fuel energy would be expended in building access roads, harvesting lumber, and replanting a new forest, while at the same time turning the former forest into a net carbon dioxide emitter until a new forest gets slowly established. After the trees are cut down, much of the wood may end up being used as biofuel, creating yet more CO<sub>2</sub>. The reduced ability of the forest to absorb and slowly release water from increasingly severe storms will create downstream damage that may yet create more CO<sub>2</sub> from the use of fossil fuels to repair any flood damage. Where is the carbon production/sequestration timeline for this project?

We object to the TGIRP at this time as we are entering a new era brought on by our excessive use of fossil fuels, the cause of rapid climate change. This project stands in opposition to Vermont's Global Warming Solutions Act to reduce greenhouse gas pollution to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. Furthermore, this project may not adhere to Pres. Biden's "Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies" issued on Earth Day 2022.

We believe that a better policy on forests would be to either leave forests alone, doing what they do best, OR harvest wood selectively and wisely for local specific demand purposes only.