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Comments: I strongly oppose the proposed timber sale and subsequent logging in Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest as part of the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project (TGIRP).

The largely roadless area of Telephone Gap is where my family and I regularly visit to recharge, rejuvenate and recreate, particularly the Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area. The solitude and isolation of this ecologically critical region is exceedingly rare in the Northeast and therefore wholly deserving for continued, wilderness-level protections.

Old growth forest comprises only a tiny fraction of New England's National Forests, yet sizeable portions of Telephone Gap comprise trees over 150 years old. Indeed, over 90% of the proposed logging would occur in what the Green Mountain National Forest classifies as mature or old. On Earth Day 2022 President Biden declared in an Executive Order that the Forest Service must protect mature and old growth public forestlands for the benefit of biodiversity and climate and the Telephone Gap logging proposal clearly falls within the President's mandate.

Logging in Telephone Gap would pose severe negative impacts on a host of rare and endangered species dependent on the mature forestland. Species include the Bicknell's Thrush, Canada Lynx, Pine Marten, Snowshoe Hare, Black Racer, Spotted Turtle, Wood Turtle and the critically endangered Long-eared Bat.

The loss of mature forest cover poses downstream flooding and pollution hazards. Headwaters negatively affected by logging include the White River, an important tributary of the Connecticut River, as well as Otter Creek feeding into Lake Champlain and various feeder streams supplying public water supplies.

Equally, if not of greatest importance is Telephone Gap's key role in carbon capture and climate protection. The science behind a mature forests' effectiveness at carbon capture are well documented; on these grounds alone the logging proposal is needlessly reckless and ill advised. The TGIRP must include carbon capture and climate protection as a key objective in the management plan. In that regard, large-scale logging as proposed must be removed from the TGIRP.