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Comments: I have been following this project for some time and am coming at this from the angle of slowing down the warming of our climate and preventing further loss of biodiversity in our Vermont forests. I am a member of Pollinator Pathway which protects native pollinator habitat, including in our forests, because many pollinators rely on forests for food and habitat, especially in spring and early summer.

In regards to slowing climate change, a study by the University of Vermont, "Late Successional Biomass Development in Northern Hardwood-Conifer Forest of the Northeastern United States" by William S. Keeton, et.al, 2011, shows that New England forests could store 2-4 times more carbon if left to grow old. Leaving mature and old trees to stand is one of the best strategies that we can do to combat climate change and species extinction. This should be the highest priority for the National Forest Service.

I am stunned that the second draft of this Telephone Gap Plan still allows nearly 12,000 acres in the GMNF to be logged. The Telephone Gap timber sale has been singled out as one of the ten worst projects in the United States by Climate Forests, a coalition of 120 environmental groups in the U.S.

The US Forest Service has committed to a nationwide Forest Plan amendment process that will update its stewardship of mature and old-growth forests. Because most of the logging proposed in the Telephone Gap contains project is mature forest up to 160 years old, the Forest Plan should be followed and the Telephone Gap project should be put on hold until the amendment process is completed in 2025.