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Comments: I'm writing in response to the Forest Service's proposed timber harvest in the Telephone Gap area. Although smaller than the original 2023 plan, the site is still huge. Old growth can't be replaced. It sequesters carbon, maintains water quality, provides habitat for flora and fauna whose safe spaces are shrinking dramatically, mitigates drought and flood dangers, and preserves Vermont's historic legacy.

As stewards of our public land, the Forest Service has the duty to listen to citizens and the responsibility to take action to preserve and protect. Logging doesn't accomplish either of these but severely degrades this area for decades to come. We don't have time to wait another 160 years for a new old growth forest to replace this one. Vermont is already losing so much with climate change. When we have a climate asset in this forested area, protect it, don't log it for short-term dollars when mature forests are desperately needed to combat climate change.

Old forests are exceptional for sequestering and storing vast amounts of carbon, protecting water quality, and mitigating droughts and floods. Today, just 0.3% of New England forests are older than 150 years.