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Comments: To the US Forest Service, with regard to the plans for Telephone Gap:

It is deeply concerning for the Forest Service to have taken the short-cut of filing an Environmental Assessment for the Telephone Gap project, after proposing such drastic forest destruction. In this era of climate change, witnessing its impacts in Vermont like record-setting rain events, not only flooding towns and valley farms but filling our high elevation hay fields with standing water throughout last summer, it is appalling that the Forest Service would try to duck the clearly necessary Environmental Impact statement for this important forest.

Proposal Alternatives C and D show a consciousness for stewardship by lowering the scope of the targeted forests in terms of area and intensity, but Alternative A is the only one that acknowledges the level of crucial importance of these forests to help rebalance the excessive carbon load in our atmosphere.

Plans for logging in all Inventoried Roadless Areas including the 16,000-acre Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area, should be permanently tabled. With the mature stands in Telephone Gap at 80 years old and older, we have an opportunity to continue to re-grow the thriving ancient forests that once stood here, although recent science shows that even then, they won't measure up to the giants that once graced our Green Mountains.

We do not have time on our side. The world we're all in does not resemble the world of a century ago, not even the one of 50 years ago. Swings in average temperatures, rainfall and droughts are extreme and getting more so. Like proverbial frogs in the simmering pot, it is wrong (and moronic) for us to ignore the markers of climate emergency and think we're in a new normal. The survival of life's complex interwoven fabric now rests upon people's ability to learn from our excesses. Now is time to pull back, and enact policies of restraint that allow for forest recovery rather than operationalize extraction for highest profit.

Leave the profits to private landowners so they can better preserve their forests. The Forest Service should focus on stewardship of public lands to ensure that people and wildlife have access to places that epitomize the foundation of quality of life.

Please back away from your plans for Telephone Gap. The people of Vermont and every creature that lives there will thank you for putting aside your executioner's axe.