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Comments: Good Morning Green Mountain National Forest People,

I have lived my long life in forests and am intimately acquainted with forest life. I am writing to share my deep belief that Telephone Gap should remain an intact forest free from development, road building and logging in any manner whatsoever. There are myriad reasons for this, some of which I have outlined below. Indeed the FMP should read, "Leave As Is".

1) Planet Earth is in a biodiversity crisis - old and growing older intact forests are among the ecosystems that harbor the most biodiversity.

2) Planet Earth is in a climate crisis - old and growing old intact forests are among the most resilient ecosystems - they create weather, regulate moisture and more, thus stabilizing the climate.

3) Old and growing old forests:

- Clear and clean our water sources, aquifers, ground water and streams.
- Are home for rare and uncommon biology, plants, animals, fungi, insects, soil life, etc., etc., many of whom cannot survive in their mutually beneficial symbioses outside old forest ecosystems. Once destroyed they they may take decades or even millennia to recover and may in fact disappear.
- Sequester, accumulate and store vast amounts of carbon in the biomass and soils.
- Experience naturally occurring disturbance events creating gaps that studies have shown to provide adequate early succession habitat for birds and animals requiring such habitat for reproduction and foraging. Indeed these birds and animals survived for millennia without our patch cuts and other damaging logging practices.
- Experience naturally occurring disturbance events creating gaps that studies have shown do not fill up with invasive plants and encourage excessive deer browsing, preventing natural regeneration as do intentionally logged gaps.

4) Studies show that allowing middle-age forests to achieve old growth status could double the carbon storage so vitally important by the end of the century.

5) Forest degradation has shown to negatively affect some declining bird species such as warblers.

6) Logging creates the need for more and more roads:

- That fragment the landscape, always resulting in the loss of biodiversity for animals, plants, birds and other living organisms that require unfragmented, large tracts of land for reproductive success, genetic health and variability and foraging.
- That create more and more edges which studies have shown invite common (often considered "pest") species such as raccoons, deer and rodents as well as invasive plants to use as corridors bringing them closer to human living spaces where they become habituated to humans and human food sources, thus losing their "wildlife" status.
- That due to climate change (exacerbated by large scale logging) the ground is not freezing to a depth or indeed freezing at all especially in wet areas, to allow the ever heavier logging equipment to enter a forest without irreparably damaging the ever wetter and softer soil. This damage including compaction, destroys the soil's ability to absorb water resulting in runoff and erosion further damaging the soil, soil life, carbon storage and biodiversity. Hibernating reptiles, amphibians, insects, fungi and other soil dwelling organisms will be killed.
- That some western states with National Forests are now closing and remediating their excessive forest road systems because they are so harmful to wildlife and healthy resilient ecosystems. Why is the Green Mt. National Forest creating new roads where there should be none at all?

7) Studies have shown that migrating species are dependent upon large intact forests to complete their migrations. Vermont is replete with migrating species.

8) I haven't heard of an economic analysis proving that the wood products removed from middle-age, growing old and old forests pay for: administrative services, logging operations including salaries, insurance, fuel, machinery, transportation, road construction and deconstruction and other infrastructure and personnel expenses as well as carbon emissions and still make a profit that can justify the environmental destruction - which truly is not

justifiable.

9) Not logging Telephone Gap will have a negligible impact on the timber industry because most of the wood products we consume originate on private property, not public lands. The last figure I read was 3.4% of wood products originate on public lands.

10) President Biden signed Executive Order #14072 detailing the protection of mature and old growth forests from logging. Why is the Green Mountain National Forest management plan defying this order?

11) Vermont has Act 59 detailing the protection of biodiversity - 30X30 and 50X50. Telephone Gap and other Green Mountain National Forest land is ideal for meeting this goal in Vermont. Why is the Forest Service planning to destroy this invaluable land?