

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/22/2024 4:00:00 AM

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Comments: I am writing to give my comments regarding the Telephone Gap Project and the proposed actions and alternative actions for this project.

First I believe the priority for the Forest Service regarding this project should be the environmental protection of the wildlife, fish, forest, plants and waters in this area. Though I am not totally opposed to timber sales on our National Forest lands, these sales should definitely take a back seat to the environmental protection of nature. This should without a doubt be the main focus of the Forest Service.

Here in Vermont there are abundant private forest lands being managed by professional foresters that can fill the need for forest production in this state. However, I believe that some areas on the fringes of the forest in this area can be logged for the purpose of wood products, but none in the interior parts of this project area. This would include the Long Trail, all the lands that can be viewed from Chittenden Lake and all lands above 2,000 feet elevation.

There can be vegetative management (other than wood products) in my opinion on lands that are in the interior parts of this project area that include cutting of diseased trees and cutting of hardwood trees to free up regrowth of evergreen trees to help restore the more natural historical mix of forest types in the area. At these higher elevations this would prioritize red spruce which is more heat tolerant than balsam fir in this time of global warming.

It is also of critical importance to protect all the old growth stands in this management area for the purpose of carbon storage. Stands of old growth have been scientifically proven to be of great importance as carbon sinks sequestering great amounts of carbon both above and below ground.

I also support the construction of a parking area approximately 1 mile east of the Long Trail and turning the road into South Pond into a hiking trail.

I also support the cutting of some trees along the Long Trail in order to open up some scenic views as long as it requires very little tree cutting.

It is my strong belief that in the Telephone Gap area and the GMNF as a whole that approximately 75% of the remote interior parts of the forest should for the most part be left to (over time) return to a wild natural state. The management of the forest by man should occur mainly on the 25% fringe areas of the forest.