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Comments: I urge you to end a project planned for the Telephone Gap in the Green Mountain National Forest. The U.S. Forest Service is opening this old-growth forest to logging, an area not logged for 75 to 150 years. There are no roads in this forest, one of the few roadless areas in the GMNF.

Here are some effects of the "Telephone Integrated Resource Project":

- This project will release 254,556 metric tonnes of carbon, equivalent to an additional 59,377 gasoline vehicles driven in our state for a year.

- 817 acres of old-growth forest will be cut. Invasive species will be encouraged, interior-dwelling plants and wildlife will be displaced, the contiguous forest will be fractured, the integrity of the soil will be disrupted, and erosion will be exacerbated.

- 1,800 of the 16,000-acre Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area near Rochester will be logged, one of the state's largest wild forests.

The wood products industry declares that our forests need to be "managed" in order to maintain their health. Actually, our Northeastern forests are recovering from historic aggressive logging. If left alone, these forests will provide us with clean water, reduction in flooding and temperature extremes, sequestration of carbon, and production of oxygen.

These old forest stands do not exist for the benefit of commercial industry; they exist to benefit us. In fact, they belong to us.

The National Forest is but a very small portion of forest in Vt. All privately owned forest are available for harvest. Why not leave our National Forest untouched to benefit to the environment.