

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/15/2025 7:35:41 PM

First name: Heather

Last name: Cantino

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Having previously submitted comments on the Telephone Gap GMNF project proposal, I write now, per 36CFR218, to object to the Forest Service's FONSI and choice of Alt. C. This project should be cancelled. I write both as a New England native who has hiked extensively in the GMNF and as a US citizen profoundly concerned about loss of our nation's mature and old growth forests, especially in our National Forests, including irreplaceable loss of precious biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and ability to moderate climate and the hydrologic cycle. Reiterating my earlier comments on the project, the IPCC "states that time is running out for action. On the global scale, forest protection represents approximately half or more of the climate change mitigation needed to hold temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Research also shows that New England's forests could store two to four times more carbon if we just let them grow old." In a year in which the planet has actually now passed this 1.5 degree danger point, protecting mature public forests that are in the public's control TO PROTECT is new information that adds to the urgency of this decision. Other new information since your preliminary EA comment period began in March 2024 includes the documented presence of a Canadian Lynx immediately adjacent to the project boundaries, contrary to your project's Biological Evaluation claims of no such presence in the vicinity. Furthermore, contrary to your claims of minimal impacts on old growth under Alt. C, the project would cut 817 stand acres of old growth, a significant figure given the US Forest Service's new estimate (June 2024) that only 2,000-acres of old-growth exist in the entire 400,000-acre GMNF. Given that only 0.5% of the entire forest is old growth, the Telephone Gap project would significantly and irrevocably threaten this extremely rare essential habitat. I urge you to cancel this ill-conceived, anachronistic, and dangerous project.