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Comments: To USDA/Mr. Sinclair,

The Telephone Gap project must not be allowed to proceed as is. Vermont's relatively small portion of public land is a treasure and comprises some of the last old growth forest in the contiguous States. I grew up near where the proposed logging op is taking place and have fond memories of my first interaction with wild leeks, aka ramps, in the small piece of national forest on Route 100, during a 9th grade Ecology class. We also had the fortune of witnessing a cross section of a very old original growth stump at the info stand, trees which rarely can be seen today. The scale and diversity of a mature forest is unmatched compared to forests actively being "managed" by humans, federal or private. Unbroken stretches of forest such as the proposed area are becoming more and more rare as transplants continue to buy land and build sanctuary homes to escape the spectre of diseases like COVID as well as the drudgery and bleakness of large cities. There are plenty of opportunities on existing public and private lands for recreation and "entertainment" of tourists and guests from elsewhere. The intrinsic value of this timber land as it exists, even if only a small fraction has never been touched by human hands, is incalculable as an undisturbed, living ecosystem, and must be preserved as such for the benefit of both plants and animals, as well as the intrepid public. Let the various private landowners do their own management of 90% of the state, and keep public land preserved and self managed by the original management; nature.

Thank you for opening commentary on this project.