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Comments: You must stop the proposed U.S. Forest Service (USFS) plan to cut trees in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) in Telephone Gap. Located in central Vermont and a source for watersheds, including the White River, much of Telephone Gap is remote wilderness blanketed by mature forest. The plan includes cutting in 11,000 acres (the size of the City of Burlington.) Additionally, new roads could be carved out of the GMNF wilderness to support the logging operations. This adds to the 43,000 acres of the GMNF already approved for logging and releases a 1/4 of a million tons of CO2 into the atmosphere!

Among the many reasons the USNF should not carry through with your plan to cut in the Telephone Gap include:

1. 92% of the area proposed for cutting include forest areas defined as old and mature.
2. This plan threatens newly defined endangered species, the long eared bat.
3. This plan threatens the headwaters of the Otter Creak and the White River, and risks exacerbating flooding in downstream communities
4. It targets one of the largest wild lands in Vermont.
5. It is not operating according to the intent of President Biden's historic Executive Order from Earth Day 2022, which directed the US Forest Service to protect these forests for the benefit of the climate and biodiversity.

The plan to cut Telephone Gap is based on a 2006 study. That study and the Telephone Gap Plan hardly mention the newest science which shows forests have the capacity to hold 2-4 times more carbon to help with climate crisis if we don't cut them. Allowing at least the public forests to be wild gives Vt the chance to increase our amount of old growth forests and therefore our carbon storage ability. We do want our Forest Service to follow a scientifically sound direction that increases forest protections to help mitigate the climate crisis not continue to degrade our forests based upon old science, weakening the natural world's ability to store carbon and maintain biodiversity upon which we all depend?

Please move away from logging and toward natural climate solutions that store carbon in mature and older forests and allow naturally regenerating forests to continue growing for greater carbon accumulation.