

Do Not Clear Cut Telephone Gap

That there were more open places in New England forests is a myth. There were occasional fires started by lightning, but the forests weren't ever "managed" by Native Americans (with fire). It's why they survived here in an undisturbed, natural setting for the thousands of years of their history.

We have more than enough wild open area now—under electrical wires, abandoned and fallow farm land, and on managed private property.

That we must continually have 'succession forest' in process is a myth.

That old growth forest and our woodlands in Vermont should be 'for the best benefit for the most people' is propaganda for the lumbering and hunting interests. The interests of the forests and native species should come first. That should be the primary goal of any forest management.

Clear cutting to create successive forest will soon destroy any old growth trees, especially those 300-400 years old (white pine). These are treasures we cannot, and should not, lose.

Fact: The older trees absorb more carbon. Old growth forests absorb the most carbon, more than young forest. Clear cutting is an environmental disaster by releasing carbon into an already carbon compromised atmosphere. Regardless of any friendlier term used, clear cutting is clear cutting. Spraying fungicide on clear cut areas is abhorrent.

The cases for declining populations is misunderstood, manipulated, or has no science to it. That America woodcock and ruffed grouse populations are declining has not been studied adequately to declare that. What it actually means is that hunters would like to expand the population to increase hunting of this species--they want more open land created to achieve that. It's not a decline in population, it's a desired increase by hunting interests, at the expense of our forests.

It's estimated that there are 18 million grouse. Hunters kill over 2 million every year. This is not a 'decline in population'—it's an increased desire for hunting. Wood thrush is not native, and actually prefers old forest.

The golden winged warbler has declined because it hybridizes with the blue wing warbler, not for lack of habitat. Nor are they native. So why would we clear cut our natural, old growth forest to create habitat for a non-native species?

For prairie fowl, indeed, western grasslands should be preserved for them. But there's no good reason—or good science—that can justify cutting our forests. The "State wildlife action plan" is a plan to get federal money and allow logging profits and hunting interests to drive a destructive forest management plan.

Do not clear cut in Vermont; do not clear cut in Telephone Gap.

Sharon Shea
Rutland, Vermont