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Comments: I attended the meeting about the North River Management and Restoration Project and am gravely concerned about the logging and burning to take place on such a large area (by east coast standards) in such steep terrain. It is well known that Maryland and Virginia have spent substantial money over the past decade trying to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. It is possible to lose 2,900 tons of soil per square mile annually in a forest. Without the trees holding the soil in place the area will become depleted and left with only rocky slopes. It takes 100 years to produce 1 inch of topsoil.

Right now we are under attack by invasive species. When land is cleared here in the Shenandoah Valley invasive species immediately move in: Paradise tress; Autumn Olive; Japanese Stilt Grass to name just a few. Removal of the current stand of native trees and shrubs is not a wise decision.

At the meeting one of the foresters stated that carbon sequestration is preformed better by rapidly growing young trees. Most experts agree that the old growth forests with complex root systems along with soil best helps us clean the air of carbon dioxide. The best way to combat climate change is by planting trees and by not destroying forest ecosystems.

Here in the Valley we are experiencing tornados for nearly the first time ever and with increasing regularity along with other weather extremes such as flooding and drought. In light of all these things our current way of doing things needs to be re-examined and past practices of clearing steep mountains of trees perhaps should cease until we enter a period of greater weather pattern stability.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns and for the informative meeting and program put on by our local foresters.