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First name: Olivia

Last name: Francisco

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I grew up in Vermont, with an adventurous family, and a love for nature. I spent hours in the woods behind my house with my brother building forts out of fallen branches and making "potions" from mud, leaves, and berries. I remember spending entire weekends outside with my parents doing yard work, and I remember having compost and worms in my fourth-grade classroom. I learned the hiking trails around me quickly and early on, and got to know the trees in my life like good friends.

I remember an early fall day when I was five years old. The hills had all changed to bright warm colors, so my teacher took us outside and up to the hill behind our school to sit and look at the mountains while she talked to us about why the trees changed colors. I remember sitting alone, looking at all the colors against the gray, cloudy sky, just thinking about how beautiful it was. It was a simple moment, just a kindergarten class looking at trees, but it changed me. I remember the way the hills of Chittenden County looked to me that day, the same way they look now. Those unbroken seas of green, or orange, or sticks, or sometimes (hopefully) white are what make my home, home.

Having a deep relationship with nature from an early age has undoubtedly shaped where I am today with my studies, personal practices, and beliefs I hold around environmental issues. My Vermont childhood as a good friend of the trees affected where I chose to go to college and what I chose to study, how I choose to spend my money and time, and the conversations I have with those around me. When something was so integrated into my life and mind, how could it not shape my future? The trees of Vermont made me who I am, and they're still shaping me. When I go in the woods and I see plants, I know that I am in the right place. I know that fighting for the trees is the right thing, the only thing that makes sense. I know that protecting the habitat of animals that would lose their homes to this project, like the Northern Long-eared Bat, or the creatures of the Otter Creek, Lake Champlain, and the Chittenden Reservoir, and more is what really makes a difference to Vermonters and our land.

There was already a time when our brave little state lost 80% of its forests to logging, and we are so lucky to even have mature and old growth forests to fight for. Please, don't set us back on the path to losing the trees we all love so dearly.