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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Cathy Boyd, and I live in Grand Isle, VT. My husband and I frequently enjoy walks in the public parks nearby-Knight Point, North Hero State Park, and Grand Isle State Parks in particular. We moved to Vermont permanently after bringing our family here on vacation for 20 years, because we treasure all that the Green Mountain State has to offer, and we eventually felt the call to live up here. We couldn't be happier.

I run a consultancy as a healthcare market researcher, and I am also a Vermont Extension Master Gardener and I have a PDC (Permaculture Design Certificate).

I oppose the proposed logging in the Telephone Gap for the following five reasons.

1) These are public lands. They are meant to benefit all the human and non-human residents of Vermont-not just the private sector companies that seek to profit from the destruction of these beautiful natural forests-lands that we, as Vermonters, expect to enjoy, and have a right to enjoy. Clearcuts add no value to the quality of life that Vermonters expect, in terms of beauty, recreation, fresh air and water; lands free of pollution, erosion and flooding.

2) The forest is not a factory. All vegetation has its time and place. "The right plant in the right place." One perennial is not like every perennial. One annual is not like every annual. One tree is not like every tree. The ecosystem is complex and incredibly varied with each specie's different contribution to the whole and each specie's different needs for survival. Every living thing has its role in the ecosystem. But the indiscriminate obliteration of forested lands ignores this truth. Blanket clearcuts destroy a universe of life. Forests replaced by monocultures of "renewable forest resources" are not qualitatively the same as old forest growth with the long-lived diversity of vegetation and habitat that lies under its canopy. A forest is not a factory where identical products rolling down the production line have the same function. It must not be treated as such.

3) Old growth forests are here, not just for the wildlife, flora and fauna, but for us humans, too. With the already evident consequences of climate change cementing the reality of its impact on human life, we need the best tools in our arsenal to combat climate change.

In fact, it was the Vermont Forest, Parks, and Recreation Department¹ that substantiated of the value of old-growth trees in their Forest Carbon report (November 2016). The report states: "Trees of different species and ages can differ greatly in the amount of carbon uptake and storage[hellip]Young trees have only a fraction of the amount of carbon stored in older, large-diameter trees." In particular, note Figure 1 in that report to see the dramatic difference in carbon sequestration in large-diameter trees vs small.

And in that same report they describe the value of carbon sequestration in the topsoil: "Soils also store carbon, and in some cases may store greater amounts of carbon than vegetation above ground."

The forest soil that has "cooked" for hundreds of years, teeming with life, is an important part of the carbon capture of old forests, and it, too, is compromised by the removal of those lands.

4) Preserving old-growth forest and the implementation of a Roadless Rule is consistent with the National agenda. The White House's stated policy is to safeguard mature and old-growth forests on federal lands. To that end, in January, President Biden officially reinstated restrictions on roadbuilding and logging on the country's largest national forest-The Tongass National Forest. US Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack in a statement called the Tongass "key to conserving biodiversity and addressing the climate crisis." What the Biden Administration

has done for Tongass and the country, Vermont should do for the Green Mountains and the people of Vermont.

We in Vermont don't bow to commerce. We have outlawed billboards in order honor the beauty and integrity of the state. We've minimized chain stores. Why would we infringe on any part of what we love best about Vermont- its pure and natural beauty? Especially when the beauty of the Green Mountain old-growth forests are a) effectively irreplaceable in our lifetime and in our grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's lifetimes and b) a superior way to ensure we meet our National climate change goals?

I would expect the Forest Service of Vermont to not leave it to a transplanted New Jerseyan to plead for the preservation of the State's old-growth forests and the rejection of logging and roadbuilding in the Green Mountains.

But here I am, pleading. Please reject the Telephone Gap proposal.

1 https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest%20Carbon-Nov2016.pdf