

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/13/2023 4:00:00 AM

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Comments: As you consider management plans for Telephone Gap, I encourage you to take stock of where we are now in history. We've never been in such a precarious place before.

The trees' ability to store carbon, filter water, and provide essential living space for creatures is of much greater value than simply lumber or fuel.

I offer these points for your consideration.

Life is fragile, especially now.

Overconsumption of natural resources has put us in a state of Overshoot, meaning that we humans are outstripping nature's ability to regenerate and sustain life systems. This severely impacts our lives and all forms of life.

Life has limits.

Any new plans to harvest from our national forests need to take overshoot and limitation into consideration. We no longer can refer to harvest levels of the past and repeat them. We need to take less. Our lives depend on that readjustment.

National forests are largely undisturbed areas.

Inserting 12 miles of logging roads would contribute to forest fragmentation, disrupt critical habitat, and increase opportunities for invasive species to take hold.

Forests are powerful in the face of climate change.

While humans busy themselves inventing technology (that may or may not work), trees are time-tested carbon sinks that work every hour of every day without interruption. As emission levels continue to rise, so does the vital role that trees play in balancing the atmospheric equation.

"Old" isn't "worn out;" Old is Capacity and Strength.

It is important to reserve old trees from harvest. Old and mature trees - those that haven't formally reached Old Growth status - have greater ability to store carbon than young trees. We need their strength and capacity. Unlike technology, which may or may not work, old and mature trees are helping to stabilize the atmosphere, filter water, and provide living space, as they have for eons. When we let them grow, they continue their life-supporting work every hour of every day.

"You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."

What is cut today cannot be replaced in an instant with the press of a button. Growth occurs slowly over time, and we are short of time in the face of climate change.

Please use your forest knowledge and professional wisdom to craft a plan that reflects the limits and consequences before us; a plan that

a) minimizes fragmentation

b) respects the life-giving and life-saving potential of old trees

c) respects the right of all non-human creatures to live, thrive, and prosper. Our fate is linked to theirs.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Ferry, East Barnard, VT

Attachment: drawing of a Canadian lynx