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Comments: This is the front page of the New York Times, dated August 29, 2023

"UNCHARTED WATERS

America Is Using Up Its Groundwater Like There's No Tomorrow

Overuse is draining and damaging aquifers nationwide, a New York Times data investigation revealed."

Today, I also received the following news regarding the U.S. Forest Service in New Hampshire:

"The U.S. Forest Service is planning a major timber harvest and prescribed fires adjacent to hiking trails on Mt Chocorua and in the nearby Sandwich Range.

The Forest Service's draft Environmental Assessment, just released on July 31st, calls for the operation to begin as soon as late 2023 and to continue for 5 to 10 years, covering 648 acres, and hauling out about 6 million board feet. The project includes prescribed burning of approximately 306 acres."

Several reasons to be against project:

Economics: "Timber brings more revenues than tourism." The life span of an average person is about 80 years, and an 80-year-old tree may still be considered young. Burned areas do not recover during the lifespan of a child born in 2023. So the burning of 306 acres, land that I have enjoyed being outdoors in would not be enjoyed by my one year old grandchild. The only memory that she could have of this burned area, is her grandmother's written pieces describing it and telling her how she enjoyed getting through the forest and reaching the peak of Chocorua through the different access.

Reduction of beech trees. Is the Forest Department aware that there are other species that have almost been eradicated by insects, Fungai, bacteria? If the intention is to reduce beech trees because they are overgrowing the area, I would recommend first studying why this event is happening. And there are other methods of controlling the overgrowing of one species. I bet that there would be plenty of volunteers with chainsaws of different sizes to sign up for on one or two days of cutting beech trees previously marked by the Forest Service. The cut down trees will disintegrate into the healthy soil of our forest. Just put an advertisement in the newspaper and I will join this project with my chainsaw.

This summer has taught all of us how devastating the rain can be. I cannot image the erosion caused from this year's rain on the 306 acres if the cut and burn had been done last year.

I am simply opposed to the use of the heavily machined log landing sites that will be scattered through area, at locations not specified. Heavy machinery can compact and kill the organic soil.

I can enumerate more reasons to oppose this project, but I am limiting myself. I wish someone would give the reasoning behind ecological disasters. Lastly, with our actual climate of extreme heat and rain records and battling the Emerald ash borer, the Asian long-horn beetle, the Hemlock woolly adelgid and in New Hampshire, the trees are recovering from a massive spongy moth infestation. Every conscious person and organizations are looking at ways to plant trees everywhere in the world. Why would the U.S. Forest Department propose such a destructive project?

Amalia Torres