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Comments: We all have our dreams. But in this critical time of climate disruption this is the time to wake up. The Foothills Landscape Project is a fairy tale. It misrepresents the facts and the reality. It abbreviates and curtails full public participation. In line with our present Whitehouse administration it moves our democratic process based on shared truths toward the autocracy of built lies. Forest Supervisor Jewett emphasizes that the goal is "the right job for the right reasons." But in this project, as in any, what should be asked are the right questions for the right reasons.

I have been late coming to understand this project because I don't live in either the foothills or in a landscape. But I have been put slap dab right in the middle of it. I live in this forest along Warwoman Creek in Rabun County. This is my home. To the south of my home the land rises to Rainy Mountain (elevation 2945"), to the northwest Pinnacle Knob (elevation 3,000'), and to the north Rabun Bald (elevation 4,784'). I live well into the Blue Ridge Mountains. Once a student of biologist Charlie Wharton I should have already known there was no way this could be the foothills. When I questioned a FS representative at the Clayton meeting on 12/4/19 he admitted it was an administrative decision. No where around me do I see any living forest community living according to this administrative unit!

As to "landscape," that is a picture painter's technical term to distinguish it from a seascape. What in the world is going on here? I don't live in a landscape! The FS is tasked with taking care of a living forest community for all of us, and they don't even describe it correctly? In our current time of cascading climate repercussions it is vital to our survival to understand what we are actually taking care of, and for why. The living community of this forest I live in is part of our humanity (we come from it!) To fail to name it responsibly is to fail to understand our own humanity (humus and human come from the same root in our understanding!). To fail to understand, and respect, our actual dependent and interdependent relationship to it is to fail our future.

As to "old growth," Supervisor Jewett said there are 5,000 acres of old growth in this project area. Where is that I ask? I see on their maps little spots here and there that would fit in a corner of my front garden! How do the few square yards under the canopy of one old tree near Warwoman Dell truthfully describe an area of old growth?

The FS thinks in 15-20 year plans. The forest I live in thinks and considers in long thoughts, in long and restful breathing and reflection - longer than any of our lives or civilizations. It is wiser than we are. We must listen to it.

Historically our view of saving them, couched always in terms of their economic resource, has led to their aggregate degradation. Supervisor Jewett says "we have to be more efficient," and bemoaned that environmental assessment has gone from taking 875 days to 1375 for a 3 year project. It's not cost effective, she says, for an assessment to take longer than the project. The true cost of this attitude is to not understanding what we are doing, and going ahead any way. This Foothills Landscape Project, oblivious to the 200+ plan of the forest community, shares with all the other FS plans in the past the colonial extractive and subjugating project that is destroying our patrimony and matrimony, our livable community.

"Think like a mountain" one FS presentation offered to illustrate their approach to this project. We must, if we are to survive much longer as a species, regain our kinship with the rest of the community of the living world. We must return to that community and be consciously part of it. THAT is what Aldo Leopold was actually pointing us to when he said "think like a mountain.". He meant not the physical mute presence of a mt., but to slow down and see the long interrelated living process that is as slow as a mountain's life and that we too are part of. We too are children of that creation. We are part of that nature, and part of its future. We've got to relearn those habits, patterns,responsibilities, rules of respect, coordination and consensual respect, and ethical behavior within that community. The future health of the forest finally depends on an articulate language the FS is not in possession of. When they quote Aldo Leopold they don't know how to comprehend what that means - they don't possess the language or the skills for that. The forest is not immune from the ravages of an extractive economy over centuries. Still its relative isolation here where I live has saved much that is precious and it is a "safe keep," a repository of a diverse habitat that is unique in our country.

Over the development of this project the misrepresentations, lofty jargon, lack of specificity, determinant shaping

of public participation, have increasingly felt like the FS is gaming us. This project is too big, too superficially constructed, too blind to actual needs of its forest communities. There are what seem to be good pieces in this project, but that's the problem - they are just pieces. All I have said above came into simple clarity at the FS meeting in Clayton on 12/4/19 when I asked 7 of the team implementing this project how long they had been here - none had been here more than-3 years. How can they possibly be effective stewards of our forest? They can't.