Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/22/2023 12:28:56 PM
First name: Phillip
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: In your public meeting you asked for specifics.

I oppose all of the harvesting of trees in the Telephone Gap IRP #60192 .

1) Mature forests are the best carbon storage facilities available. Your proposal mentions harvesting operations that would remove between 500,000 and 600,000 tons of carbon from the forest. The majority, by far, which would end up in the atmosphere in short order. But your proposal does not mention this carbon anywhere. This project will contribute more carbon to the atmosphere than all of the vehicles in our state over the course of a year. It is a carbon debt that we can't afford!

2) Mature forests are the best resources for sequestering additional carbon. Every harvest operation will decrease the forest's ability to help us curb atmospheric carbon. Depending upon your method of harvest, whether even age cuttting, which is the worse, or thinning, which is "destructive lite", our forests will become less capable of doing this all important task. So not only are we creating a carbon debt, but the interest on the debt is profound. This forests will not only take 25 -75 years(based on harvest type) to get back to zero, but all of the sequestration that was missed during this period because the trees were less mature, shorter, less efficient, etc. will take some additional years to make up.

3) Biodiversity is held in older forests. The old fashioned "young forests are healthy forests" doesn't work any more. And especially Not when I can find young forests in the thousands of acres in every county in New England, but mature and older forests make up a tiny percent of our forested lands. Creating more "habitat for wildlife" by cutting trees is just plain out of step with current understanding, even within the USFS. Creating common habitat for common species is no longer the goal of habitat conservation. Diversity needs to be protected, and that means protecting all habitats. Mature and older forests are rare. They contain rare species and rare genetic material that add to biodiversity.

There are additional reasons for preserving these forests like soil and water impacts that we can argue all day about. But these issues are not like the above issues which are now in the emergency stage. Climate change is now entering the emergency stage. It is no longer a debate about whether cutting these forests are a good idea or not. It is just straight up a really bad idea. It is a bad idea for the climate and for resilience in the face of the irreversible change that is now underway.