

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/23/2023 1:12:00 AM

First name: Frank

Last name: Zitkus

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Public-owned forests are under constant threat of timbering. The timber industry, typically supported by state public agencies (i.e. State Forestry and Wildlife Divisions), promote and promulgate supposed wildlife diversity and climate-change benefits of timbering to its municipalities, land trusts, private landowners and to the general public. Such benefits are non-scientific based but are accepted as facts as they are the experts.

Consultation with forest ecologists should be sought and included in all timbering proposals on public lands.

Forest ecologists are concerned with the actual health of the forests, its ecosystem services and biodiversity of species. Proforestation should be employed to preserve forests so that they can grow to old growth status. In

NE there is very little old growth forests and most of whatever there is lacks permanent protection. There are

many adverse impacts to timbering rarely if ever mentioned by oversight state agencies apparently not so

interested in forest health and diversity but much more so in timbering our public lands for private profit. Adverse

impacts such as the introduction of unmanageable non-native invasive species to land disturbed by timbering

threaten native plant and wildlife species survival. Managed lands are less biodiverse, less resilient, more prone

to fire, drought, flooding, wind damage, soil erosion and compaction.

Measures need to be taken to permanently preserve public forests so that the greatest ecological and climate change mitigation benefits can be realized. Old growth forests afford us the least costly, most effective means of protecting biodiversity, preventing species loss while maximizing carbon storage and sequestration...all facts that forest ecologists can provide!