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Comments:

The proposed logging of Telephone gap and elsewhere in the Green Mountains is based on a Forest Service Plan that was released in 2006 and founded on information that is even older. It is out of date and does not take into consideration the terrible climate predicament we are in now. In fact there is no mention in the Plan of the climate crisis affecting our planet or even the vital role of carbon sequestration performed by these mature forests.

This outdated plan should be abandoned, not put into action. The Forest Service must prepare a new plan, one that incorporates the newest research and is centered around the critically important role of trees, especially mature trees, in carbon sequestration. And it must incorporate the role of old forests in preserving biodiversity. **THESE FORESTS MUST NOT BE LOGGED NOW.**

With respect to the claim that this logging is necessary to create early succession habitat: There is PLENTY of such habitat in Vermont. It is being created constantly by all the forest landowners who have their land in Current Use. In fact the "rare" early-succession wildlife species that are claimed to need this degree of forest clearing were never native to this region. They expanded their range when European colonizers cleared old and mature forests for european-style animal husbandry and farming. The documentation of the "decline" of early succession species is based only on a very recent and arbitrary baseline starting in the 1960s.

What is sorely lacking in Vermont are MATURE and OLD-GROWTH forests. Forests older than 150 years of age cover only about 0.3% of New England, and almost all of them are in the Adirondacks and Catskill parks of New York. These forest are reservoirs of old growth biodiversity that has been practically eliminated in Vermont. They contain a high degree of structural diversity and a wide variety of tree species, herbaceous plants, insects, mosses and fungi, and deep, carbon-rich soil with an associated soil microbiome. By contrast, early succession is not rare , thanks to human intervention.

With respect to whether Northern hardwood forest is, according to one analysis, "over-represented" in the proposed logging area; What is the data? Palaeoecological records are notoriously spotty, dependent on small pockets of surviving, preserved material (pollen) that are very location-specific and may not be at all representative. Was the analysis based on pockets found in the Green Mountains?

AND really, it doesn't matter.

What matters is that trees are the only "technology" we have to remove carbon from the atmosphere. The Forest Service proposes to cut thousands of acres of mature trees containing a large amount of carbon, that are capable of sequestering more large amounts of carbon for decades to come, probably for another century. Logging will also release large amounts of carbon from the forest floor. It is an understatement to say that curbing carbon emissions and stabilizing atmospheric carbon NOW and in the next thirty years are crucial if we are to have any hope of limiting the climate crisis we are in. Logging these forests is an enormous step in the wrong direction, and only serves to further harm our beleaguered planet.