

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/13/2023 1:05:04 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the US Forest Service

My first exposure to a mature forest was in 1971 in Sherburne, Vermont (now Killington, VT) while working on the Green Mountain Club's Long Trail Patrol maintenance crew. Near the high point of Route 4, we walked through a forest of trees that two of us could barely, or couldn't, put our arms around. It felt like walking among the Greek gods, the columns of the Acropolis, or through the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

?Please protect Vermont's Old Growth and mature forests (and, of current urgency, the Telephone Gap area) for the benefit of the animals and plants that require the forest for survival; for the carbon the plants will store as long as the forests remain; for the benefit of humans who will experience the forests' beauty; for the protection of the above- and below-ground waters of Vermont?.

?Vermont's Old Growth and mature forests are necessary for the animals and plants that live there. Removing forest displaces animals to other areas that don't necessarily have the capacity to support them--in essence, reducing the animal population. Bears that survive on acorns and beechnuts would have to move, crowding bears in neighboring areas. A surviving pocket of a shade-loving plant species can't migrate, and could simply die out when the forest is removed and conditions change.

One might argue that converting timber to homes and furniture doesn't return the stored carbon to the atmosphere. But a significant part of a tree that is left on the forest floor to decompose does release its carbon to the atmosphere in a few years. If slash is collected for conversion to wood pellets, its carbon is quickly moved from storage to the atmosphere.

Considering that most Vermont timber comes from privately owned land, protecting publicly owned forests will have a very small effect on Vermont's wood industry.

Again, please ?protect Vermont's Old Growth and mature forests and, especially now, the old growth of Telephone Gap.

?David Fisk

Post Mills, VT?