

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/27/2023 4:00:00 AM

First name: Nicholas

Last name: Thorndike

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I am a native to this land and the forests here that you are requesting to be cut down for the harvest of timber. This proposal brings much sadness to me and my brothers and sisters of this land. We do not consent to this proposal.

6 years ago I moved back permanently to this land at the end of Whiteface Intervale. The reason was that I woke up to the destruction of daily life of consumption in this civilization. In one word, It is due to a separation in the mind of our interconnectedness of all that is. In this waking up, I realized I had a deep purpose to shift the way I was living to become closer to nature. I was gifted the perfect opportunity on this land to share a new way of being with the people around me and our message has even reached the other side of the world. Already within 6 years we have shifted peoples lives completely. We have given hope to those who nearly lost it all, the hope that humanity has a chance of turning things around for itself to build the future we want our children to live in.

We love where we live because it is as close to being untouched by man as it is. This proposal threatens that beauty. It threatens the integrity we hold for your organization that we believe you shared a common love for the forests. A love that bonds the people in a common unity. You are breaking that bond with your harvest.

Here in the intervale we host Lakota Sweat Lodges called the Inipi Lodge. This ceremony has been the un-severed thread of teaching the wisdom of nature and reconnecting humans to their mother earth. This ceremony is a way of observing nature as a part of us to be respected and spoken to. It is one way in which humans recognize the separation within us and allows healing to occur. In these lodges we sing traditional Lakota songs while we pray for the healing of one another, and the healing of the land. We will be praying at our next lodge that our trees are left to stand, that those who seek to cut them down will feel the oneness with the forests and treat her with the respect of ones own mother. As she is our mother. She gives us our food, our medicine, and our water, and if she is cut down without respect, not only our mother but we the people and our children will be the ones who feel that pain.

I live bordered against the national forest and hold much honor because of this. I thought it was a protected place that could bring safety for the forests. The thought of you cutting down our forest would taint this honor I hold for you. I would no longer look at your organization as one working for the trees, the animals, the people, and maintaining the beauty of our sacred forests. This decision would make visible the truth beneath your coat of good honor. Claiming good will in the name of betterment of all would only become a lie to hide the truth of greed.

I do not blame the people who are pushing this agenda. It is not about good people vs bad people. It is they system within humanity that drives itself. Not humanity that is at fault. This proposal is a manifestation of the ancient energy of that system, an energy that deceives it's victims as to its purity while the underlying intent is not with true prosperity in humanity. This energy runs through all of us in one way or another to varying degrees. I believe it's our job as humanity to recognize this energy within us and stand up to name that energy, not to blame one another. As humans, we are not that energy, we are divine spiritual beings in a school of life on earth. We are all brothers and sisters and we all want what is best for everyone. Who is cutting down all the trees best for? As our society crumbles and the divide thickens of wealth and poor, one day will come where it no longer matters how much wealth you accumulate. We will all be brought down to the same level. In that time we will see that the only thing that truly mattered was how well we cared for the earth, how clean we kept our waters, and how much life we brought into this realm with our being here.

I have grown up in these forests foraging and exploring the terrain you speak of. Almost every day that I walk these forests the thought runs through me of what would it be like to see these forests if in the past, these lands had never been harvested before. With every generation that passes we get closer to eliminating that question. Until we once again repeat the pattern of separation and continue to cut down again.

For the most part humans tend to think we know so much about our impacts on the environment because of science. I would largely disagree. The only humans I would begin to trust that they understand the impacts we have would be those who lived in harmony and alignment with the nature around us. Those of which we decimated their populations and drove off the land to fulfill the colonial mindset that has proven itself, now more than ever, to be a detriment to the entire planet. The western mindset we have taken on by our culture of separateness through our ancestors has severed that deeper connection we have that the people of this land still hold onto a thread of. We are to be the guardians of this forest not its destroyers, This land is not ours to determine its fate to turn a quick profit from. Perhaps rather than assuming we know what's best for the forest, we should consider the spirit of nature who is connected to everything always, may know far better how to manage itself compared to the egoic mind of man. Maybe it might be time to consult with those few natives left as to what they think is best for our environment.

As a service for the forest, this proposal is hypocritical of your organizations name to be cutting our relatives in such mass. I do not believe this proposal is a smart idea to put into action. I hope grace and humility surround you gently and that a decision is made in mindful, heart-full, consideration for the deep wisdom these great forests hold. Cutting these forests will be felt by your childrens children more than we will ever know. Be the one who thought about them. You are loved. you are being prayed for. Thank you for your time.

Many Blessings,

Nick Thorndike