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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USDA,

I write to ask that the Forest Service significantly reduce the acres of forest to be logged.

The logging conducted near Bingo Creek destroyed a chanterelle patch that my family had been harvesting for a decade. This ecological destruction was not considered in the choice to log this area and is not being fully considered in the updated proposals.

The logging of old growth must stop. The logging of any established forest must be considered only when necessary.

On the global scale, forest protection represents approximately half or more of the climate change mitigation needed to hold temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The largest 1% of trees store 30% of all aboveground forest carbon in the US. Public forests in New England store, on average, 30% more carbon than private forests. We should not be spending our tax dollars to subsidize cutting old trees on public lands.

Research by the University of Vermont shows that New England forests could store 2 to 4 times more carbon if we just let them grow old. Letting mature and old trees stand is one of the most effective things that Vermonters can do to combat climate change and extinction. Private forests are the source of 96% of the timber supply in Vermont, so protecting public forests would have minimal impact on the wood products economy. We must put our public forests on a different path.

Mature and old forests matter for a lot more reasons than the carbon that they store. These same forests are also powerhouses for biodiversity, clean water, and climate resilience. Many of New England's most imperiled species, including pine marten, Northern Long-eared Bats, and brook trout, thrive in healthy, old forests. Old forests excel at removing the phosphorus and nitrogen that drive algal blooms and dead zones in our rivers, lakes, and ponds. And they are exceptional at reducing the impacts of both floods and droughts, by slowing, sinking, and storing water.