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Comments: I was very pleased with the internet exchange on the 27th of March. I found it relaxing, informative and human. It also helped clarify internally, my position on the project. I have done some research over the years, being the owner of a traditional and rare plant Nursery here in Barnard and have grown trees from seed, as well as fern, alpine and water plants. I have just recently become very interested in old growth forests and what they can offer the realm of the world's carbon sinks. I am not panic stricken by global warming nor the "polluting gas" CO₂, since it is the life force of the planet. This is not to say we should continue to pollute the atmosphere when we do not have to.

The two great carbon sinks of the world, the Dem. Rep of the Congo and the Amazon basin are facing issues of deforestation and the Amazon with the added problem of drought. There are still the Boreal forests of Canada and Russia. and the great forests of the Northwest, but if you look at the globe, there is a lot of desert, dry rock mountains, high, dry deserts and scrubland.

So, we turn to the deciduous forests of the East Coast and more directly, Vermont. We are 76% forested (unfortunately we just lost 1% to development.) and some of those forests are reaching mature size and canopy. Much of that forested area (80%) is on private land. and much of that 80% is under some form of current use, and actively managed. That leaves the blocks of State and National Forest lands.

Under direct scrutiny are the Telephone Gap area and State of Vermont partially owned Worcester Range. So, the direct question is. "Where are we going to get the Old Growth forests"? If the supposed goal is 30% and we are at best 2%, that is a lot of ground to cover.

I believe it comes down to assessing value to the forests and trees. There are conflicting values. One is prime timber value, the other is longevity of storage and sequestration and the ecological value of terrestrial and subterranean life forms and the interwoven life that occurs. And there is also wildlife and recreation to consider. I personally think we already have sufficient "recreational areas" that could be further developed. As to wildlife, I was thrilled to have moose at the nursery even as they ate some of my inventory. To make a point, I was horrified to see the moose die a slow death from massive tick bites, and I do not see very many anymore. Same is true for too many deer and the ensuing ticks. Enough private land that is managed can accommodate Vermont's wildlife.

I could quote authors, research documents, Harvard Forest studies, and ongoing studies documenting the value of tree growth beyond the prime timber category. 100+ years beyond. I am not opposed to repairing water bars, opening up vista for hikers, or constructing a shelter. I am not opposed to thinning a climax forested area. I think the largest area could benefit from plan D. I am totally opposed to any clearcutting. I am completely opposed to recreational ATV's and dirt bikes. They are both the antithesis of being IN Nature and I have witnessed the damage they can do. I also do not like the modern equipment used in harvesting timber, as the tracks cut into the understory, damaging many roots at the 8"-10" depth. This even occurs in winter if there is a mild spell. I have seen it first hand. But the old, softer methods are not economically viable on a large scale so I guess there is no option.

I know nothing of the burning methods to acquire suitable planting area for red oak. I would be in favor of substantial oak planting, as they are an excellent species for disease resistance, large canopy, food for numerous animals, and durability and longevity. I agree with you on the beech and with your approach.

I think the area designated for potential old growth should be DOUBLED, and the choices of timber be very selective and kept to a minimum. The rationale behind this is the continued development of urban areas and more access roads for individual properties which really adds up to many treeless acres., and the ever present threat of and expansion of the ash borer.

To my knowledge there are no large scale tree plantings going on within the areas of private or public ownership on harvested land. We run the risk of good intentions being left behind due to needs of housing development and large scale clearing of land for Solar Farms.

We will need more and more wilderness lands to protect ourselves from ourselves.

Thank You for your time.