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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have spent years occasionally hiking on Camels Hump, and have also hiked in some of the mapped areas in the Northern Escarpment Ecological Restoration & Fire Resilience Project. I am concerned the democratic process is being stripped away through the use of the "Categorical Exclusion", which reduces public input and agency accountability. I have 2 other major concerns:

1. Converting one older more established ecosystem of high canopy moister forest to an experimental fire adapted (catches fire easily) ecosystem that must be regularly logged burned and sprayed with toxic herbicides, is an overall, degradation of the forest environment.
2. The decline of over 40 interior forest bird species is clearly linked to fragmentation of larger contiguous older forests because of patch cuts. One example is the Wood thrush which has lowered nesting success due to more nest parasitism by Cow birds, which do best in forest edge environments which are also associated with larger populations of nestling predators. See April 28, 2022 Nature Ecology and Evolution: Forest Degradation Drives Widespread avian Habitat and Population Declines for a more comprehensive landscape level study. It showed greatest population declines of birds that were dependent on old forests "who's degradation may therefore be primary cause of biodiversity decline in managed forests".