

Re: Pine Creek Forest Restoration Project #523141

Attn:

Jason Nedlo, District Ranger
761 South Laurel Road
London, KY 40744

Dear District Ranger Jason Nedlo,

I have several concerns about the proposed logging within this project. It makes it hardly seem to be a restoration project with the lasting impacts of some of the proposed logging activities. I also applaud your office for some wonderful things that this project addresses.

I am concerned with the language that is used for trying to protect bat habitats that are within the proposed project area. *"Prescribed burning is not to occur within known Indiana bat roosting areas from May 1 through July 31."* The documents go on and states that there are 8 known sites, 7 within the forest. Does your administration contact non-profits and other agencies that collect and store cave data? Then is there a study and assessment to catalogue the bat populations in those caves before any action is taken? The state does this for state projects, such as road widening projects. It is imperative that your administration does the same to save these vital creatures.

I am excited about the rerouting of the Poison Honey section of the Sheltoewe Trace. It is always great to get recreation trails off of pavement and into the forest. To go along with this, I am pleased to see that a gate is proposed up near Fish Trap (NFS Road 4094). The off roading in this area is just awful and extremely destructive, all while being illegal. I would actually take it a step further and place the gate and/or boulders at the cemetery and make that the end of the road. I would advise not opening this road for hunting either. At least not until several years have passed and the damage is mitigated and stopped.

I am also pleased to hear that a gate will be put up on NFS 4117 to stop the ATV/UHV traffic from heading into the Rockcastle River WMA. I am also pleased that the proposed gate leaves access for hikers to visit Pine Island Double Falls, which is one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the Daniel Boone National Forest. My concerns are several here. The ATV/UHV traffic goes around gates and cuts trees. Piles of dirt do the same, as it is evident at the end of NFS Road 119B. A pile of dirt exists to stop

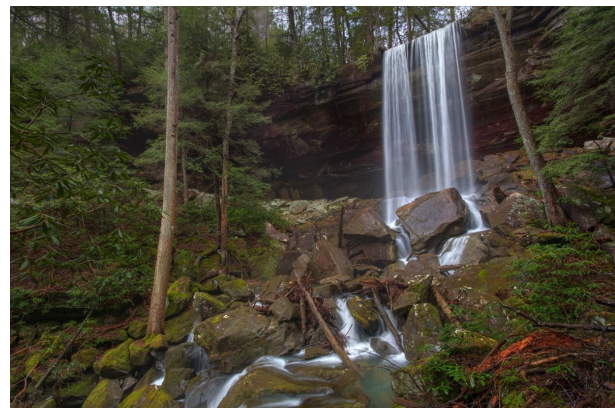
traffic from heading down to the river (to the northwest), yet on multiple trips to the area, I have seen trucks and jeeps coming or going out of there. I would love to see that and all illegal ATV/UHV access points cut off. There is one gate out there that has stopped traffic in one direction, but it needs to be improved for heading to the northwest towards the river. Either a gate or something similar like what was done at Buzzard's Rock in McCreary County. A large hole was dug and dirt piled behind it, that has completely stopped any ATV/UHV traffic the last several years. Boulders are also a solution, as is evident around Laurel Lake.

While placing the gate on NFS Road 4117 to still allows access to Pine Island Double Falls, I am floored that the shelterwood cuts would be left in after your office has experienced those woods and falls for themselves since then, as well as receiving endless calls about '*how to get to Pine Island Double Falls.*' This is a resource that begs to have a trail for hikers and visitors to enjoy. Not a woods to be cleared of magnificent trees for less than the going rate for lumber.



I am vehemently opposed to any shelterwood cuts. The forest service sells the lumber under market value, meanwhile hurting private lumber sales, scaring the landscapes and forever damaging the forest. Meanwhile there are plenty of acres in the project area that are perfectly fit for producing and helping along to create seral habitats without logging. The proposed logging includes log landings which remain for decades after the loggers have left. They harbor invasive species and compact the soil. Log landings should not be allowed for any purposes in the project area. The logging roads create paths through the forest that allow for the illegal ATV/UHV traffic that this proposal is trying to help solve. Why create new trails in a different location while wanting to fix the existing ones? Those 23 miles of illegal trails will only increase with allowing logging to commence.

I am also concerned with all the shelterwood cutting at or near the end of the roads near Lick Branch and Pine Island Branch. It will add unnecessary traffic and destruction to the miles of gravel roads that trucks must traverse to



reach those areas. Both trucks carrying equipment as well as logs. The trucks will damage those roads that are used by hikers and hunters. It could make them impassable as well as dangerous to anyone out there while a semi truck is barreling towards them on those narrow roads. If those shelterwood cuts are allowed to move forward, would the loggers and truckers pay for the upkeep of the roads? Would they be ticketed for traveling too fast in and out of the Cane Creek Wilderness? That is just another reason why no logging should be permitted in that area that requires passage through the Cane Creek WMA.

I am pleased to see the proposed prescribed fire burns near Lick Creek to help restore that forest that was devastated by fire a few years ago. It will go a long way to help that forest recover.

I am very pleased to see Angel Hollow classified as an old growth forest. There are some beautiful trees down in there. I am curious as to why the proposed area does not include any of the trees above the cliffs lines? There are some nice mature old growth forests that lie directly above that area as well.

It seems like the only trees being protected are the timber worthless hemlocks. I would advise on re-evaluating on expanding this designation area to hardwoods that fit the classification in the area and above the cliff lines. I am also very pleased at the expansion of the old growth classification to the incredible forest around Rock Creek. As for the Angel Hollow area, just south of 80, there are several areas for



proposed shelterwood cuts. There are some nice forests in there and I just do not understand the need to devastate them all. Especially since the project scope states only 40 acre sites. The 5 areas located with shelterwood cuts near Poison Honey Fork are all right next to each other. They only skip over the timber worthless hemlocks in the valleys. Please eliminate or reduce the cuttings in this area by half, at least. Along with no log landings and no 'temporary' logging roads, that are anything but temporary.

I am glad the forest service is creating a buffer around recreation areas and trails. I am curious as to what the widths of these buffers are? There should be no logging around or near any trail, similar to the 300 feet required for camping, etc. Prescribed burns are

should be the only exception. Why is there a proposed shelterwood cutting along the Ned Branch Trail? This area does not need a logging operation.

I am really concerned about the shelterwood cutting within the proposed Rockcastle WMA. There is no choice but to abandon any shelterwood cutting within the new proposed WMA boundary.

Sir, I thank you for your time and for considering my thoughts from an avid hiker that thoroughly enjoys the forests your office and administration are proposing to destroy. I greatly appreciate the willingness to stop the illegal ATV/UHV traffic, the classification of old growth forests and the management of past mistakes that clear cut the forest. Please do not repeat the past with more clear cutting or shelterwood cutting all in the name of seral habitats.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Morris', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Christopher Morris