



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 9 January 2020
To: United States Forest Service
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest's Foothills Project

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), we would like to state our support for the actions outlined in the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest's Foothills Project. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 50,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

At QDMA, we believe that the proper management of our forests is vital to the preservation of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. Proper forest management benefits a suite of game and nongame species, and the current science supports active management practices similar to those being proposed in the Foothills Project. This active management of our forests is the responsibility of our government agencies to protect the wildlife that belongs in a trust for all of the American public to enjoy. Activities outlined in the proposal to maintain and improve watershed and ecological conditions by addressing the need to improve biologic integrity, increase the ecosystem's resilience to disturbance, restore connectivity, and support high water quality and soil productivity will greatly benefit wildlife including white-tailed deer.

Specifically we support the project's proposed actions to create, restore and maintain ecosystems that are more resilient to natural disturbances; to reduce hazardous fuel loading across the landscape to diminish damaging wildfires; to improve soil and water quality; to provide sustainable recreation and access opportunities; and to awaken and strengthen a connection to these lands for all people.

White-tailed deer are an important driver of the economy and will benefit substantially from this proposal. On a national level, whitetails are the most popular big game animal, and whitetail hunters are the foundation of a nearly \$67 billion hunting industry. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately three of every four hunters pursue whitetails. On the state level, Georgia's sportsmen and women contribute greater than \$1.5 billion annually to the state's economy and support nearly 25,000 jobs. These sportsmen and women who care deeply for the land, the whitetails that utilize it, and conservation depend on your approval of this proposal. On behalf of the QDMA, we would like to thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation