

From: Joseph Morgan <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>
Sent: Monday, May 31, 2021 10:55 PM
To: FS-objections-southern-ozark-sf <ozarkobjection@usda.gov>
Subject: [External Email]Robert's Gap Project

I am a respondent of record on the first EA for the above project. After reading the revised EA that included some minor changes in the project, I am still convinced that a full Environmental Impact Statement must be done before any contracts are let. This is a 60-square mile project of nearly 40K acres of the headwaters of three of the most important rivers in the state, including the Buffalo national river, visited by 1.6 million people annually. These tourists expect a pristine river and this project as proposed guarantees they will not get it. Building 40 plus miles of roads and massive thinning and poisoning and burning in these headwaters will alter river sediment levels and water quality of these rivers. It reminds me of the sentiments of former Buffalo River superintendent, now retired, Kevin Cherie, told me a few years ago. "The greatest mistake the national park service made establishing the park was letting the Forest Service have jurisdiction of the headwaters." Prove him wrong. Let's not pretend that this is just another forest service project. Instead, realize that this is the crown jewel of the natural state that you are impacting with these reckless decisions without an independent EIS, for which I am calling for again. I ask the same question that Mike Masterson the statewide columnist for the Arkansas Democrat asked in one of his recent columns, "Why can't we just let mother nature take care of these sacred headwaters?" Masterson is the husband of Cong. John Paul Hammerschmidt's daughter. John Paul was instrumental in creating the national park. Please place my name and address on your mailing list so I can keep up with your decisions concerning this important project. We are all in this together as I know that all of you forest service workers share my concerns. What a great public relations gesture for the forest service to announce that the headwaters of the Buffalo River will be left sacrosanct, thus assuring that the river will remain untamed and wil forever be unpolluted. Your actions on this matter will affect the lives of millions of people and wildlife for centuries to come.

Joseph Morgan