

July 29, 2021

Mr. John Morgan, District Ranger  
Cheat Potomac Ranger District  
2499 North Fork Highway  
Petersburg, WV 26847

Subject: Upper Cheat River Project

Dear Mr. Morgan:

As a West Virginia outdoor enthusiast and forestry professional, I am writing to express my thoughts related to the Upper Cheat River Project Area Plan. I am happy to see that there is an increased emphasis on timber harvesting within the area as this plays a pivotal role in diversifying wildlife habitat and restoring a more natural distribution across age class and successional stages.

However, I'm concerned that the scope of the annual harvests (approximately 1% per year) may not be significant enough to have the desired ecological impact. In addition, with regards to economic impact, the harvest methods (primarily helicopter and cable yarding) seem to provide little financial benefit to the local communities. This is due to the extreme costs of the operations, themselves, as well as the lack of helicopter and cable yarding companies in the area. I understand and appreciate the reasoning behind using these lower impact methods in many areas on USFS land. I would only suggest to reevaluate the percentage of harvests utilizing conventional logging. This would potentially result in increased dollars and jobs staying in the state.

In conclusion, I'd like to commend the work already being done on the Mon and raise my hand for looking at the benefits of increasing the overall annual harvest and increasing the percentage of that harvest that is conducted using conventional logging techniques.

Thanks in advance for your consideration,

Kevin A. Schaus