

**From:** [George Fleszar](#)  
**To:** [FS-comments-southern-chokeee-watauga](#)  
**Subject:** [External Email]COMMENT Re: Pond Mountain Project in Cherokee NF  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 7:25:28 PM

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Keith,

I would like to provide feedback regarding the Pond Mountain project.

I have hunted Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock for over 4 decades. So while I have not been formally trained in forest management, I have studied these two species and their habitat requirements for many years.

I realize many factors affect population dynamics and that grouse populations are cyclical. That being said, I have seen steady decline in their population for decades, especially in the NC & TN forests. I feel that a very aggressive approach to creating successional forest is needed to increase population of not only Ruffed Grouse but many other wildlife that thrive in successional habitat.

Consequently, I strongly encourage the USFS to increase the amount of early successional forest being proposed. This Project proposes the creation of 6.2% early successional forest. However given the lack of habitat diversity in the Forest, particularly at mid-to to high-elevations which grouse prefer I feel strongly that early successional forest needs to be maximized within the project area. I urge the USFS increase it to the maximum proposed by the study, which I believe is 8%.

Thank you for your consideration,  
George Fleszar

Sent from my iPad