



North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
N.C. Forest Service



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

Scott Bissette
Assistant Commissioner

March 21, 2022

Mr. Ken Arney (kenderick.arney@usda.gov)
U.S. Forest Service
Regional Forester - Region 8
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Ken:

I wanted to reach out and provide some feedback as it relates to the proposed Nantahala & Pisgah National Forest Management Plan. My staff and I met (virtually) with James Melonas's staff and had the opportunity to hear about the Plan's highlights. There are numerous aspects that compliment the recently-updated North Carolina Forest Action Plan's goals and objectives. We know the revision process has been years in the making and congratulate James and his staff for their efforts.

We appreciate the Plan's focus on elevating the levels of active forest management across these two National Forests. Our organization encourages proactive thinning, final harvests, prescribed burning and other silvicultural treatments that help reduce wildfire and pest risk; sustain overall forest health; and contribute to the region's forest products-related economy. We view the proposed Plan's Tier I and Tier II annual acreage goals as having a positive trajectory when compared to recent years. Simultaneously, we encourage even higher levels of active forest management that would result in greater prescribed burning and early successional forest habitat creation. The North Carolina Forest Service would welcome the opportunity to be considered an "Interested Party" as it relates to the topic of implementing higher levels of silvicultural treatments on the Nantahala & Pisgah National Forests.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this effort. We understand the importance of a well-balanced, multi-resource approach and believe the proposed Plan will help sustainably manage the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests for years to come. We look forward to continuing our solid partnership with James and his staff, whether it be through the Good Neighbor Authority, Shared Stewardship initiatives or other conservation collaborations.

Sincerely,

Scott Bissette,
Assistant Commissioner
North Carolina Forest Service

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