



August 30th, 2026

The Ozark Society
3428 E. Wyman Rd.
Fayetteville, AR. 72701

Ms. Janine Book
c/o Magazine Mountain Ranger District
P.O. Box 511
Paris, Arkansas 72855

Dear Ms. Book:

The Ozark Society is a 1,100+ member organization that originated in Arkansas in 1962 for the purposes of preventing the Buffalo River from being dammed. Over the decades, we have been instrumental in getting the Buffalo congressionally recognized as America's First National River. We were involved in the establishment of the state's other wild and scenic rivers. We were instrumental in identifying, negotiating, and testifying for our state's wilderness areas. Our organization exemplifies the values of our Arkansas outdoor heritage and conservation. That being said, we would like to submit these comments for the 304281: "Magazine Forest Health" project. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

This is a large project, with very little time for the public to review it. We ask that the Forest Service honor the provisions of the Endangered Species Act, and allow more time for ordinary people to analyze what has been presented to the public for consideration. In regard to meeting the requirements of NEPA, we think the district has performed their analysis in good faith, but we are concerned as to whether they will be able to anticipate all of the potential impacts due to the project's sheer scale.

We support a longer comment period, and more than one comment period, for a project of this size and scope. One 14-day comment session, with essentially only one alternative, with no opportunity to appeal, does not seem to be designed to elicit public involvement. We know that recent administrative changes, some of which have curtailed public involvement in Forest Service decisions, have been imposed on the Forest Service staff as well as on the public. Thank you for your efforts to keep interested citizens involved.

Our comments today mainly center around making recommendations for protecting wild, natural areas, to make sure we continue to have some relatively large blocks of old forest on the Mt. Magazine Ranger District.

This type of ecological community is preferred habitat for many of our native plants and animals during at least part of their life cycle. These include Magazine Mountain Shagreen snail, black bear, eastern small-footed bat, eastern red bat, northern long-eared bat, hoary bat, ringed salamander, southern red-backed salamander, Diana fritillary butterfly, gray fox, barred owl, black-throated green warbler, hooded warbler, ovenbird, wood thrush, and scarlet tanager.

We recognize that there are many important uses of the Mt. Magazine Ranger District. We are not trying to significantly impact any of these other uses. We are asking that a small portion of the Mt. Magazine District remain wild and natural so these areas will be there for the study and enjoyment of future generations. These wild places are rare on the Mt. Magazine Ranger District, and therefore have added significance as wildlife habitats and back country recreation spots.

There are two areas on the Mt. Magazine District that we would like to recommend for special protection in this project, and in the next forest plan as well. These recommended lands are generally very steep and much of the acreage is not suitable for timber production. As far as we can tell there are no open roads or trails in the proposed areas. In some cases, roads have been “cherry-stemmed” out to make sure they can remain open.

We are including maps with suggested boundaries. However, we welcome further discussion with the Forest Service and others to review the proposed boundaries and consider changing them if necessary to aid in manageability or for other reasons.

We ask the Forest Service to allow these areas to remain wild and natural, without any new roads or trails, or any timber cutting, or any recreational development, so they will remain in a wild and natural condition.

The first area, South Wicked Creek, about 5,000 acres in size, is part of the flanks of Mount Magazine itself, and is contiguous to the Mount Magazine Special Interest Area and Mount Magazine State Park in certain places.

The second area, Gulf Creek, is about 1400 acres, and includes a sizeable part of the Gulf Creek Watershed and lands along Big Shoal Creek .

Thank you again for considering our comments. See maps below.

Sincerely,

Brian Thompson, President
Tom McClure, Conservation Co-Chair





