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First name: Robert

Last name: Bozic

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Mr. John Morgan, District Ranger

Cheat Potomac Ranger District

2499 North Fork Highway

Petersburg, WV 26847

Upper Cheat River Project

Dear Mr. Morgan,

As a lifelong resident of West Virginia and a frequent visitor to the Monongahela National Forest, I am pleased to see the plan to manage our forest for its intended uses. Timber management not only keeps our forests healthy, but enhances wildlife habitat, diversity and recreational values. The local communities also benefit from the tourism as well as the payments made in lieu of taxes when funds are generated from timber sales.

Unfortunately, the annual harvest levels fall short of the sustainable levels as well as the changes in stand structure to keep the forest diverse and healthy. The harvesting methods that are proposed, primarily Helicopter (51%) and cable yarding (15%) provide a fraction of the value back to the local communities. The lack of contractors with these capabilities limits competition and job opportunities, especially within the local industry that support these communities. The majority of the area has been previously harvested by conventional methods that have been proven and continually improved. The areas have roads that were built during older projects that were funded by taxpayers. It would benefit the communities and taxpayers to use these assets.

Finally, I'd like to add that the health of our aging forests and the protection of them from wildfire and diseases is dependent on more intense management that is proposed. The local communities that the forest dominate, have shortfalls in revenue due to the lack of property taxes, since the forest is a large percentage of those counties. We all should strive to conserve the forests and not preserve them. That was not the intent of the founding of the Forest service. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

R.Mark Bozic