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Organization:

Title:

Comments: USDA Forest Management Plan

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Wayne Shewmake, in support of Ozark Vegetation Management Plan:

I am not a biologist, but with many years working with origination and agencies that do help manage our forest I have over the years developed a point of view as to what I think the average user would like to see our forest look like.

1. Over all I think the Ozark National Forest has improved a lot in the past several years and has made improvements that have benefited the land, forest, streams, and public use.
2. I feel that the National Forest belongs to the people and should be available for public use, as much as possible. However we have all seen how some groups can try to overtake the lands and destroy our natural habitat for animals, plants, and for people. Public use is important because the people are the ones who are paying for all of it. But it still needs to be regulated to continued success of our natural resources to have it for future generations to enjoy.
3. I have worked on the Bearcat Hollow WMA and see how it has benefited wildlife and the public. I like the more open areas, but I also enjoy the woody area with the mixed forest vegetation. I guess it depends on what you are trying to manage for but the way Bearcat Hollow WMA is spread out with openings, I can see more of the area and enjoy the view and use of the area. We see more wildlife, and some green on the ground year around.
4. Again I do not have the knowledge as to the needs for the drilling for fossil fuels, but with what we have now in reserve, I don't see a need to continue with drilling and destroying our forest for something we may never need or use as we move into the future.
5. OHV our a part of our lives today, I have one and enjoy it, and as I get older it has been of lot of use to save me a lot of hard work on my farm and in my travels, but I do see a need to regulate their use in our national forest, because some do not follow the trails and instructions for proper use in our forest. I have taught the public for 40 years about how to use them and how enjoyable they can be but we all have to respect our streams, forest, nature, wildlife, and others who use the land for our future generations.
6. Prescribed burn; as I observe the use of prescribed burn in the Ozarks National Forest I can see the results in vegetation and wildlife as well as being able to walk through the forest better. I've seen plants that have come back in areas that they have not been in for 100 years or more. After a prescribe burn I can see a lot more use of the areas by small insects and birds. Prescribed burn has and can help prevent forest fires from getting out of control. My observation; most wildlife feed on the ground and after a prescribe burn there is much more food for wildlife for 2 or 3 years, then it needs to be burned again.
7. I've seen how working with groups and other agencies thru stewardships has been a big help to the Ozark National Forest and continues to do so. I feel not only does it help with the work to be done but it also gives ownership to those who volunteer to do the work and see the results.
8. I like to think about it this way, I'm only here for a short period of time and I want to try to leave it better than I found it.