

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2024 5:00:00 AM

First name: James

Last name: Decker

Organization: Warren County Chamber

Title: President/CEO

Comments: Dear Madam or Sir, We write to urge your rejection of the Scoping Notice presented in the reference Federal Register posting, commonly referred to as the "Old Growth Proposal". The Old Growth Proposal presents a forest management prescription which would be implemented on all National Forest lands throughout the United States, irrespective of existing, forest-specific assessment and developed strategies which have been developed based upon the actual conditions which exist within individual forest lands. In the case of the Allegheny National Forest here in Warren County, Pennsylvania, the Old Growth Proposal is diametrically opposite the scientifically developed plan for enhancement of the ANF forest health. The 2007 ANF Forest Plan identified a significant, unhealthy age imbalance across the ANF. This imbalance was found to have not materially improved through 2013 as documented in the ANF Monitoring and Evaluation report. Work by the Allegheny National Forest Health Collaborative in 2017 developed the same conclusion as was presented in the 2007 ANF Forest Plan .... more timber harvests are needed to remove older trees to make way for the much needed younger forest growth. The Old Growth Proposal is entirely inconsistent with the evaluations and recommendations of both the US Forest Service as well as the Allegheny National Forest Health Collaborative and, if adopted, will have irreversible and devastating impact on the health and viability of the Allegheny National Forest and surrounding communities. We iterate our request that the Old Growth Proposal be rejected. ATTACHMENT: Old Growth Proposal position statement.pdf is letter content.