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First name: Julie

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: RE: Jellico Vegetation Management Project #63037

Dear Stearns Ranger District,

Thank you for your valuable time and willingness to hear our community's concerns and comments.

Our region of Appalachia is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the United States.

In order to preserve this valuable biodiversity, we must be a part of the education and protection of this landscape for current and future generations.

Jellico Mountain is a part of this important natural resource and natural heritage of Appalachia.

I am opposed to the current proposed action and in favor of Alternative 1 for the following reasons:

1. Alternative 1 meets the objectives of the Forest Service's [ldquo]Overriding Objective[rddquo]:

The overriding objective of the Forest Service's forest management program is to ensure that the National Forests are managed in an ecologically sustainable manner. The National Forests were originally envisioned as working forests with multiple objectives: to improve and protect the forest, to secure favorable watershed conditions, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use of citizens of the United States. [1]

1. Scientifically we know that large, man-made clear-cut areas worsen flood disasters and leave lands vulnerable to invasive species. This creates inevitable future environmental damage that is problematic for both the Forest Service, as well as surrounding communities, and is not ecologically sustainable. While it is understood that careful, responsible logging (such as should be the case in Alternative 1) can be useful for making way for healthier forested areas, vast amounts of logging is well known to create serious environmental issues that impact everyone in the area, damaging important soil and root systems, microbes, invertebrate and mammal habitats that are needed for healthy forests.

2. Educationally, it is vital that while the community has input in its protection, we must see Jellico Mountain as a valuable, exceptionally biologically diverse resource that should be protected for future generations to appreciate and experience for the love of nature and for necessary research. As it is, Jellico Mountain is also a part of the natural heritage of Appalachia and should be preserved and protected as much as possible for our children.

Therefore, in brief: Alternative 1, if done responsibly, is the best option for both the logging request and the protection needs of Jellico Mountain.

As a local educator, concerned citizen, and mother [ndash] thank you for your time,

Julie Deyrup

[1] <https://www.fs.usda.gov/forestmanagement/aboutus/index.shtml>