Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Foothills Landscape Project as currently

Proposed. It is very important to consider how this important resource is used and protected for the irreplaceable value it offers to the public.

I am writing to express my concerns about several of the plans descibed in the Foothills Landscape Project Environmental Assessment (EA) including those for logging, herbicides, the process proposed, and impacts on recreation. The foothills of north Georgia are a precious resource providing air and water quality for a region, opportunity for recreation, and corridors to preserve wildlife movement as climate changes.

The massive amount of logging described in the EA is of great concern to me. Plans to log vast quantities of oak and pine forest to create open areas will create areas like an urban park and not a forest. Trees that have survived for 50-100 years in the forest have value for the continuation and preservation of the natural forest and perpetuation of all the plants and animals of the forest. Roads created for the logging efforts further destroy the areas with damage to streams and causing erosion. I have spent many days hiking in the mountains on the trails and camping over the decades. I want future generations to have the privilege of enjoying and learning from the forest. Some of the wildest places left in the Foothills of North Georgia are described as Georgia Mountain Treasures and I certainly would like to see them all protected.

The proposed herbicide use on large areas of the foothills forest described in the vegetation plan is of special concern to me. Having had a career in science, I understand synthetic chemicals are sometimes needed and useful but must be used only with precision and extreme care in the limited appropriate situations. Allowing these chemical in the forests for 15-20 years is very disturbing. Massive use in large areas may lead to imbalances and change in the ecosystem that cannot be predicted. Native plants that should be preserved will be destroyed. The increased use of these chemicals in the environment has shown that we do not fully understand the impacts to plant life, wildlife or humans. Very limited use in very small areas only should even be considered. The 2011 risk assessment methodology referenced may be very inadequate in 2020 and going forward, in light of more recent research and legal judgements regarding pesticides and herbicides. The FS should determine appropriate assessments rather than rely totally on EPI and FIFRA registration.

Please include a process to allow the public to be included and informed about the locations and timing of the management projects. In the past, public input has been useful to the process. Many citizens are very familiar with the areas and can have valuable insight about the specific areas that could impact a particular proposal. Collaboration with the public, in the planning process for the public lands is necessary. The NEPA process is needed and must be included.

All of the described issues relate to a most important point, the value of recreation in the foothills of North Georgia for thousands of people living in Georgia, surrounding states and more distant points. This area is very special and known for the natural beauty and opportunity for a variety of recreation with varying levels of skill required. Some may enjoy a short walk of a mile on the trail others a strenuous backpack of a week exploring the forest. Recreational activities of fishing, biking and hunting are all enjoyed by many. The landscape project should leave the foothills suitable for all of these activities without destroying the natural beauty and ecosystem.

Please consider these comments seriously and preserve the natural beauty and integrity of the wonderful foothills.

Sincerely,