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First name: Cynthia
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Comments: I hike in the Chattahoochee National Forest. An intact mature forest protects a healthy mix of tree species and a mix of different tree ages, healthy, abundant under-story and ground cover plants and healthy wildlife populations.

Forests have thrived for thousands of years without human intervention. Many tree species in the Foothills Landscape can live hundreds of years; the majority of trees are middle-aged.

Your decision should protect existing old growth. I support the Forest Service's proposal to set aside 5,050 acres of old growth. Only 11,000 scattered acres of old-growth forest exists in GA. It is unthinkable to cut a single remaining old-growth tree.

Up to 90,000 acres of forest could be logged The most obvious and damaging results of logging are:
Cutting and removing trees.
Building roads tears up the forest floor.
Skidders and logging trucks compact the soil and crush plants and animals.
Loss of rich topsoil.
Sedimentation of pristine trout streams.
Flooding and erosion.
Herbicides contaminating soil, water and air.

Removing and limiting invasive species should be a management priority. I volunteer with the National Park Service and have seen how privet and oriental bittersweet displaces all native plants essentially destroying native woodlands. Mechanical treatments and fire should be used to control invasive species where practical and limit the use of herbicides.

Non-native invasive species are one of the biggest long-term threats to the Foothills. The Forest Service should develop detailed plans for controlling invasive species across the landscape.

Protect the large roadless areas and corridors for species that need large areas: Grassy Mountain, Emery Creek, and the Chattooga River corridor. As climate change alters habitat and raises temperatures, species will need wide, safe migration corridors.

Thank you.