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Organization:

Title:

Comments: These are my personal comments on the proposed forest plan amendment. I also agree with and sign on to the comments being submitted by Kentucky Heartwood.

I am against reducing protections for threatened and endangered bats, especially for the purpose of increasing logging on our public lands. We don't need wood products so badly that we should consider trading off more of our precious endangered wildlife to meet timber targets put in place by people who were unaware of the planetary crisis we are now facing.

I regularly recreate in the Daniel Boone National Forest. I have recreated on public lands my whole life, and my roots run deep in the Appalachian region.

To the extent that we currently have protections for them, I love knowing that the Daniel Boone National Forest is a safe-haven for federally-endangered Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*) and federally-threatened northern long-eared bats (*Myotis septentrionalis*). It is important to me that current protections remain in place, and if anything are increased. I have personally seen endangered Indiana bats in a cave on the Boone, and hope to be able to see them again in the future. In an era of constant depressing news about our planet and the climate, I long for a time in the future when the Indiana bat has increased in numbers and is no longer at risk of becoming extinct. Such a success story would make me feel very happy and would be a welcome counterweight to all of the soul-crushing bad news that ecosystem collapse bears.

Right now we face a global extinction crisis. In addition to the multitude of life forms that are dying off from our planet due to destructive consumption by humans, bats are also dying off because of white nose syndrome. Humans caused this to happen, and it is up to use to do everything we can to fix it. Now, more than ever, we need bats to be protected. We need increased surveys of maternity colonies and roost sites. We need more research to understand bat ecology. And in the meantime, we need to maintain current protections for these bats.

I am against the aspects of the forest plan amendment proposal that places additional stress on bats. I am against aspects of the proposal that will increase take of bats, including increasing the killing and harming of bats.

I am very much against decreasing the space (from 2.5 miles down to just 150 feet) given between maternity colonies and logging operations. Especially considering that surveys are not done to locate current roost trees at the time of the logging operations. We cannot continue to rely on old surveys, since these sites will change based on availability of roost trees (which is constantly changing as some trees fall, and other trees become suitable for the bats).

From my point of view, endangered and threatened bats are not getting in the way of conducting necessary management activities on the Boone. There is already a system in place that allows take of these creatures (killing, harming, etc) if there is something that really needs to get done. Increasing commercial logging on our public lands is not a good reason to kill bats. Doing management for the broad purpose of increasing "early seral habitat" is not a good reason to kill endangered bats.

Specific projects that are needed to protect other threatened and endangered species can be evaluated on a project by project basis, and can be conducted in ways that give the best possible consideration for all species affected. In such cases, surveys can and should be conducted before and at the time of the project implementation to look for roost trees and other aspects of the forest that are essential for bat reproduction and

survival.

To the extent that terminology needs to be updated and brought into alignment with other agencies, I feel that this should be done separately from the aspects of the proposal that aim to increase logging on the Daniel Boone National Forest.

I deeply appreciate the extension of time given to submit comments, for the public comment platform online, the reading room, the public meeting, and everything that has been done to make this an open public process.

I look forward to working with the Daniel Boone National Forest to do what we can to increase protection of at-risk species, and ensure that the Boone is a safe-haven for these creatures whose numbers are already so small that we could easily kill them all, if we are not careful.