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Title: River Protection Chair
Comments: I am a lifelong paddler and hiker in the Appalachian foothills. They are part of me, and I want to take care of them. Your foothills plan sounds wonderful in the abstract. I support many of your declared objectives for these critical areas. But the plan at this stage tells me nothing about what specific treatment will be given to any particular parcel of land. And the plan, as I read it, is to exclude the public from input relative to any particular plan for any particular parcel.

I also am realist enough to know that Forest Service management of the areas that have been entrusted to it is often influenced by its need to raise money through timber sales. I have no doubt that the Timber Industry will be at the table when parcel specific decisions are made. They should be, but so should those of us who recreate and restore our souls in these woods.

The intent of this entire process appears to me to exclude the user public from any meaningful input into the implementation of this project. As an example, as a paddler, I am very concerned about the "woody debris" that the plan indicates will be introduced into the streams. When moving water moves through woody debris, it creates a strainer. A strainer is anything that water will flow through but a canoe or kayak or human body will not. A strainer is a death trap for a paddler who becomes entangled with one. The water as it flows through a strainer overturns a boat and takes its occupants straight to the bottom and holds them there. Paddler input is crucial relative to every piece of woody debris you propose to put into our rivers.

Unless this plan is radically changed to allow public input in making specific management decision, I must oppose it, irrespective of it laudable proclaimed goals. Without meaningful public user input, you are sure to make a mess of your implementation, and are likely to unknowingly create man traps.