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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Foothills Landscape Project on the Chattahoochee National Forest. I live close and visit these lands for hiking, paddling and camping. I care deeply about the management of this forest now and into the future. It is integral to the health and well-being of my family and friends.

I am concerned with the lack of information about exactly where and when you will be cutting trees, reworking trails, and burning areas near many of my favorite trails and camping areas. I am worried that when we are planning our trips in the forest, we will be unable to know if the area is in a project area. I want to keep the long standing practice of being notified and given an opportunity to have a say in where management and disturbances occur. We would like to know because many of the activities planned in this project do not provide a pleasing environment for my friends and I to enjoy. In general, Forest Service projects tend to disturb an area, take a long time to complete and re-grow, and sometimes end up looking worse than they did before.

Recreation areas, trails, and unique areas like Jake and Bull, Stonewall Falls, and along the Chattooga River should receive special consideration in Foothills Landscape and include ongoing collaboration with the groups using these areas. Meeting once a year at a time and place and in a fashion that is up to the discretion of the District Ranger is not enough.

If the Forest Service does not plan to include the public in site-specific decisions before implementing, I would like the Forest Service to specifically identify and explicitly prohibit cutting, herbicide application, and road work close to trails in the Foothills Landscape. I would like my experiences on the trails within Foothills and in the National Forest to reflect a sense of natural beauty. These values are why I choose to spend my time in the "Foothills Landscape."

My friends and this surrounding community hope you will listen to public input, take impacts to user experiences much more seriously, and protect the beauty of this national forest.

Thank you,
Diane S. Payne