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Comments: I am very concerned about the fact that this Foothills Landscape Project as currently formulated will not allow the public to utilize the established NEPA process at the time site-specific locations for treatments are being established. The ecosystems of the Southern Appalachians are incredibly complex. Cutting trees in some areas can be relatively harmless but cutting trees in the wrong places can have devastating effects. Please fix the Foothills! Do not closeout the NEPA process before the public can know specifically where you plan to do the projects you want to do.

My biggest concern is one of process and here's why: In the past, the Forest Service has decided to drop an average of 243 acres of timber harvest from each project in order to avoid harms identified by the public to wildlife, soil, water, rare species, roadless areas, recreational opportunities, and old-growth. Those improvements would not have happened without public knowledge, involvement, and scrutiny. But with the Foothills project that public involvement will be sidelined. The public's tools for oversight of the government, the NEPA process, will be completed and no longer in place, right as the Forest Service is making decisions about exactly where their management projects will occur. Please put the NEPA process back into the Foothills plan. Then commit to real collaboration with the public about site-specific management decisions.

Thank you