

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/8/2020 3:55:57 PM

First name: Denny

Last name: Rhodes

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I attended three of the Foothills Landscape public collaboration events. The first was in Gwinnett County. The second was in Dahlonega, and the third in the Clarksville area. At each, Forest Service employee attendance eclipsed public attendance. For the most part, my impression was that attending Forest Service employees had little enthusiasm for those events. My takeaway from each was less than enthusiastic.

Somewhere in the process, I concluded that the public events were intended to preempt public comment at some time in the future. Others I know independently came to the same conclusion. Recently, I read a letter to the editor of the Clayton newspaper from someone who had attended such a public event in Rabun County. He described the meeting as "a checkoff for public participation".

With the proposed changes in NEPA compliance in 2019, the Forest Service clearly expressed a desire to move away from public input to proposed actions. Foothills appears consistent with that. Indeed, putting the voluminous EA out for comment over a 30-day period spanning the year-end holiday season suggests a lack of desire for meaningful public input.

The landscape approach is vague with regards to what where. Impact, therefore, good or bad is indeterminable. It is a significant departure from prescriptive management, which is say what you do-do what you say, and in a clearly defined location.

Revision of your Land and Resource Management Plan is overdue. That you would commit resources to the Foothills Landscape project when it is, puzzles this taxpayer.