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Comments: I read the summary and just don't have time or feel it's imperative to read the full report. First off, let me say, I strongly support this Foothills Landscape Project and feel its waaaay overdue. What I find from many in opposition or uncomfortable with a particular part of the plan is simply because they are uneducated and seemingly sometimes unwilling to learn. I understand peoples concern about limited input but at some point the public needs to extend a degree of trust in people working in the Forest Service. I grow up in these mountains and currently live just south of the proposed project area so I feel like I've got some skin in the game. What I continue to tell people is folks need to rely on the Forest Service to do the right thing even when their not watching. I've been working in the forestry field 40 years and in Forest Management the last 30. People tend to get bent out of shape about the use of herbicides and total harvest (clear-cuts) in large part because of emotion. I saw it growing up and understand now most of the concerns were born out of simply not knowing the facts. People tend to form an opinion based on their experience and many experiences are based on negative occurrences. Typically, the only time you hear anyone talking about clear-cuts or herbicides is when they have something negative to say because it takes far less effort than understanding the array of benefits. What is commonly overlooked is the good those herbicides have done in suppression and eliminating non-native and evasive species and the reduced cost in vegetative management. Many of the local people have been around long enough to see the results of restricted Forest Management since the 80's and the results speak for themselves. I have to chuckle a bit when I hear people speak of "Old Growth Timber", and the definition that's used to define it.

One item that jumped out at me in the summary was the expansion of trails, and specifically Horse Trails. Many don't understand the damage horses can do to trails and how expensive and time consuming proper maintenance can be. I'm certainly not proposing eliminating that portion of the project but I feel it will be vitally important to maintain a realistic approach during planning to insure trail maintenance is simplified as best it can be. Simply put, don't create trails that give folks the warm and fuzzes but are almost impossible to properly maintain. Whatever the projected maintenance cost ends up being, I think you double that for actual cost. Most horseback riders I know, like the narrow winding trail system instead of wide open trails. It's a balance but wide open trails allow heavy equipment required to properly maintain trails in this part of the country. Plan carefully!

I personally would like to see total harvest (clear-cuts) scattered across the landscape from one end of the project area to the other with a minimum size of 40 acres. Harvest areas up to 100 acres would be great in areas where its appropriate. These areas need to be large enough to attract more than one to two timber buyers when it's time to harvest. As many understand, the timber market in North Georgia isn't the strongest, and so larger size harvest should encourage better pricing on products. I for one would like to see some areas managed for Yellow Poplar along with increased acreage for White Oak. A combination of even age and uneven age stands would be good. Yes, its typically more difficult to manage than pine but anything worth doing isn't the simplest path sometimes. I really like the idea of creating and maintaining areas as open fields or meadow-like openings. I would be interested in knowing how much political support both inside and outside the Forest Service there is for this project. I think it's a good proposal and one that will have a lasting positive impact on the Chattahoochee National Forest both environmentally and socially. I'm willing to write letters to our representatives and senators if that would be beneficial. Its past time for the Forest Service to get back to implementing wise conservationist practices across the National Forest like I know they can. I believe you have a good plan here and one I hope gets implemented to the fullest. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.