Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/10/2020 7:05:48 PM
First name: Klio
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Comments: Hello,

I am writing today to express my concerns and reservations concerning the Foothills project.

First, before this project can be closed to public comment, it requires that an Environmental Impact Statement be written and released for the public to consider. Otherwise, how can the public agree to a project proposal without a thorough review of the environmental impacts on public lands.

Second, as it stands this project violates NEPA in two ways: the Forest Service has not provided site-specific information and after today, will deny public participation guaranteed by law for the duration of the project. How can any individual of the public be in agreement with a proposal which does not disclose the precise locations of where treatments such as timber harvesting, burning, and herbicide application will occur? The forests in the southern Appalachians are some of the most diverse forests in the world with rare flora and fauna, therefore knowing the location of these treatments is imperative and significant in order to make an informed decision regarding public lands.

Third, I am in disagreement with the forestry practices that the Forest Service has adopted regarding this project which prioritizes crop tree management over the native biological diversity of our unique forests. To equate that an even aged stand of two or even three species of trees replaces a naturally occurring biologically rich and diverse stand of trees in southern Appalachia is appalling and shameful.

Fourth, the Foothills project must change to conserve the 630 acres of existing old growth, as recognized and documented by the Forest Service. Further, this project should work to restore old growth connectivity across the landscape to address the effects that will be inevitably felt due to climate change. This project must address the importance of restoring the native forests of the region (i.e. not even aged stands consisting of 1-3 dominant species over a landscape) to be connected across the landscape to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Thank you for your consideration,