Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/11/2020 12:56:26 AM
First name: Wanda
Last name: Taylor
Organization:
Title:
Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I am a retired educator and landowner in Rabun County who wishes to express concerns over USFS proposed land sales and Foothills Landscape Project implications to the area. Due to the enormity of these proposals, 157,000 acres and 95 times larger than any previous project of the Southern Appalachians, great care must be taken in the implementation process. While I am a great supporter of our current national administration (Trump), and his endeavors on behalf of our economy, many of these current proposals will come at too high a cost to our national forests treasures. I oppose the sale, large harvest, Old Growth and Chattooga River disturbance, and use of herbicides with inadequate safeguards.

First, loss of acreage (due to sales) and beauty (due to harvest) will devalue Rabun County properties and harm her tourism dollars. The top of Charlie Mountain and the Boggs Mt. areas do not need to become the eyesores of Screamer and Tallulah Falls - whose ridgelines are filled with homes. Monies generated by these sales would most probably be spent on the acquisition of lands far to the south in less expensive locations - resulting in little benefit to Rabun County.

Secondly, harvest areas should not become the unattractive clear cuts (canopy openings) like the one on Wolf Creek Road of the past decade, where landowners were assured by the supervisor that we would "not even know it had been cut" - an area adjacent to a major road. These areas should be hidden by buffer regions, placed in less conspicuous areas, and be adjacent to neither Old Growth areas nor waterways. Public input opportunities with avenues for revision must be included in any plan. The planting of crop trees must be interspersed with areas of native forests and camouflaged. Care must be taken to protect our streams and prevent a repeat of the trout kill in Cutting Bone Creek as a result of a harvest in the late 70's and early 80's. That stream has neither recovered nor been restored by the NFS. Our sons have not been able to fish the stream as did their father.

Finally, as the daughter of governmental herbicide applicator, I can attest to the inadequate monitoring of the process. While herbicides are a necessary component to forest management, safeguards must be ensured to protect both the applicator and adjacent landowners from inappropriate concentrations and application methods.

In conclusion, please reconsider sales of NFS parcels, large scale harvest, and herbicide application practices in Rabun County. Our national forest must be preserved, as our past leaders intended, for future generations.