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Comments: I am a concerned wildlife biologist that has been moved to speak against the Foothills Landscape Project after reading the environmental assessment.

As a lifelong North Carolina native having spent my entire life familiarizing myself with the Appalachian mountains and familiarizing myself with this state's flora and fauna, I am deeply concerned for the health and diversity of forest ecosystems in the Southern Appalachian region. This proposal promises primarily even-aged pine/oak stands in lieu of (already decimated) old growth forest stands and other diverse mesic hardwood ecosystems, which support the greatest biodiversity and several threatened/endangered species.

The use of herbicides in clearing and treatment poses a significant threat to the health of the Chattooga watershed, which is already stressed from increased sedimentation and runoff from lack of riparian buffer zones. The Chattooga watershed holds not only cultural and social significance but is a crucial facet of the landscape, and the effect of chemical runoff on the health of its headwaters and larger streams cannot be overlooked.

As a citizen, scientist, and neighbor, I do not approve of this project (particularly on public land), and urge others to consider the dire and varied consequences of the proposition.