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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom This May Concern,

I love spending time in the forest. I live in an area that has recently been logged and is being managed to produce certain characteristics deemed valuable by your agency. I understand that some of these characteristics (young forests are more productive and can sequester more carbon dioxide) are good for the overall health of the forest but not all. I also understand that some timber targets have to be met, however, I am concerned with the overall scale of the project.

Imagine your friend was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. To bring your friend back to health he/she would have to undergo multiple surgeries, chemo and radiation therapies. You accompany your friend to some of these appointments. After seeing the toll these treatments take on your friend you wonder how can he/she handle any more of the poisons that are supposed to help rid their body of cancer.

I spend most of my days recreating in the Chattooga River are and am very concerned about the massive logging operations (60,000+ acres of commercial timber harvest) in conjunction with prescribed burns (50,000 acres of burning) and heavy pesticide applications (74,500 acres) over long periods of time. I wonder how the Chattooga River Watershed can handle any more of the poisons and unnatural treatments that are supposed to bring about it's health. Some people respond to cancer treatments and recover, many have adverse side effects from the radiation and experience a weakened quality of life as a result. Unfortunately, many simply do not recover. The Chattooga River Watershed is not sick and does not need to be logged, cut into, covered up and burned as extensively as prescribed in the Foothill Initiative. This area and those within the plan contain many intact robust ecosystems that serve as important wildlife corridors with unimpaired waterways. Human health is just as simple as forest health. We know what contributes to the physical health of humans; sleep, exercise, proper nutrition and strong caring relationships. The details of this project are a misguided attempt to create a healthy forest. Understanding forest health is simple. The Foothills Initiative project will not ecologically restore the area or do any good. A healthy forest isn't fragmented from excessive logging, burned such that it doesn't mimic the frequency of natural patterns, diminished of its biodiversity to favour commercial tree crops and sprayed with chemicals that you wouldn't want near your well water or family garden. Reduce the amounts of all of the above. I believe that the project should have to produce and Environmental Impact Statement. It's comparable to a care plan/strategy that is a normal part of surgery or medical treatment. It's an expected part of any major treatment. Shouldn't it be a major part of this treatment?

If this plan goes forward as is there needs to be routine check-ups on how operations are affecting the physical, chemical and biological health of treatment areas. Ecological succession is a natural process in which an area that experiences a disturbance repairs itself. Ultimately, these forests do not need to be managed by you for us. These forests need to be protected for us by you. If we were not here the earth would manage itself and it wouldn't involve timber targets, roads, herbicides and burning.

Please uphold the biodiversity of these areas by decreasing the planting of commercial tree species, significantly decrease the use of herbicides and burning applications and timber harvesting.

Thank you for your time,

Amanda Gladys