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Comments: The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Virginia State Leadership Team strongly supports the Piney River Vegetation Project, especially management actions to diversify the forest. We recognize the limitations this project faces with respect to regenerating young forest creation (as detailed in the Draft EA). The proposed 95 acres will help diversity the project area and move the forest toward greater health and resiliency while providing habitat for hundreds of wildlife species who depend on young forest or early succession growth for survival. However, given the small and steadily decreasing amounts of this forest stage across the GW NF and in the project area (less than 1%), please consider any viable option to increase regenerating young forest timber harvests in this and future projects through even-aged harvest methods.

The entire GWJEFF is losing critical diversity by the thousands of acres per year as long as we do not implement regenerating young forest timber harvests as per the GW Forest Plan (1,800-3,000 acres per year). We appreciate this landscape scale project which will help diversify and create more natural forest conditions on a well used portion of the GW.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.