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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment on "Devils Hens Nest Vegetation Project" These are my comments on the proposal.

I'm an avid outdoorsman and have enjoyed great hunting opportunities in the area of the proposed project since the late 1970's. I've seen the forest evolve from early successional Habitat (ESH) to later forest growth phases. The forest has "grown out" of optimal wildlife habitat. I support the prescriptions proposed by the USFS and would like to see active forest management prescriptions carried out to bring ESH forest conditions from 1% to at the least 10% and, optimally up to 20%. Specific measures to increase ESH would be beneficial to grouse and other species dependent on ESH.

As a member of local Ruffed Grouse Society(RGS) chapter, I've participated in several habitat improvement projects on the George Jefferson and Cherokee national forests in VA & TN. These projects have been done in partnership with USFS usually in conjunction with timber harvests. I promote future such projects and would like to see strengthened partnerships with the forest products industry, USFS and the RGS.

Large land owners in coalfield areas of Southwest Virginia have historically allowed public access for hunting. Liability issues have compelled these landowners to limit access to private hunting clubs who lease large acreages for hunting. Hunting the old strip benches is no longer available unless you're a member of a hunting club. Reduced access to convenient hunting grounds in our area highlights the significance of this project as a social justice issue.

Our area has been successful in promoting tourism. I believe improving habitat conditions on public lands would bring wildlife enthusiasts from adjoining states. I consider this an untapped tourism opportunity.

I look forward working through the planning process for this project with interested stakeholders.