

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/11/2021 12:08:06 PM

First name: Nadia

Last name: Sawicki

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

Thank you for using a two-step analysis for this project, first considering potential effects broadly before coming back to conduct site-specific review and public engagement before taking any on-the-ground actions. Public comment and input is vital.

Thank you also for committing to designate areas to manage for old-growth. Forest with old-growth attributes should be essentially left alone. We know that deforestation is a huge contributor to climate change.

Please avoid gridlock by narrowing the project to focus on issues with broad support. You could gain efficiency, do more, and gain support for a broad program of future work by excluding areas that will stir up disagreements and are widely acknowledged as being healthier than other areas. For example, please limit the scope of the project to:

- Exclude Georgia's Mountain Treasures from commercial timber harvests
- Restrict commercial timber harvests to "fire adapted" forest types. Those forest types cover 77% of the Foothills Landscape and include the areas where most people agree active management is most needed.
- Exclude areas more than half a mile from a road. "Temporary roads" actually last decades to centuries, and regardless of any good that logging accomplishes, access roads disrupt ground water, fragment habitat, and destroy soil.
- Do not cut all trees in attempts to regenerate southern yellow pine. The second harvest is unnecessary and damages forest structure and wildlife habitat value.
- Do not thin in mesic forests. Forests on moist sites naturally have dense canopies. There is no ecological justification for this! Please keep the national and indeed global effects of deforestation in mind.
- Manage forests the way they really work: Southern Appalachian forests naturally contain trees of many different ages, species that typically live over 200 years, and young trees growing in response to the death of one or a few trees.
- Choose Alternative 3. Alternative 3 excludes areas that "unsuitable" for "timber production."

Please accept these comments from someone who cares deeply about forests in general and Georgia forests in particular because Georgia is my home. This is a project with a massive scale and should be done with the utmost care for our environment in mind.

Thank you. Sincerely, Nadia Sawicki