Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/12/2021 7:49:22 PM
First name: Billy
Last name: Chism
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Forest Service:

My comments will not be technical. But they will be from the heart and from a bit of wisdom gained from living 70 years and reading and studying about the benefits that our forests provide.

This Foothills Landscape Project could become one that keeps our forests healthy and our water sources clean and pure. Or, it could become something I hope will not happen.

I understand the need for some timber harvesting, but the Chattahoochee National Forest provides a much higher calling. As I write this, this Western U.S. and California in particular are heat ovens and forest fires are ravaging much of the land.

Thankfully, we live in the mountains and piedmont of the Southeastern U.S. Our forests get plenty of rain, and are much different than those out West. In fact, our moist forests help create the climate that brings the rain to our area. I've camped at Rainy Mountain many times, and it's easy to understand where the name came from.

All this to say... yes, obviously you should exclude Georgia's Mountain Treasures from timer harvest. But I request as a citizen who has lived in Stephens County for 48 years and has spent lots of time in our forests, we need to minimize timber harvesting and maximize letting trees grow and mature much beyond 80 to 100 years. Some oaks can live and be heathy for 400 years. We don't need pine forests. There are plenty of those in middle and south Georgia. And even in north Georgia.

We need our forests to be managed thoughtfully, which means no new roads cut into the mountainsides, no wholesale thinning or clearcuts (I've seen the longterm damage there) and it means keeping our forests doing what they do best - providing clean air for us to breathe, clean water for us to drink and a forest that will protect us from the heat and other ramifications that come from climate change affecting every part of our world. Let's be prudent, like those who manage the Hudson River watershed.

Thank you for reading. I appreciate the work you do and any positive action you will take.