

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/1/2022 6:29:45 PM

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Title:

Comments: I am pleased to submit a comment in favor of the Archer Knob project. I am commenting as a local industry forester as well as a local hunter who lives less than 30 minutes from most of the project area. As was stated in the Purpose and Need section of the draft EA this area is in great need of forest management to increase species diversity, create more early-successional habitat, and enhance recreational opportunities.

As a local deer and turkey hunter it has been very frustrating to watch the USFS forest land increase in age across the majority of the area. As the vast majority of the timber on our public land has grown to over 80 years old it is now unsuitable habitat for wildlife to raise their young and provides little food for wildlife during the majority of the year, especially in years when there is little mast. We are in great need of more early-successional habitat and I encourage this project to be expanded to encompass a broader area and I encourage the USFS to conduct more timber harvesting to achieve that goal.

As a local forester for WestRock I am committed to helping you all achieve this goal of harvesting timber by assisting in providing a market for the pulpwood, helping encourage local loggers to be interested in working on USFS, land and possibly being a bidder on future timber sales. As you are laying out your timber harvest please keep in mind that many of the local loggers who have traditionally purchased USFS timber sales are operating equipment that is different than when the road systems were designed in the 1970's through the 1990's. Many of these loggers are trucking with tractor trailers or at least tri-axle trucks with pup trailers and they are operating larger skidders than in the past because the equipment companies don't even sell small skidders any longer. Many if not most are cutting primarily with a rubber tired cutter and will mostly be interested in sale areas they can operate a rubber tire cutter, grapple skidder, and truck out of with a tractor trailer. The more you cater towards this type of equipment setup the more bids you will receive. Also please do all you can to not make these sales cost inhibited by requiring the purchaser to buy an exorbitant amount of stone, build haul and skid road (especially specified roads) and purchase excessive bmp materials. Specifically the amount of lime required per acre is excessive, soil stabilization can be achieved with much less lime and fertilize than currently required. Keep in mind that brushing in skid roads after they are no longer in use will provide adequate erosion control if done properly and is much more cost effective. Also as I stated earlier focus on sale areas that can be cut mechanically, the local suppliers aren't getting any younger and they prefer to have themselves or their employees inside the cab of equipment where they are safer. Past sales in this district as well as other districts have been proposed with many units in close proximity then their will be one or two units way off the beaten path thrown in to the sale and that turns prospective purchasers off as well. Finally the WestRock Mill in Covington can not buy charred wood so please do not include recently burnt areas within proposed harvest units.

We at WestRock really appreciate the hard work you all are doing to try and harvest more timber and we would like to help in any way we can. And again as a local outdoorsman thank you for trying to create more early-successional habitat so hopefully my children will have the opportunity to see more deer and turkeys as they join me in hunting USFS land in the future.