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Comments: Like many, when I was in high school, I took those profiles that were supposed to tell you what career you should pursue. Amongst my options were teacher and writer, which I am, and forest ranger, which I am not. I do, however, have common ground with members of the USFS--we have a great love and concern for our environment.

While I don't own land in the area concerned in this proposal, I have lived here for more than 20 years and care deeply about the region. I also have many friends who will be directly affected if this proposal goes ahead in its current form. I attended the meeting in Whitley County on November 17 and like those who spoke out, three key aspects of this proposal concern me most:

- 1) the proposed reduction in the number of mature trees
- 2) the extent of the proposed clear-cuts
- 3) the proposed use of herbicide

Human intervention in Kentucky's, indeed most U.S. forests is a recent development compared to the scope of natural history. Forests did just fine without poisonous chemicals or clear cuts. Trees well over 200 years old were integral to the forest's propagation and survival. In other words, the struggle against invasive species is a problem we created.

I agree with other community members that we need to look at solutions and work together rather than in opposition with the USFS. Specifically, I propose the following:

- 1) Leave the healthy mature trees alone. Ecosystems and our survival depends on them.
- 2) Experienced loggers at the November meeting clearly explained the benefits of select cutting. Having survived devastating flooding this summer in Eastern Kentucky and seen the extent of the destruction, I have to agree. Clear-cutting is not an appropriate solution to the issues our forests face.
- 3) Rather than endanger workers and our wildlife, creeks, and farms by spraying herbicides, application should be targeted at individual plants or stumps where there is minimal, if any risk. Once invasive species have been safely removed, those zones should be closely monitored to ensure the reestablishment of native species that will help restore our forests to a healthier state.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment.