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Comments: There is no reason to log the Kentucky forests in the Appalachians. It is my understanding that President Biden made it clear, and gave a directive, for federal agencies to attend to climate change. Any plan to log at all, of course, violates this order.

I lived in the Western United States for 14 years and I have seen firsthand the consequences of logging, as well as clearcutting. So I know well that despite whatever science the USFS may propose to justify any sort of logging or clearcutting as "management" is disingenuous at best.

Kentucky Heartwood has clearly documented landslides in Kentucky caused by logging. Trees, of course, hold the steep slopes together. Landslides cause destruction of streams--and Kentucky is lively with waterways--which in turn leads to habitat degradation for any number of fish, not to mention any riparian creature or plant ecology. We do not need any more fouled water in Kentucky.

The flooding in eastern Kentucky suggests what this region will see increasingly in years to come. Tree cover mitigates this, slowing the rainfall, and the root systems and mature soils in a mature forest store that water, hold it. To allow logging is to allow flooding.

It is also habitat destruction in terms of mammals as well. Black bears seem to be recovering nicely, and of course elk have been reintroduced into eastern Kentucky. Along with the panther, and the fairly new addition of coyotes, it is imperative to increase biodiversity in the mountains. Removing forests removes habitat, which is anthropocentric thinking that leads to irreparable damage to the earth.

But in terms of humans, I have spent my life studying our relationship to the wild through literature, especially; much of our American heritage is built on the ideas of Emerson and Thoreau, to name a few, in our understanding of our relationship to nature. We need nature to define who we are, not strictly as a source of dollars and materials. We need a space where we can find not only respite but understanding--an education in ecology, in botany and biology, in geology and geography. To sunder any ties with the natural world is to deplete our own identity. We will find no comfort, in the long run, in the scarred earth, in the endless parking lots, and in the heat islands we have created at our own expense and to our own shame.

I oppose any logging at all in the Daniel Boone National Forest. As the author of the guidebook, "Hiking Kentucky's Red River Gorge," and as a writer who has visited other places within the Boone National Forest, I am well aware of its value to biodiversity, to animals, and to children who will undoubtedly judge us and our mistakes in the future. This is a project worth abandoning. The money, wherever that is to come from, is better spent in restoration.

I have seen American chestnuts growing on the forest floor in other proposed logging areas. I have seen incredible insects I could not name. I have seen magnificent trees. This is what we must preserve if we are to conserve our sanity.