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First name: Hunter

Last name: Morrical

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I applaud the Forest Service's efforts to work with landowners to help find solutions that can better impact private landowners, and the general public. However, I do object to the current land swap proposal as it does not appear that the land being traded is of equal value.

One thing to consider is although some of this public land may not have complete legal access to the public, the public designation does protect these pieces from being developed. Being adjacent to a surface water tributaries, they provide a high value to the aquatic and riparian ecosystems. If this land were to be traded, it would then be private land, un-zoned, with little regulatory guidance on development within these areas. There would be no watercourse setbacks, or any ability to regulate disturbance (outside of wetland areas) which could cause degradation of the natural environment.

Another thing to consider is groundwater rights would be transferred to the private entity owning the new parcels. Being closer to the creeks, groundwater would become much more available allowing development to further dewater an aquifer that feeds groundwater springs in the lower valleys throughout the year. Careful consideration should be taken when developing in areas prone to drought and dewatering - Big Timber Creek is already horribly dewatered in the summer time and further groundwater consumption could result in impacts to previously reliable groundwater springs on neighboring properties.

I do believe there is a solution that both parties can agree on, however this proposed deal is not a fair trade for the general public. It is our duty as citizens to not only protect our natural environment for our benefit, but also the benefit of the unborn (as Teddy Roosevelt once said - much more elegantly than me). To trade these lands now, would remove them from ever being able to be enjoyed by the public in the future, and would remove their federal protection. Maybe the next landowner in 200 years will be able to offer a better deal to the public.

Being that these lands on the table are particularly valuable because of the water resources they hold, it would be a disservice to the public to trade these for the land that is currently proposed. A better deal can be worked out.