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First name: Matthew
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: To Whom it may concern,

Let me first start by saying that I am NOT against logging if done in a correct way. Anyone who knows me would not classify me as a "tree hugger" or radical environmentalist, but I consider myself a conservationist and a steward of God's land. I believe things need to be done in a correct way and not haphazardly, as I feel this project proposes. I guess each person has their own opinion of what is the correct way, but I think everyone can agree that the damage done from clear-cut logging and the use of hundreds or thousands of gallons pesticides/herbicides (whichever you use, both or any chemical toxins) in our woodlands and ecosystem, will be life-changing in a negative way to everyone and everything around it. It will also be irreversible and can never be fixed, which is what makes it so detrimental to the area. The bottom line for some, I guess is the financial gain, as that seems to be the motive for most things like this, however the residents, the wildlife and the aquatic areas of that region are the ones left to reap the damage and suffer the consequences of something they did not do, something they did not want, but more importantly something that could've been prevented.

I can only assume that people who do not live close by, really do not give much thought to what is left after an area has been clear cut. I keep mentioning clear-cutting, because a huge part of the proposal I've seen is to clear-cut over half the proposed area, which would be over 5,000 acres of Daniel Boone Forest clear-cut. To clear-cut flat ground to make cattle fields may be one thing, but to clear-cut timber in the mountains is of no benefit and causes more damage than good. The people who choose to do this must not really consider the damage to the local people, the land, the wildlife and the water sources after clear-cutting timber or from the run-off of poison use of herbicide/pesticide sprays, but more about the monetary gain they can make by taking the resources. I would bet that they wouldn't choose to do this in their backyard close to their home, but seem fine doing it in someone else's backyard.

Ironically, the Daniel Boone National Forest is "supposedly" owned by everyone and I feel I help pay for it with my taxes, but it appears only a handful of people (most likely none or very few locals) are going to make a decision as to what is done to our land here. If the people really do own it, then let the people vote whether to proceed or not .The fact We/I own it is a façade people are led to believe, because IF this were true, it would not be touched. I would venture to safely say the vote would overwhelmingly be opposed to logging the Daniel Boone National Forest in this area. Maybe people could deal better if it wasn't spread out over 40 years or if most wasn't clear cut and they didn't use herbicide spray. I feel this project in the manner proposed will have detrimental effects on the residents, the wildlife, the ecosystem, the land, the aquatic streams, ponds and lakes and also the tourism and the residents. This is why I do not believe this project should move forward and I'll explain why.

I recently only heard of this proposed logging, even though I live close to the Daniel Boone National Forest. Not a coincidence I feel, but when I did hear about this, I was actually sick to my stomach hearing the plans for most of the Forest was to be clear cut and then sprayed with chemicals. Again, I'm not a "tree hugger" as some would think this sounds, as I have actually logged with my dad, but we have NEVER clear-cut any property nor used ANY chemicals to spray because it is not necessary or beneficial to the land. We would select timber trees at least 16 inches in diameter or bigger to give the younger Oaks, poplars, hickory and other trees a chance to grow and reseed the area.. When you clear cut, there is NOTHING left and that opens the door for invasive species such as vines, kudzu and autumn olive trees to take over. I guess that's when you want to bring in the toxic chemicals and spray. I do not understand that logic.

I heard one of the selling points from the government representatives of the forestry department or some other

agency in the meeting was how this would be beneficial to wildlife and the ecosystem. If clear-cutting, using herbicides and doing things like this is so beneficial to wildlife and the ecosystem, why don't you ever hear of it being done in Yellowstone National Park, in the Redwood National Park or any other national park? Do you see it being done locally in the state at parks, such as at Kingdom Come State Park (known to locals as the Little Shepherds Trail) or Mammoth Cave? Do you hear of them clear-cut or even do select timber cutting in Cades Cove in the Smokies? Do you think they spray herbicides/pesticides in these areas? No you do not. Why, because it's not beneficial! Maybe they do some select harvest at some of these places from time to time, but I don't believe they bring heavy equipment into Yellowstone or any of these other places to clear cut timber and then spray herbicides. The truth is, it's not beneficial to wildlife or anyone around to clear-cut timber in the mountains or to use herbicides/ pesticides to spray undergrowth. Maybe on flat ground to create farmland and cattle fields as I stated earlier, but not in the mountains. It's reasons like this, most people do not trust anything the government does. As Ronald Regan once said, the 9 most feared words anyone will hear is " I'm from the government and I'm here to help." Well it seems the government is here in Whitley and McCreary county and they have come to help… Yea right!

It is never beneficial to wildlife when you cut down all the trees in an area which give many a home, give all shelter from weather and give them food, and keep them hidden from people and predators? As of now, the wildlife are safe, have food and shelter in the forest and are able to hide better from hunters because most of the woods is only accessible by foot. This is a good thing, because it keeps all ATVs out. By creating logging roads where people can access the land easier, ATV traffic will be able to go all over the forest, giving access for people to cross over onto private lands that would otherwise not be available to them. I know your reply will be to say " ATV's can't be used on government property", but they are used on government property when people can access them easily, just like some people poach deer where they think they will not be caught. These logging roads, besides making the land barren and ugly, will create easier access by people with ATVs and create other problems

Now again, I can't help but mention the herbicides/pesticides that are planned for this project. You will use hundreds if not thousands of gallons of this and where do you think it will go when used on higher elevations? All of this will now get into the streams, rivers, lakes, wells and other water supplies. In short, these sprays contaminate the entire food chain and water supply. These sprays get into creeks and streams, contaminating drinking water for all mammals to drink, fish and all other aquatic life to live such as beavers, ducks, minks, otters and people to use for water or food sources. Every animal including man will be negatively affected by contaminated streams. Water and food supplies get the poison, the animals eat and drink the poison and people eat the animals and also drink the water. Once this is in the ground and water, it's completely irreversible. It's not like you'll be using a small bottle bought at Wal-Mart, but hundreds and maybe even thousands of gallons! This is not good in any shape, form or fashion and the reason I keep bringing this point back up.

If all of this isn't enough, let's take the herbicides out of the equation and just say you were going to clear-cut the timber. How many people will be adversely affected by the water run-off erosion and mud-slides that will be created by clear cut logging on a mountainside? Everyone. What kind of trees would be left to reseed the forest? None, because they have ALL been cut. Anyone knows that when trees and vegetation are removed from a mountain, you get mud slides and erosion. It's not even likely, it's inevitable. It's not IF it will happen, it's how much and how bad it will be. The run-off goes downhill into water supplies and streams and everywhere else, making a mess and damaging private farms and lands. Not to even mention how all this looks! Even if it didn't do any damage, which we know it will, it makes the landscape look raped and destroyed. Not to mention the forest will never grow back like it was for hundreds of years if ever, but never in our lifetime.

I don't want to drag this out and as I said before, this COULD possibly be done in a way that could benefit wildlife and the area or at least not completely destroy everything, IF done properly. I think most people could agree some very old growth could be selectively taken out in a way not to tear up things. It may sound silly, but why not use mules to bring the timber out to keep from completely destroying the land. This could add to the tourism

aspect as people would travel and visit to see logging going on with mules. Maybe even a small dozer to bring timber out and reclaim any logging roads created, to where there are no roads left when the project is complete. Instead of herbicides which I stated was a non-negotiable for me as this will do the most harm of all things proposed,why not kill the undergrowth with controlled burns? Also instead of clear-cut timbering, which I feel is the second most destructive thing outside of sprays, you could do some select timbering and plant back one or two saplings for every tree you harvest. Say you take 150 White oak trees in one area, plant back 150-300 white oak saplings to replace what was taken. You should also leave trees under 16 inches in diameter and they will reproduce themselves. When you clear-cut everything, there is NOTHING left to reseed. Everyone would agree that in the mountains, this is not good forest management at all.

It's funny to me that coal companies have to reclaim and fix everything as they work and when they are done with the land leaving it better than before. Mountain cell tower sites have guidelines to go by and also have to reclaim the land. It seems logging operations are the only people who can go into a place, clear-cut it, demolish it and do what they want to as long as the landowner is ok with it and they do not have to reclaim anything. There is no oversight in logging and I've never understood this. And I know the government will not oversee themselves in doing this project.

So in closing, if you've really taken the time to read this letter, thank you. I am not mad at the people who have come here to propose this, as I know you have a job to support your family as I do. I live here and do not want to see the mountains destroyed or the ecosystem polluted with herbicides and such. I also feel there are some things you can't put a price on and the land is one of them. If logged, this land will never look the same again. I could be open to discussions about select timbering as I mentioned and possibly reach a mutual agreement as long as the land was not clear-cut timbered and no herbicides/pesticides were used. Leaving trees of a certain size to reseed and planting saplings to replace what you took as well. Again you don't see this in National Parks, so why does the government come here to take what they can from the people here? And it should not take forty years to complete this project. I mean it only took 8 years to hand cut the Erie Canal by hand. I believe the forty year contract is just to leave an open window for the government to come in and rape and take from the land for half of a generation. That's ridiculous. I hope that in reading these complaints that you will take seriously how the people feel and really do what is right for the people who live here. So in closing as I have pretty much stated, I am completely against logging the Daniel Boone National Forest as it has been proposed. Thank you again for you time

Absolute No Under any circumstances

Clear-Cut logging
Use of Herbicides and or any chemical sprays to kill plants, bugs or anything
A 40 year time frame
Questions:

Where is the timber that they want to cut going? Will it be used within the U.S? (if it's planned on being shipped overseas, I'd sure hope it's not to supply China or some other foreign country)

Who stands to make the money from the harvesting? I feel obviously the government owns the land, but where is this money going? The government just raises taxes or prints more money when they want more, so the entire idea of this project perplexes me. Somebody wants this timber and somebody stands to get rich doing it.

Why was this area chosen for this?

Why do you propose so much clear cutting?

Why do you feel the need to use chemical sprays? I have bees that work close and probably in some of the proposed areas.

Sincerely,

Matthew Ratliff