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Comments: I am writing to express my opposition to the ill-planned, unnecessary, and environmentally unsustainable Jellico Vegetation Management Project. Caving to agency and industry pressure by prioritizing industrial logging over ecological health is an incredibly short-sighted approach to management and stewardship of these incredible public lands. Whatever economic benefits that could possibly accrue from this project are dwarfed by the negative environmental impacts certain to occur, impacts that ultimately undermine the fiscal sustainability of the Daniel Boone National Forest and adjacent communities.

The Jellico Project as proposed would damage watershed health, exacerbating flooding risks while destroying riparian habitat for wildlife - including threatened and endangered species. Its indiscriminate logging of mature and old-growth forest would diminish the forest's age-class diversity while directly contributing to unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. I live in rural western Colorado, where our forests are succumbing to drought, fire, beetles, and other stressors associated with a warming climate. The Jellico Project would only be contributing to this, when instead the forests of the Cumberland Mountains should be retained as biodiversity hotspots and carbon sinks. Given the agency's poor track record, I am also concerned about the likely spread of invasive species should this project go forward.

While I live in Colorado, I value and cherish the species-rich, biologically diverse forests of the Cumberland Mountains. I am watching our Western forests succumb in real-time to beetles, fires, and other stressors, on top of which is the Forest Service's unbridled logging, ostensibly in the name of "forest health" but in reality just another unjustified rationale to satiate the regional timber industry. It makes me happy to know that USFS-managed public lands include such special places as the Jellico Mountains, and saddened to learn that this special place is likewise in the crosshairs of the agency's unprincipled perspective that puts board-foot quotas ahead of sustainable management. Please be responsible and withdraw the proposed Jellico Vegetation Management Project from consideration.