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Comments: I am writing to plead that the Forest Service NOT amend the Jefferson National Forest Plan, and to select Alternative 1 -No Action. Do not make the 11 amendments and exceptions for the Mountain Valley Pipeline - it goes against the very purpose of establishing the National Forest to protect water among other things. We have already seen hundreds of water quality violations due to MVP, and that must be put to end.

Besides endangering water resources, the MVP crossing the JNF could threaten all kinds of plant and animal species, including endangered ones. Many kinds of native plants require undisturbed soil to germinate and thrive; once an interior forest is torn up and turned into edge habitat, a whole different ecosystem has to adapt. As someone who studies native plants, propagates them, collects seed, and strives to learn about their survival needs, it is crucial to know that certain native plants require years on end of undisturbed soil in order to germinate and populate. It is never as simple as just re-seeding an area that has been deeply disturbed. The integrity of the soil is forever changed, and there is a big chance we would lose rare species. Mycorrhizae in the soil would be harmed, interrupting the network of nutrient sharing and inter-species dependencies in the forest, creating a chain-effect of harm that goes further than any of us could see.

Removing portions of old-growth forests also interrupts the process of topsoil being created, and destroys a place that would otherwise be retaining carbon. In the midst of a climate crisis, we MUST keep our old growth forests in tact and let them do their work of carbon sequestration.

We need clean water, and we need to protect the integrity of our ecosystems. We do NOT need this pipeline. I urge you to not bend the rules for MVP, and to stay firm on the purpose of the National Forest towards conservation.