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Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am a local resident of the Pisgah National Forest area. I spent time every day in this beautiful forest. I am deeply deeply concerned about the finalized plan. I urge the forest service to prioritize conservation and recreation in the country's most popular national forest.

Old-growth forests store large amounts of carbon, clean the air we breathe, maintain and increase biodiversity, filter water, and reduce wildfire risks. The old-growth forests of the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests are home to several endangered and threatened species, including four species of endangered bats and the imperiled Blue Ridge lineage of green salamanders.

The amendments proposed by the Forest Service should create standards for the protection of all old-growth forests on National Forest Lands. It's important that the new rule is strong enough to protect the rich biodiversity of our region and to keep these massive carbon stores firmly rooted in the soil to mitigate climate change and flexible enough to allow for the restoration of old-growth stand structure and wildfire resilience.

Furthermore, the final plan is an epic fail. It has already received widespread public, political, and community opposition. the final plan sentences the forest to decades of conflict, litigation, and community resistance.

Fortunately, the solution is simple: prioritize conservation and recreation in the country's most popular national forest. Specifically, here are 10 specific ways to amend the plan:

- \* Protect all 101,000 acres of the most important recreation and conservation areas.
- \* Protect all remaining old-growth forests.
- \* Protect all of the Craggy National Scenic Area.
- \* Prohibit logging on steep slopes.
- \* Prohibit logging in the Appalachian Trail viewshed and other major trail corridors and viewsheds.
- \* Prohibit logging within 100 feet of all waterways, including ephemeral streams.
- \* Include the carbon and climate benefits of mature forests and old growth forests in all decisions.
- \* Protect all of the State Natural Heritage Areas.
- \* Include species-specific plans and robust, enforceable protections for their habitat.