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Comments: A forest plan that promotes sustainable timber harvest, good habitat for wildlife, water yield and recreation is not just about timber management but forest management. Forest management is needed to sustain livelihoods as well as human and landscape health.

A mosaic of uneven aged forest stands provides a landscape that gives us all these amenities. Old growth forests have unique multilayer structure and support species of flora and fauna not found in younger forest types. Their age and lack of human caused disturbances allows development of these communities over time. Once cut, it would be a hundred or more years in our southern forests, if ever, that the forest type would exist again. This is all the more probable given changing growing conditions, seed sources and species competition.

There is no need to harvest old growth forest. Managing in a rotation within stands of normal harvest ages (e.g. 25 to 80 years depending on tree species), on land already under silvicultural practices designed for sustained yield can provide forest product needs. Why go to the expense of road construction and soil disturbance from roads and harvesting in these old forest stands? The benefits for retaining undisturbed old growth far outweigh what can be gained (by who & how many?) by harvesting the trees.

The biggest and oldest trees in our forests store more net carbon than younger forests and more than any other land use in the U.S. Our watersheds and drinking water yields benefit from roadless areas and larger intact forest tracts.

Please do not allow encroachment into wilderness areas and older forests in less accessible areas. Old growth forest hold intrinsic values that are not replaceable.

I implore the National Forest Service to assure the PNNF is managed to benefit us and future generations with a long term view that includes allowing old growth forest that exists at present to remain intact while managing for tree stands of all ages that include some to continue into old growth age classes.

All the natural resources life depends upon are influenced by forest management. Climate change is a global issue that our backyards and regional forests can help buffer. The Pisgah-Nantahala forest plan impacts my local environment and economy in Western North Carolina. This is my homeland. Protect existing old growth, the forests that inspire awe and give us so many benefits, and take the long term view.