

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 10:34:15 PM

First name: Stephen

Last name: Hendricks

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The US Forest Service has nurtured and restored the magnificent biodiverse forests of the Southern Appalachians for over a hundred years. They were abused and high-graded by timber companies after the Civil War before scientific forestry was practiced in the U.S. Poor farming practices over many years also degraded many areas.

Most coves and higher elevation portions of the forests need to be allowed to return as near as possible to their prior condition with a very minimum of timber management and road building. They might have high commercial value in many cases, but biodiversity, scenery, and recreational values of near-natural older growth areas are a much wiser resource investment for the future and provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of the public.

Careful scientific management is needed for the forest but please don't degrade in any way what it has taken over a hundred years to restore.