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Title:
Comments: Thank you for considering an alternative ("Alternative 1") to the logging proposal, Jellico Vegetation Management Project #63037. Although I would far rather there be no logging, I consider Alternative 1 a compromise our communities can live with.

I understand that the national forests are to be multipurpose and are not the same as national parks. Different standards, motivations, and rules apply, yet[hellip]

I am strongly opposed to the original proposed actions for the following reasons:

- I believe it is misleading for the Forest Service to state that forests need human management. Except for the potential need for fire management, natural forests are healthy without management. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a model of forest health. Those forests are not cut, thinned, or otherwise "managed", yet are healthy and sustainable.

- Similarly, I think implying a "need" for multiple aged stand communities is misleading.

"While desired structures, species compositions, and age classes occur in a mature forest, the biodiversity provided by young (0-30 years old) and mid-aged (31-80 years old) forest is being lost. To counteract this loss and increase project area biodiversity by providing a mix of habitat for flora and fauna"

o Vast amounts of private land surrounding DBNF are in various age classes and stages of succession, already providing "a mix of habitat for flora and fauna." There is no need for more.

o Converting areas of mature woodland into mixed-age stands does advantage some species, but harms others. Loss of mature stands disadvantages animal species requiring large territories and disrupts sensitive areas in which threatened/endangered plant species are found.

- Clearcutting damages soil, fouls streams and rivers, and promotes erosion and landslides, particularly on steep slope areas in the proposed areas of cutting

- The November 2022 Town Meeting suggested the timber cutting would benefit our community. This may be true if only local loggers are contracted to cut and if local businesses use the timber. Otherwise, these jobs are being outsourced and our resources are simply benefiting others.

- Intensive logging will have a far greater impact on our roads. Will the Forest Service or the logging companies pay for the road damage?

Please consider the following as support for Alternative 1:

- Surrounding landowners will be far happier.

- There will be fewer unsightly areas of damaged landscape

- There will be more natural areas available for college students learning about ecology, environmental science, and biodiversity

- Less erosion, landslides, and water fouling will occur.

- There will be less disruption for sensitive/threatened/endangered species

- There will be a shorter duration of logging trucks on the roads

- There will be less road damage.

Again, thank you for considering an alternative to the original proposal and listening to the concerns of those of us who will be most impacted!