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Comments: We have seen so much destructive flooding in Kentucky in recent years, and this project will only increase the risk of destruction caused by increased rainfall. The Forest Service's analysis of landslide risks in the Jellico Mountains does not address the most relevant issues related to this significant hazard. Given the steep and landslide-prone nature of these mountains, it's crucial for comprehensive assessments to be conducted. I urge the Forest Service to take a deeper look at the landslide risks and the serious issues raised by Kentucky Heartwood. By prioritizing thorough analysis and incorporating additional expert guidance, we can better safeguard against landslide risks and ensure the safety and stability of the Jellico mountains and surrounding areas.

I've seen Tree of Heaven destroy sensitive forest communities all over the eastern US. The northeast region has been devastated by this invasive plant moving into disturbed areas. The proposed plan will create perfect conditions to foster the explosion of this species. The Draft EA's analysis of the rampant Tree of Heaven infestation in the Jellicos is grossly understated. Large infestations, particularly stemming from areas previously logged by the Forest Service in the 1990s, pose a significant risk of spread with the proposed logging activities. The potential for Tree of Heaven to foster explosive populations of the spotted lanternfly is alarming, as it can have detrimental effects on neighboring native species and agriculturally important trees, like fruit trees. Regardless of the which proposed action is selected, Tree of Heaven needs to be treated and maintained. The original proposed action addressed a large invasive issue and should not be dismissed regardless of timber volume extracted.

he best available climate science unequivocally demonstrates the importance of mature and old-growth forests for climate change mitigation. These forests act as essential carbon sinks, helping to absorb and store significant amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. By acknowledging this science, the USFS should align its practices with broader conservation objectives and contribute meaningfully to climate action efforts.

Please protect these natural resources with smart forest management and do not allow this plan to go forward.