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Title: Secretary

Comments: The approximately 50 beekeepers of the Whitley County Beekeepers Association are adamantly opposed to the Proposed Action which supports logging 10,000 acres, of which 5,000 acres is a form of clearcutting and for a project length of 40 years. We prefer Alternative 2, which is no logging. While not ideal, we would be able to tolerate the compromise option of Alternative 1. However, with ANY logging, we ask that the Forest Service modify their plans to include the following improvements.

Honey bees and native pollinators are declining due to a cocktail of pesticides, invasive species and habitat loss. The plans put forth by the Forest Service will further contribute to these problems when there are existing workable solutions that the Forest Service should take and incorporate into all their plans.

1. The Forest Service plan for clearcut areas is to spray herbicides to kill sun loving maple and poplar so that shade loving oaks can grow. We understand you want especially white oaks to grow because you can sell them at a higher price, which is fine. Yet, when spraying, we are asking you to do only stump application of herbicides, not broadcast spray. There are many reasons why herbicide spraying over larger areas is not helpful for bees and all pollinators, groundwater contamination and ground-dwelling species. Stump spraying is the middle ground solution.

2. Invasive Tree of Heaven is already infesting large areas of this part of the National Forest from logging in the 1990s and has never been removed and is spreading like crazy. Beekeepers know tree of heaven is the preferred food source for the invasive spotted lantern fly. We care about this because tree of heaven supports the spread of spotted lantern fly and "honeydew" (bug poop) gets in our honey and tastes terrible. We are asking the Forest Service to remove the existing tree of heaven using stump only herbicide application and not clearcut so much so more tree of heaven grows and supports more spotted lantern fly.

On behalf of the 50 Whitley County beekeepers, we ask you to kindly incorporate our feedback into your plans.

Respectfully,

Ashley Ratliff

Secretary - Whitley County Beekeepers Association