Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/23/2024 4:00:00 AM
First name: Richard
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Re: Jellico Vegetation Management EA

I am writing to to voice my opposition to the proposed 40 year action plan to log 10,000 acres of mature forest and of that 5,000 acres being clear-cut.

First and foremost, I find it absolutely offensive that a government agency would put forth any plan with a 40 year time frame. The number of changes to our political leadership over that time, and thus changing priorities is enough reason to give any one pause for suggestion such a long plan of action. Not to mention, when we are discussing the management of our forests this is a process that needs to be continually monitored, evaluated and adjusted as time and circumstances change. If the 40 year action plan is approved, I doubt there is any chance it will be changed or altered during that time frame, even if it is warranted.

Secondly, I want to address the removal of more mature forests in the United States. The following, while not an exhaustive list of problems with removing mature forests, should be enough reasons that we should take a careful look at limiting the acreage we are removing of these forests. Removing Mature forests, especially through methods of clear-cutting poses a number of problems.

Trees enrich the atmosphere with oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide as they grow. Logging slows tree growth, so they can't counteract the carbon dioxide released by logging, reducing this vital forest property. Cutting down mature forests creates a "carbon debt" that can take decades or even centuries to recoup. While the trees are down, they are no longer sequestering carbon.

Clear-cutting can reduce the soil's water-holding capacity and root strength. Removing forest cover exposes the soil to heavy precipitation and temperature variations. Trees slow down water currents, preventing rill formation, this is why clear-cutting increase erosion in addition to the potential of hazardous landslides without tree roots holding the now loose soil in place.

Mature forests are home to unique biodiversity and logging can damage habitats and destroy forest ecosystems. This threatens wildlife species and deprives them of their natural habitats, reduces food sources and decreases biodiversity. Aquatic animals are also adversely affected as water temperatures rise due to lack of shade.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.