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Comments: I am writing in regards to Jellico Vegetation Management EA Project 63037. Since moving to Kentucky in 1990, I have used the Daniel Boone National Forest as my primary recreation source - camping, hiking, wildlife watching, swimming and mountain biking. I have hiked and camped and mountain biked in Jellico. My general opposition to logging of the Jellico area is my observation that it has very steep slopes, is highly susceptible to landslides which erode the hillsides and add sediment to the streams. In addition, we have seen severe flooding in eastern Kentucky hollow communities that has been greatly enhanced by logging and mining activities which remove the vegetation that would otherwise help absorb and retain the rainfall.

This is mature forest, and the forest floor of Jellico - especially the coves - is deep with leaf litter and this wet matter will help reduce the frequency and severity of both forest fires and flooding.

As a birder, I am aware that the Cerulean Warbler has been recorded and documented in the Jellico area as well as endangered bat species. Communities below the mountain are resolutely opposed to the logging as demonstrated in community hearings in Williamsburg and McCreary County. I am concerned about logging bringing possible entry of invasive species, particularly tree of heaven, which brings the spotted lanternfly. The logging operators sometimes will damage young trees to access the mature trees that they want, and the mechanized equipment brings in seeds of invasives, which then forces the Forest Service to use potentially dangerous herbicides which can affect water quality and habitat, but herbicides like Round Up are known to the World Health Organization to declare Round up a probable carcinogen for the personnel who apply it.

Anywhere there has been logging in eastern Kentucky it has been followed by invasive plants such as multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, miscanthus etc. Then come the ticks and chiggers which thrive in logged areas, but which are hardly present in forests that have not been logged in 100 years.

While hiking in the Jellico, I helped document giant old growth trees which should be left standing to meet President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies. As far as the 40-year plan, it is both impossible to predict the state of our climate that far in the future, and thus it would be irresponsible to project a logging plan that far into the future. We may find out in the next few years just how seriously climate change is going to affect Kentucky and its forests - if we log the forests now it will be too late to go back. I feel this proposal is irresponsible and the project should be cancelled to save the forests, the wildlife and the communities of people who live downstream.

The Forest Service for DBNF is prioritizing a timber harvest over other forest needs, including recreation, forest health, water quality, and more. We have lost almost all of the old growth forests in America, we should work to preserve the existing remaining precious old growth.