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Comments: The Jellicos are home to a number of rare and endangered species. The proposed logging and clearcutting under the Jellico Vegetation Management Plan will irreparably damage this ecosystem, opening the area up for the growth of opportunistic invasive species and damaging the soil and water. Furthermore, about 900 acres of the proposed project area is old growth (>130 years) forest, and should be protected for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, increased resiliency to climate change due to high structural diversity, higher levels of carbon sequestration per tree than newer growth forests (given that carbon sequestration accelerates as a tree ages), and they provide important habitat and wildlife pathways for thousands of species.

Beyond these concerns, the geology of the Jellicos is not conducive to logging and clearcutting, especially when considering the resilience of these ecosystems. The Jellicos are known for their steep slopes and unstable soil, and clear cutting and other forms of timber production creates significant risk for both human and ecological communities. This is particularly important given that the Jellicos are home to many rare and endangered species, and post-landslide soil and vegetation regeneration is slow; complete restabilization of mountainsides via trees is expected to be slow to nonexistent, especially in the face of a warming climate (Buma and Pawlick, 2021). Logging releases huge amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through felling, milling, transportation, soil disturbance, and decomposition of slash. While this may provide a relatively short-lived economic benefit, the negative effects on human communities and local environments will be both long-term and far-reaching.