

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/24/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Stephen

Last name: Dorsett

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Jellico Vegetation Management Project #63037

I am writing to express my deep concern about the proposed logging project in the Jellico Mountains within the Daniel Boone National Forest. As a resident of Kentucky and someone who deeply values our natural environment, I believe it is crucial to voice opposition to this plan.

The U.S. Forest Service's proposal raises several critical issues:

1. Ecological Impact: The Jellico Mountains are home to mature and old-growth forests that provide essential habitat for flora and fauna. This forest provides a distribution of different age and species of trees and diverse ecosystems. The Jellico is already "healthy". Clear-cutting the Jellico would disrupt this delicate balance, affecting countless species and their ecosystems.

2. Landslide and Flooding Risk: Kentucky residents are already upset at the lack of concern that the USFS shows for landslide and flooding risks. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/05032023/kentucky-old-trees-young-forest-carbon-storage/> The devastating floods and mudslides in neighboring counties underscore the urgency of responsible land management. We cannot afford to exacerbate landslide risks by further altering the landscape.

3. Carbon Storage and Climate Change: Mature trees play a vital role in carbon sequestration. By removing them, we not only lose their ability to absorb carbon dioxide but also contribute to climate change. Protecting these forests is essential for our collective future. Replacing this forest area with a "new" forest only releases already stored carbon and sets us all back for climate change.

4. Recreation and Aesthetic Value: The Jellico Mountains are not just a resource for timber; they are a refuge for residents and visitors alike. These lush mountains hold historical significance and provide solace for those seeking natural beauty and tranquility. Old-growth forests contribute to the outdoor recreation industry. People visit these pristine areas for hiking, birdwatching, and other activities, supporting local economies.

Considering these concerns, I urge the Forest Service to reconsider the Jellico Vegetation Management proposal. Instead, focus on respecting the economic and ecological values Jellico provides us with today. We must prioritize the long-term health of our forests and the well-being of our communities. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I implore you to listen to the voices of residents, conservationists, and those who cherish the Jellico Mountains. Together, we can find a path forward that respects both nature and our shared heritage.