Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/31/2024 5:56:41 PM
First name: Joanne
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Re: FS Scoping Letter dated June 28, 2024 and the SAATAB Recommendation Report
From: Joanne G. Mitchell
I got the scoping letter on June 28. I read the letter and the SAATAB Recommendation Report, and perused the map and link for the Southern Appalachian Watershed Resiliency Project for the Cherokee National Forest. I attended the virtual meeting on July 17th. The information is also in the SOPA for Cherokee National Forest on July 1. From what I could glean from the report, I am not unopposed to the intent of the report. I am all for clean water. Watershed health, as I understand the basics of clean water is comprised of sediment reduction but also a consideration is infrastructure sustainability for land management and recreation which means there must be transportation venues such as roads or trails, to get around. I would be very concerned about the loss or closure of trails. I would like to be included on site-specific projects with the southern Cherokee National Forest, an area I am familiar with.
However overall, I think the scoping letter and report are very vague. It is hard to comment on NINE national forests, some of which I have never even visited. I preferred DETAILED information-maybe that comes later by each national forest. It was hard to wrap my head around this report.
I got another scoping letter about removing the concrete dam on Citico Creek in Cherokee National Forest on April 19. This was probably my first experience with the recommendations in the SAATAB report. (pgs 5, 24)
Just wondering why did you include the Great Smoky Mountains, a National PARK if this report is concerning National FORESTS (pg 19,24)
Just wondering why include the Ash and Ayers report from 1901 (123 years ago!) (pg 16) that's going back a long time! Seems like you want the # national forest to go back to the state of the Garden of Eden.
Pg 23-In the Culverts section, did they consider the SHAPE of the culverts. I understand that elliptical shaped culverts, rather than round culverts are more conducive to aquatic critters.
In Chapter 6 of the report, you recommend that a key element of restoration is monitoring that requires adaptive management. Just how is this going to be funded? Remember, you are messing with Mother Nature who can be very stern! The installation of water control structures was mentioned previously. This chapter recommends closing roads that no longer serve a necessary purpose-does this include recreation such as hiking, hunting and horseback riding? Who defines the NECESSARY purpose? This chapter also excludes use of several hardened low-water crossings types that have been used locally. The Professional Trail Builders of America have recommended some of these for years. I have attended several of their conventions, both east and west of the Mississippi River. Plans should be done for both the 100 AND 500 year flood situations.

Enough said. Got to get this in the US mail.