Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/4/2024 4:12:29 PM
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Comments: Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, North Carolina Chapter
Response to U.S. Forest Service Red Spruce Restoration Project

In careful review and consideration of the USFS proposed plan for red spruce restoration across appropriate sites in national forests in the central and southern Appalachians, the North Carolina Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers executive and advisory board expresses an overwhelming sentiment of support. Opportunities to increase forest type diversity in western North Carolina and restore historic ecosystems that have been impacted by human exploitation speaks to one of BHA's core tenets. Since its inception in 2004, BHA has valued the traditions and heritage our wild lands, waters and wildlife make possible, and we are driven to protect wild places.
Returning the red spruce and fir forests to some greater semblance of its former glory atop the Appalachian High Country, within those lands held in public trust, is worthy of support from all Americans who appreciate and seek out intact ecosystems and the astonishing biodiversity contained within. As one board member commented during our discussion, "I can imagine Daniel Boone crossing over the Blue Ridge and walking through these forests. It's a yes vote for me, a thousand times yes."
NC BHA is proud to voice its support for this endeavor and hopes there will be opportunities to volunteer its skilled and enthusiastic membership for the work to come. We recognize the distance to the finish line will mean that the measure of success will likely be unknown until our grandchildren hike into the High Country with children of their own, and yet we say, "a thousand times yes".

Sincerely,

Phillip Widener
Chairman, North Carolina Backcountry Hunters & Anglers