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Comments: o whom it may concern:

As a hunter who appreciates the importance of healthy forest habitat, I support the proposed action (Alternative 2) as developed by the U.S. Forest Service in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Alternative 2 directs the national forests toward stewardship, and I urge the USFS to stand by its choice to move in this direction even against simplistic and deceptive narratives opposing restoration.

Old forests are one of several critical successional stages in healthy ecosystems. Disproportionate emphasis on old growth - without respect to forest type and in a way that prioritizes them over other forest types - could hinder the USFS's ability to optimize wildlife habitat, carbon stewardship, resilience and biodiversity.

As a landowner of a fair size property in New Hampshire we have instituted a management plan. In the winter months we cut low value trees for our outdoor wood furnace. We use spruce, poplar and at times maple for saw lumber for projects. Old logging roads are repaired and new culverts are created. these area's are seeded and planted with native tree's and shrub's from NH forest service. Fourteen years later, we went from twelve(12) birds species to thirty one(31), not including game birds or raptors. Our Monarch butterfly's are with us and growing in population every august till September. the deer, turkey, grouse and woodcock also are reaping these benefits.

Most of our neighbors throw corn or bird seed and don't see half as many animals(more bears although). Sound forest management works. Plus we have many volunteers waiting to be put on small projects. Lets get them in the outdoors instead of in front of the TV or computer!

The following approaches will be key to the USFS's success:

Active forest management is necessary for restoration and complementary to overall forest policy: Many units of the National Forest System are plagued by risks of uncharacteristic wildfire, imbalanced carbon cycles, poor fish and wildlife habitat, and impaired ecosystem functions. Correcting these problems requires both action and monitoring. As restoration projects are expensive, and as many involve reducing woody material of no commercial value, America's paradigm of forest management must shift toward using commercially valuable wood to fund restoration.

Flexibility in management practices, local decision-making: A nationally important and popular objective such as

sustaining old growth must not impose a general policy on the many local situations where actions are necessary. Local decisions consistent with the national objective must drive action.

Increase the pace and scale of forest restoration and reduce litigation: Excepting wildfire, forest ecology moves slowly. Over the nearly 190 million acres of forest in the National Forest System, ecological problems spread faster than current restoration programs. New policy for achieving restoration goals is meaningless without new procedures to execute more projects faster each year.

Recognize the importance of other forest types: The benefits for old growth forests described in the DEIS resemble those needed for all ages and types of forests within the National Forest System. I urge the USFS to embrace a forest-wide policy of restoration that creates the diversity to support wildlife and water objectives and sustain forests overall.

I appreciate the USFS hearing input from hunters and dozens of true conservation groups toward a science-based approach that relies on local knowledge and expertise from people who work and recreate on our national forest lands. I look forward to future policies and reforms activating the same concept of stewardship across all age and habitat types in the National Forest System.