

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/20/2024 5:34:26 PM

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Comments: As a life long 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.

Allowing forests to enter old growth with no plan for fulfilling nature's plan of a diverse habitat controlled through burns, resource management, and replanting...allows for a diversity of not only plant life but also wildlife...as an old growth forest is a desert for wildlife with little to no sun penetration therefore not producing browse habitat.

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

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.