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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the Forest Service,

As a former resident of Kentucky and ardent lover of the many wild spaces there, I would like to draw the Forest Service' attention to what I consider to be serious flaws in the proposed plan (Stearns Ruffed Grouse Habitat Management #66719):

#### Rare Plants

The project area is home to historic, botanical wooded grassland communities associated with rare plant species. The Forest Service should partner with the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves to conduct botanical surveys and adjust their plans based on the rare plants found in the surveys. The Forest Service should include wooded grasslands among this project's Desired Outcomes.

#### Late Successional Habitat Management

There are limited and inadequately distributed areas prescribed for late successional and old-growth management. This project must include better distribution of these forest types to ensure species have access to them within their habitat range. The project should also include additional areas prescribed for late successional and old-growth management to ensure compliance with the National Old-Growth Amendment and strengthen protections for mature, current, and future old-growth. The Forest Service should ensure that this project does not result in the loss of potential old-growth or existing old-growth. Instead, stands within areas prescribed for logging that include potential or existing old-growth should be managed to retain a significant amount of the older over-story.

#### The Forest Plan is OUTDATED

Forest plans set the overall management direction and guidance for every national forest. In the Daniel Boone National Forest, the Forest Plan was last revised in 2004 to include a mandate that a 5,784 acre area in the Stearns District be set aside for young forest and ruffed grouse habitat. However, Forest Plans are supposed to be revised every 15 years. Since our Forest Plan is so outdated, logging mature and old-growth forests to create early successional habitat is no longer in alignment with the National Old-Growth Amendment and requires revision with the latest science and data.

I strongly urge the Kentucky Forest Service to reconsider this management plan in consultation with the relevant conservation experts and particularly the local community who can provide insight and input as daily witnesses to the area's wealth of biodiversity. Please to not destroy such a wonderfully diverse ecosystem for the benefit of a

single species without a long, thoughtful process and serious consideration of alternative options. I am alarmed by the apparent blindsiding of local residents with this plan rather than an active process to include them in the planning - at the very least an invitation should have been extended for a conversation or Q&A session.

Sincerely,

Jordan Morgan