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Comments: This project places priority on a single species, the ruffed grouse. Multiple studies show that this game bird has declined largely due to West Nile virus, being over-hunted, and predation by prey species such as coyote and NOT due to habitat loss. In addition, there is PLENTY of early successional forests that border the project area. In fact, most of the private land near the Daniel Boone National Forest is already early successional. There is absolutely no need to clear cut more of the national forest as this tactic will not bring back ruffed grouse.

Plus, the fact that the Ruffed Grouse Society receives funding from the US Forest Service (posted on the Ruffed Grouse Society's own website) is a conflict of interest at best. The Ruffed Grouse Society wants the US Forest Service to clear land and the US Forest Service has timber targets to hit. That means the US Forest Service is incentivized and supported by the Ruffed Grouse Society to NOT do what is best for the all citizens of America.

The National Forest is owned by the people and the Forest Service is the stewards of that land for the citizens of the United States. If you keep chopping down our mature forests, we will never have more old growth. The US Forest Service is the only one who can preserve more old growth for the people of today and future generations of tomorrow. No one else is going to do it for us, so the US Forest Service MUST.

Finally, the US Forest Service needs to incorporate the most recent and best available science into their thinking, their actions, and into updating their Forest Plan. It is a shame when I, as a regular citizen, can poke holes in their repeated and stubborn use of outdated peer reviewed science, when there is newer science available that addresses climate change, carbon sequestration, and the value of mature forests. The US Forest Service must stop pretending they don't know they are purposefully using old information, start preserving more mature forest so it can become old growth and stop clear cutting land in the name of a single game species that declined almost entirely due to other reasons.

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

REFERENCES

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