

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/30/2025 4:01:47 PM

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Comments: I want to state my support for the Sunny Oaks timber harvest project. As a wildlife biologist and land manager working in SE Ohio, the most productive and increasingly rare habitats found in our forests are early successional habitats. Responsible, well thought out timber harvests on mature hardwood forests and the integration of prescribed fire pre and post harvest are the best tools for increasing this habitat type. There will be hundreds of thousands of acres of mature hardwood forest habitat remaining after this harvest, but this represents an opportunity to increase habitat for species of wildlife that require a younger forest.

People see a timber harvest and think its the end of the forest. It is not the end, but a new beginning, if implemented correctly, which I fully trust our local loggers and forest service staff to do. A harvest resets the forest to a younger age, which benefits a massive suite of wildlife in this region including several that are currently struggling to hold on, like Ruffed Grouse and Bobwhite Quail. These and many other species require more sunlight and a younger forest to thrive, and this project will support that habitat improvement.

Beyond wildlife benefit, this type of operation will benefit a multitude of local people and businesses. From the cutters, to the truck drivers, to the saw mill workers, to the artisans using the harvested timber, logging creates jobs and opportunities for rural Americans to live a viable existence in a time when urbanization is increasing and small-town America is dying. Forests are renewable natural resources. They should be managed as such for the benefit of local communities and the rest of society as a whole, even if those in modern society consuming the forest products created by such a project have no idea where their amazon box came from.

I fully support this harvest and look forward to it's implementation. It checks all of the boxes ecologically and economically and will be an excellent use of our public land.