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Forest plan should move us forward, not backward

Dear Kristin Bail, USFS North Carolina Forest Supervisor,

I love Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest for the many benefits it provides: clean water, great places to recreate, large remote areas not provided by private land, and habitat for native plants and wildlife. I am very concerned by the recent proposal to leave 70% of our National Forest open to logging and road building with few protections for old-growth forests, rare species habitat, and core forest areas. The Forest Plan needs standards and guidelines to protect these special features.

It is unacceptable that there is consideration to build more roads when, according to the Assessment document, 68% percent of all watersheds have open road and trail densities above 2.4 miles per square mile, the threshold established for impairment. The \$61,000,000 road maintenance backlog makes this both economically and environmentally unsustainable.

If the Forest Service is to be successful in accomplishing multiple use management, that management must be directed in areas where there is a high degree of consensus around logging. That consensus exists where there are already roads in place and ecological restoration needs have been identified. The Forest Service does not need a blank check for logging wherever it wants, it needs a focused plan of work, guided by enforceable standards, that has a high degree of public support.

Sincerely,

Brad Aikins