

Date submitted (UTC-11): 6/19/2017 3:30:40 PM

First name: Erica

Last name: Gunnison

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State:

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Email: mycelial.networking@gmail.com

Phone:

Comments:

Big Ivy

Hello -

I was very disappointed to see the preliminary draft plan that leaves much of Big Ivy open to logging, including 1,000 acres of old-growth forest.

Big Ivy is such an important resource to myself and my family. Old growth areas are so incredibly rare and threatened in our region, they need all the protection they can get! Logging doesn't even seem like an effective use of the space - the profit margin is thin it's extremely short sided, and it doesn't keep in mind the many rare and endangered species to be found there.

Myself and my family don't have a lot of options when we want to experience what an intact forest in our bioregion might look like, and so we turn to Big Ivy. It has the closest wilderness to the Asheville area. Even though we're in Swannanoa, we frequent the trails and the wilderness there, and appreciate the fresh clean spring water that we can literally drink from - some of the last uncontaminated water systems in our area.

We need to designate Big Ivy's trailless, high elevation forests as wilderness, as recommended by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, and to designate Big Ivy's strail network and the old growth forests of Coxcomb Mountain and Snowball Mountain as backcountry. These areas need to get the protection they deserve as the rare jewels that they are. It is these areas that draw the basis of our entire economy in the area - folks are migrating in unprecedented numbers to Western North Carolina, and its the mountains that draw them in, not the timber. Its the nearby wilderness that makes Asheville a desirable area to move to, and if we lose that our economy only has beer to turn to, not much of a draw for the healthy mentality Asheville would like to cultivate.

I know my support of stronger protections is in the overwhelming majority. Expanding the Wilderness protections has already been unanimously supported by the Buncombe County Commissioners. That and it's clearly the right thing to do, from every angle and for every reason.

Thank you for your time.

- Erica Gunnison