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First name: Brannon

Last name: Morris

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State:

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Email: bmmorri@g.clemson.edu

Phone:

Comments:

Terrapin Mountain Comments

I am submitting comments on Terrapin Mountain because of it's debated classification and use by the forest service. I think the mountain provides a good wildlife corridor into the Ellicott's Rock Wilderness and these corridors are becoming more important with elk making their way from NC to Georgia and South Carolina. Travel corridors that can help funnel these animals away from urban areas and into existing forest areas to the south would be helpful. South Carolina is one of the fastest urban sprawling states especially into the small mountainous areas of the state. The presence of elk may help boost the political will to preserve what little is left in states that have not valued or managed their natural resources as well as North Carolina. I have spoken with a Biologist with the S.C DNR and there has been an attitude of resentment for the reintroduction of these animals by North Carolina with- in state DNR agencies bordering N.C. for the management complications elk bring as they expand. Most South Carolina residents do not support this attitude and are thankful for North Carolina bringing them back and adding life to the unique deciduous forests of the east coast.

Terrapin mountain because of it's location and proximity to the one of a kind Chatooga river water shed makes sense to be designated wilderness or at least held by the forest service as National Forest. There are only a few private lots on it. The mountains along the border of the G.A, N.C, S.C are one of the few places where people can have a wilderness experience. This is already in jeopardy as a couple hours hiking will take you from road to road. Also this area is threatened most by urban sprawl. It is used by a few as a luxury- a place to put a second home. I have a problem with taking an already small area and making it smaller on behalf of a few who try to get state agencies to remove wild animals from their natural habitat because they are a nuisance or a threat to domestic pets, while denying access to these places of refuge for many who are not as fortunate and must live in urban areas, but still need a place of solitude. Take for example the Toxaway river compared to the HorsePasture river. One is worth going to N.C to see the other is not. Development on the Toxaway has devalued the river even destroying it completely as evidenced by the community shutting off the water flow this past summer. A Google Earth image shows a giant beach that has developed downstream because the river cannot flood and keep it's channel clear. The fishery has also been adversely affected on the Toxaway. To let a few confiscate an entire river for the development of second homes and impose the cost of a loss of a beautiful unique natural resource seems a lot like selling Manhattan Island for beads and alcohol. I will also point out that people seeking a wilderness experience don't demand that roads be tore up and straightened for their convenience. People like Teddy Rosevelt worked hard to ensure we would still have these places to fight over in the future. If people in the forest service and the State's DNR agencies don't carry on the traditional American reverence for the natural world as was committed to them then who will? Terrapin Mountain is a small piece of something we are trying to hold onto in a generation that is in stark contrast to our frontier heritage. It makes sense to keep it undeveloped- whatever classification that requires. In the future these areas become more valuable, not less as urban sprawl and development like is happening on hwy 276 at the Toxaway river continue to take away an the opportunity of a wilderness experience for future generations by altering these landscapes permanently. I hope you consider my input.

Sincerely,

Brannon Morris

864-906-4670

bmmorri@clemson.edu <mailto:bmmorri@clemson.edu>

