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Spring 2017 material Plan Building Blocks

Thank you for taking the time to review public input in revising the Nantahalla Pisgah National Forest Plan. The following are my recommendations as an individual who hikes and camps regularly in these forests, based off the draft suggestions of the MountainTrue organization.

I am very strongly in favor of a special management area for the Art Loeb, MTS, Bartram, and Benton-McKay trails. In just the 8 years I have actively been hiking on these trails it is amazing how loved to death some sections of these trails have become, especially the Art Loeb and MTS. It seems imperative that these trails receive some professional planning and mitigation efforts to try to preserve their current character as much as possible. Pressure on them is only going to increase in the future and they need to be managed as single continuous units. I consider this critical.

Areas that I have personal experience with and feel are in need of protection and better management would be: an expanded Big Ivy study area that includes Snowball, Coxcombe, and Shope Creek. Shope Creek in particular is just blowing up and needs special attention to the conflicting needs of hikers, bikers, and hunters. Panthertown is the epitome of "loved to death" and is threatened by many sides. I support an expansion of its backcountry status. Linville Mountain and Upper Wilson creek similarly deserve expanded protection. These are the particular areas I am most familiar with, but I support all the suggestions in the MountainTrue report based on my knowledge of some of the individuals involved in drafting their recommendations.

I love these two forests and I am appreciative of the challenging work you have with regards to managing the increasing human pressure on them. I often hike alone in them, and have learned ways to increase my chances of finding solitude, but I also often hike with strangers and friends through meetup groups. The ability to find opportunities for meeting old friends and old-timers who share my love for these mountains is priceless, but so is the opportunity to get to introduce first-timers to them that would never dream of exploring them on their own. As more and more of our lives are conducted on-line, I am more committed than ever to ensuring that we can make opportunities available for everyone to experience authentic wilderness and preserve as much as we can of the endemic flora and fauna.

Thank you for your consideration.

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