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Comments:

Spring 2017 Material Plan Building Blocks

I feel strongly that North Carolina's national forests are some of the most beautiful landscapes in our state and our nation, and they provide critical habitat for an entire range of animal species. Therefore, I am concerned by the draft plan, as it could allow for timber harvesting in sensitive areas. Areas important to backcountry recreation, those with exceptional biodiversity, and any old growth trees should be off limits to all logging. Additionally, the plan must be designed to maintain habitat connectivity, allowing for animals to move from one area to another through fully preserved stands. Therefore, I encourage the Forest Service to understand the unique needs of differing areas and provide protection for those areas through revising the plan accordingly.

More specific management areas with standards and guidelines need to exist at the Forest Plan level to hold the District Rangers accountable when proposing future projects within their Districts. The fact that the draft plan is departing from specific management area designations with standards and prescriptions for protection is very troubling, and needs to be reversed.

Regards,

Heather Payne