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Spring 2017 Material Plan Building Blocks

To Whom it May Concern:

Please protect the Nantahala and Pisgah National forests from timber cutting. These national forests house some of the most beautiful landscapes in our state and nation, as well as critical habitat for a range of important animal species.

<https://us.e-activist.com/ea-action/broadcast.record.message.click.do?ea.url.id=583&ea.campaigner.email=7AZCEJfXzGfCbI96RRcF68Qa ztlvuLM%2B&ea.campaigner.id=qFpWv7MYepc=&ea_broadcast_target_id=0> Please do not allow timber cutting in sensitive areas in your forest management plan because it would treat the vast majority of the forests as being the same, without recognizing many special places within the landscape that are important to backcountry recreation, exceptional biodiversity, old growth trees, and connectivity of habitat.

I was reading about your plan in the Sierra Club newsletter, and it mentioned the following points (listed below) that I would urge you to consider when drafting the forest management plan for these areas.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter!

Sincerely,

Dr. Michele Clark

Points from Sierra Club newsletter that I agree with and would like you to consider:

Grandfather Ranger District: Linville Mountain should be placed in backcountry management. The Upper Creek Gorge/Sugar Knob Backcountry area should be expanded. The Upper Wilson Creek Backcountry area should be expanded.

Appalachian Ranger District: Snowball Mountain, Coxcombe Mountain, and Shope Creek should be included in the Craggy Mountains/Big Ivy Special Interest Area. (We are pleased by the creation of a new Special Interest Area in Big Ivy, though it should cover all of Big Ivy, and not just a portion.)

Pisgah Ranger District: Upper Courthouse Creek, Daniel Ridge, Cedar Rock Mountain, and upper Lickstone Ridge should be placed in backcountry management to protect their remote character and the species that depend on them.

Nantahala Ranger District: All of Panthertown Valley and Flat Creek should be in backcountry management.

Tellico Bald, Siler Bald, and Fish Hawk Mountain should be placed in backcountry management. The backcountry area around Terrapin Mountain should be expanded to 4,000 acres. Corbin Knob, Hench Knob, and Chunky Gal Mountain should be Special Interest Areas.

Cheoah Ranger District: Upper Santeetlah Creek should be a Special Interest Area or backcountry area.

Tusquitee District: Gipp Creek should be placed in backcountry management. The Unicoi Mountain backcountry area should be expanded.

Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in general: There are many special places that are in the wrong management area and lack the amount of protection they require. In addition to specific areas mentioned under each Ranger District above, there are dozens of smaller natural areas not protected by the forest plan that should be "zoned" in the backcountry designation. Other resources, such as Old Growth, Riparian areas, state-designated Natural Areas, and major recreational trail corridors, do not have specific management area designations with standards and prescriptions for protection (a departure from the current plan). Rather they are left in zoning that is wide open to logging. For example, the Bartram Trail, Benton McKay Trail, Art Loeb Trail, and Mountains-To-Sea Trail lack a management area that would preserve the special character of these long-distance hiking trails. They should be designated as special corridors, similar to the Appalachian Trail and the Trail of Tears. In short, 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.