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Comments:

"Spring 2017 material Plan Building Blocks"

U.S. Forest Service:

Thank you for allowing us common citizens and residents of North Carolina (NC) to have input on the the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Plan Revision. I also appreciate your having open houses, like the one for the Grandfather District on June 29, 2017, so as we can see what has been done and so as to ask questions.

My name is Michael Thomas, and I live on Adventist Circle in Burke County. My property borders the Pisgah National Forest in the Grandfather District. I have had many experiences with the Grandfather District of the National Forest Service (NFS). There have also been times that I have had to involve NFS personnel in Asheville, Atlanta, and in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, so many of those experiences have not been positive. I have also had many negative experiences with hunters who litter, bait, poach game, and/or set up close to private property, thus endangering my neighbors and me. I look forward to the National Forest Service being a better neighbor in the future, and doing a better job by responding to problems in a timely manner that we in my neighborhood experience.

Please make sure that our National Forests are protected better than they are now. Please make sure that the National Forest Service Staff have a better and quicker response rate to us, the public, when we report illegal acts and problems in the National Forest. Unfortunately, often when I have reported problems, I will have to follow up with correspondence several times (and/or move up the chain of command), over a period of time, in order to get an answer and/or to get something addressed; this is unacceptable.

Please make sure that the National Forest Service staff do not commit illegal acts on private property; this has also happened. Please make sure that contract providers such as loggers, tree planters, and follow up contractors do not litter and follow the law--- and yes there have been problems in this area too. There needs to be more and better monitoring of our National Forests.

During the past few years I have tried numerous times to get the NFS to be proactive by stopping potential problems, but I have constantly run into resistance. Once again, in the future, I look forward to the National Forest Service being a better neighbor and to being more proactive in preventing problems.

Regarding wilderness areas in NC, we need to set aside the most areas possible for wilderness designation. I am very familiar with the Linville Gorge Extension area, and it definitely deserves to become wilderness. It should be expanded, all the way around, even more than what has been proposed as of now. We need more wilderness areas in NC. Once an area is timbered and/or disturbed, then the chance of it becoming wilderness for all to enjoy is gone forever. Please lobby Congress to designate more wilderness in NC and nationally.

Regarding timbering, there should be less done, and there should be more areas for wilderness and recreation. And when timbering is done, please extend the boundary of a site so as it is not as close to water sources; a distance of 2500 feet could help. Also, what is now called a diversified cut looks more like a modified clear cut. Although this may be ok in some instances, that is what I have consistently seen done in the past several years. Please make diversified cuts where there are more trees, of all kinds including hardwoods, left, and where there is less area in each tract cut, plus overall, where there are less tracts cut.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to add input into the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Plan Revision, and please do better.

Sincerely,

Michael Thomas

North Carolina Native, Property Owner, and Tax Payer

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