

Date submitted (UTC-11): 8/15/2017 3:04:30 AM

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New Management Plan for North Carolina

I lived in Banner Elk area for 10 years and have been living in Wilmington for 30 years. There seems to be some similarities between our fisheries management debate on the coast with the Forrest management plan in the Western part of the state.

Change has happened and the plan needs to reflect those changes with acknowledgement of the greater value of recreational use versus clear cut harvesting the Forrest.

My suggestion is tilt the plan in favor of recreation and protection, to increase the Wilderness areas around the existing trail corridors and areas of greatest view scape and watershed protection.

Then redefine the types of logging allowed for certain classification areas. By this I mean that it is obvious that using mules or draft horses to pull logs from the more environmentally sensitive areas versus bulldozing a road and running skidders has much less impact on the environment especially if the ground is frozen or has snow on it. There are ways to reduce the impact and erosion and still harvest the trees and this is where the marketing kicks in. This sustain-ably harvested timber can be sold for a premium price to the people who are on the side that want to protect and preserve which offsets the added cost for the loggers.

I guess my idea is to soften the impact of timber harvest which will help all stakeholders co exist long term.

As with fisheries the nets and traps are the bad part of commercial fishing and until we get away from that type practice the recreational and environmentally minded citizen will always vote against the commercial side and this does not allow a compromise.

So too is the industrial scrape and slash commercial logging a bad practice for our pristine natural areas. Soften up the forestry practice which will employ more people per board foot, raise the value of the wood harvested by marketing it as sustain-ably harvested from our protected areas.

The value of the tress has risen in our National Forrest standing or cut. That value increase needs to be addressed in the plan. The forest harvest needs to be done in a way that softens the impact.

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