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Geographic and Management Area building blocks

After attending one of the public meetings and following this plan revision process in depth, I've grown concerned the USDA Forest Service is committed to a short-sighted agenda. By treating forests as a crop to harvest for immediate income, you are destroying one of the most powerful means this planet has to regulate its climate. Instead, since the Forest Service is charged with "stewardship of these lands while providing for appropriate human use and enjoyment," work to encourage more recreation and tourism, which are already huge in this region, and will provide sustainable economic benefit. One way to do this is by making the current Wilderness Study Areas permanent Wilderness.

While talking with various National Forest Service personnel (and certain members of the Nantahala Pisgah Stakeholder Forum), I've sensed an effort to reassure the public that the plan revisions are meant to protect the "health of the forests." Cutting forests is not "healthy" as it destroys complex ecosystems. All of the talk of management techniques, fire suppression, etc. is really just camouflage for "let's sell this timber." I don't believe it's a coincidence that the push for logging nearly 450,000 acres of our southeastern National Forests comes at the same time that wood pellet manufacturing facilities are popping up across the region.

I've concluded the Forest Service is intent on pursuing an increase in logging and avoiding creation of new wilderness. By strategically handpicking the members of the Nantahala Pisgah Stakeholder Forum, you've tapped into a population of citizens, organizations, and corporations who will support those goals. Please prove me wrong when you draft the next phase of the revision plan.

D. Staples