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Comments:

Dear Supervisor Olsen,

I recently attended the meeting you held in Berea where you talked about the importance of engaging the community in the management of our public lands, and I was so happy to hear that from you. I hope you'll take that commitment seriously as you consider amending the DBNF Forest Plan.

Some of the amendments, such as updating definitions to be more in alignment with other agencies, I agree with. However, when I see that you're proposing changes to the existing Forest Plan that would reduce restrictions that, at the time of writing, were considered necessary to protect threatened and endangered bat populations, I'm deeply concerned. The resilience of these species has not improved in the intervening years, and damage to even one maternity colony could have very significant consequences for their potential recovery. I understand that there are an increasing number of threatened and endangered species to consider when planning and implementing projects, but rather than taking greater risks with one species to reduce them with another, I would encourage prioritizing these crucial areas of habitat for the species who inhabit them, rather than prioritizing logging-based management in these areas.

Thank you for hearing the voice of the public whose lands you're responsible for managing, and maintaining and strengthening protections for threatened and endangered bats, NOT reducing them.

Sincerely,

Xyara Asplen