



Sample Comment – “Process”

I am very concerned – about the fact that this Foothills Landscape Project as currently formulated will not allow the public to utilize the established NEPA process at the time site-specific locations for treatments are being established. The ecosystems of the Southern Appalachians are incredibly complex. Cutting trees in some areas can be relatively harmless but cutting trees in the wrong places can have devastating effects. Please fix the Foothills! Do not closeout the NEPA process before the public can know specifically where you plan to do the projects you want to do.

Sample Comment 2 – “Process”

My biggest concern is one of process and here’s why: In the past, the Forest Service has decided to drop an average of 243 acres of timber harvest from each project in order to avoid harms identified by the public to wildlife, soil, water, rare species, roadless areas, recreational opportunities, and old-growth. Those improvements would not have happened without public knowledge, involvement, and scrutiny. But with the Foothills project that public involvement will be sidelined. The public’s tools for oversight of the government, the NEPA process, will be completed and no longer in place, right as the Forest Service is making decisions about exactly where their management projects will occur. Please put the NEPA process back into the Foothills plan. Then commit to real collaboration with the public about site-specific management decisions.

Sample Comment Letter – Recreation

Dear Supervisor Jewett,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Foothills Landscape Project on the Chattahoochee National Forest. I live close and visit these lands for biking, hiking, camping, and fishing. I care deeply about the management of this Forest now and into the future. I attended a meeting announcing the Environmental Analysis and appreciated the focus on recreation in this project.

I am concerned with the lack of information about exactly where and when you will be cutting trees, reworking trails, and burning areas near many of my favorite trails and camping areas. I am worried that when we are planning our hikes and camping trips, we will be unable to know if the area is in a project area. I want to keep the long standing practice of being notified and given an opportunity to have a say in where management and disturbances occur.

We would like to know because many of the activities planned in this project do not provide a pleasing environment for my family and I to enjoy. In general, Forest Service projects seem to mess up an area, take a long time to complete and re-grow, and sometimes look worse. I would hope recreation areas, trails, and unique areas like Georgia’s Mountain Treasure areas will get special consideration in Foothills Landscape and future project proposals.

If the Forest Service does not plan to include the public in site-specific decisions before implementing, I would like the Forest Service to specifically identify and explicitly prohibiting cutting, herbicide application, and road work close to trails in the Foothills Landscape. I would like my experiences on the trails within Foothills and in the National Forest to reflect a sense of natural beauty. These values are why I choose to spend my time in the “Foothills Landscape.”



My family and this surrounding community hope you will listen to public input, take impacts to user experiences much more seriously, and protect the beauty of this national forest.

Thank you,

Sample Comment – Special Places

Dear Supervisor Jewett,

Several of the wildest places left in North Georgia lie in the Foothills. These [Georgia Mountain Treasures](#) are special areas, and I would like to see them protected and valued in the Foothills Landscape Project. I could talk about how they are refuges for wildlife. Or I could talk about how if you want to see the cleanest water we have left, they are the places to go. I could even talk about how they connect to protected areas in other landscapes, and how that connectivity is getting more important as the changing climate forces plants and animals to move.

What I want to talk about, though, is what they mean to me. I want places where I can explore. Places where I can find myself. Places that have a little mystery left. When I run into a road, all the magic disappears. It doesn't matter if the road is paved, gravel, or a "temporary" road. Some brier-filled patch of woods where half the trees were cut a few years ago isn't any better.

The Foothills are a place of adventure, peace, and beauty, but there are only a few places left where it hasn't been cut into bite-sized pieces. Less than a quarter-of-one-percent of the Foothills is Wilderness. None of the Foothills is designated remote backcountry. These Mountain Treasures are unique, and they should be protected.

I am not saying never set foot in them. Cutting some little maple trees that are going to rot in two years is no big deal. Fire is part of nature. I am just saying don't put any kind of roads into these areas, and don't chop down a bunch of the tall trees.

These places mean something to me. Please let them be.

Sincerely,

Sample Comment 2– Special Places

Dear Supervisor Jewett,

Thank you for all your hard work for the people and forests of North Georgia. I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Foothills Landscape Project and hope my comments will be helpful. If there's anything that we should all be able to agree on, it's that we need clean air and clean water. That's why the remaining roadless areas in the Foothills are so important to me. They are our absolute best chance to have really clean water anywhere in the Foothills.



Please don't make new roads in our roadless areas. The document you provided to describe the project says roads dump more sediment into streams than any other management activity. Even "temporary" roads disrupt water flow and can turn into raw gashes that pollute our streams.

Please don't harvest trees in our roadless areas. Surely there are better places than our roadless areas to cut trees and have big machines drag them through the woods. The places that are scraped off to load the logs onto the trucks are even worse.

Please don't use any herbicides in our roadless area. There seems to be more bad news about them every day. We can't count on them to stay out of the water, and who knows what's really in some of them. Surely you can find some way to manage the forest without resorting to poisons.

So many streams and lakes have been fouled that it's hard to find places that still have really clean water. It would make me sad to think that we aren't taking care of the few in our roadless areas.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Warmly,

Sample Comment – Logging

I am writing to express my concerns about the massive amount of logging that is described within the Foothills Landscape Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and associated documentation, including the Vegetation Plan.

The Forest Service plans to log vast amounts of oak and pine forest as part of the Foothills Landscape Project. For example, I've read that over 50,000 acres are to be logged, taking out half the tree cover in order to open up the canopy. The extent of thinning threatens to leave these forest areas looking like messy, unkempt urban park—not the North Georgia forest we know and value. If the proposed approach is allowed to take place, we and our children who visit the Foothills will be wandering among the stumps before very long. This is not something I want to see or a legacy we should leave.

An additional 8,300 acres of mid-age and late age (100 years old) oak and pine are proposed in the EA to be logged (85 to 90% canopy removal) in order to let the very young trees thrive better and create a young forest habitat. This sounds very much like the FS is approaching Forest management like a farmer—to get even aged stands, perhaps for harvesting. This was a mistake 50 years ago and would be a mistake today. Thank you for reading my comments.

Sample Comment – Herbicides

My biggest concern with the Foothills Landscape project is the pesticide applications on over 65,000 acres. Some limited applications may be necessary and understandable but the sheer amount of Forest that will be treated with chemicals under the Foothills plan is disturbing and shocking to me! I do not support this plan to allow these chemicals into our forests for the next 15 to 20 years despite the growing scientific evidence of pesticide and herbicide effects on people and wildlife. Please keep the



public informed on exactly where and how these chemicals will be applied BEFORE they are approved, and allow alternative methods to be proposed and implemented when feasible.

Sample Comment 2– Herbicides

I am writing specifically to voice my concerns regarding the plans for widespread use of herbicides in our forest that is part of the Foothills Landscape Project plan and is addressed in the Environmental Assessment.

The Vegetation Plan that supports the Foothills Environmental Assessment calls for pesticide applications on over 65,000 acres. Some limited applications may be necessary and understandable, for example to treat infested hemlock and ash trees, and control kudzu, but the sheer amount of forest that will be treated with chemicals under the Foothills plan is disturbing and shocking. Although the Forest Service states that it uses “best available science” in its plans and risk assessments, the most current science referenced about chemicals it plans to use is the 2011 risk assessment methodology developed for the Forest Service by Syracuse Environmental Research Associates. With the pace of research, knowledge and legal judgments concerning pesticides and herbicides, even a layman knows that 2011 science in this area is not necessarily the most current and best available science available.

The Forest Service has goals to achieve, but in pursuing its goals we hope that it consider how little it really knows about the potential long-term impacts of applying herbicides so extensively on our forest lands. Once the damage is done, you cannot undo it.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns and for your care for our forest.

Sample Comment 3– Herbicides

The 148 page Vegetation Plan that supports the Foothills Environmental Assessment calls for herbicide applications on over 65,000 acres. Some limited applications are necessary and understandable, for example to treat infested hemlock and ash trees, and support fuel reduction, but the sheer amount of forest that will be treated with chemicals under the Foothills plan is disturbing and shocking.

The Forest Service (FS) references the US EPA as its guide for what chemicals are safe to use and how to use them. However, the fact that our EPA has not banned a chemical does not make it OK for our forests. And furthermore, the FS is required to do an independent assessment of the safety of pesticides rather than relying on EPA and FIFRA registration alone. (Ref. USFS website page on Pesticide Management and Coordination).

Knowledge of the impacts of chemicals on our ecosystem grows, and new knowledge must be considered. For example, the significant chronic risk of the widely used herbicide Atrazine on amphibians, fish, mammals, birds and terrestrial plant species was finally recognized and reported by the EPA in 2016. This illustrates how important it is for the FS to recognize and use current science in its decision-making and before implementation. However, although the FS states that it uses “best available science” in its plans and risk assessments, the most current science that it references is the 2011 risk assessment methodology developed for the FS by Syracuse Environmental Research Associates. With the pace of research, knowledge and legal judgments concerning pesticides and



herbicides, even a layman knows that 2011 science in this area is not necessarily the best available science.

Another aspect of the forest that the FS has not considered in its Foothills planning is the underground network of fungus and microbes that permeates the forest floor that was discovered only 15 years ago. Research in the years since is beginning to unravel the importance of mycorrhizal networks in forest survival, growth and defense. We do not know the potential damage to these network from the types of logging and chemical application the FS plans in the 157,000 acres of Foothills Landscape. The FS has goals to achieve, but in driving ahead to achieve its goals we hope that it will consider how little it knows about the potential impacts of its actions.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns and for your care for our forest.