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To: John Greis <jgreis@fs.fed.us>
cc: lynne@dogwoodalliance.org
Subject: SFRA comments

02/04/02 10:26 AM

Dear Sir,
For your consideration:

I am writing in regards to the recently released Southern Forest Resources Assessment report from the US Forest Service. Their conclusion is that urban sprawl and population growth is the greatest threat to Southern forests.

This may be true somewhere else, but our family lives on the Cumberland Plateau and we know different here. Population growth and urban sprawl did not come first here. The chip mills and modern, fast ways to clear-cut thousands of acres came first.

Big companies buy up thousands of acres of land, clear-cut and then plant pines for pine plantations. They soon found out that pines weren't thriving and in places a high percentage of them died, sometimes 70-90%. So big companies soon decided to sell land and retain their timber rights. They often sell their timber rights to another company. Then the land is clear-cut, subdivided, and sold again. Then the urban sprawl finally comes. Urban sprawl does not cause clear-cuts. Urban sprawl is a result of clear-cuts and availability of chip-mills.

Much of the soil on top of the Plateau is dry, sandy, and poor. When all the trees are removed at the same time, it is very difficult for new trees to get started again. In some places, pines do well enough on the first planting. But by the time 2-3 crops have been planted and harvested, the soil becomes worn out. Then more and more fertilizer must be used in order for the pines to grow. As the expenses of raising pines increases, lumber companies decide to sell, and then urban sprawl moves in.

This cycle begins by money-hungry large companies, clear-cutting, and by chip-mills, and the end result is subdivisions. Subdivisions are not the threat to the forests. They are only the end result. If this continues as fast as it is in our area, saw logs will in time become very scarce or even a thing of the past. Selective cutting is a solution and it is the right way to maintain healthy forests.

Sincerely,

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