



WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
6820 MARKET STREET
RUSSELL PA 16345-3406

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SUPERINTENDENT

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August 31, 2021

Mr. Rich Hatfield
Bradford Ranger District
Allegheny National Forest
29 Forest Drive
Bradford, PA 16701

Re: Pleasant Project

Dear Mr. Hatfield:

The Warren County School District Board of School Directors supports the Pleasant Project which you have released for comment. However, we do not believe the project goes far enough to address the issue of poor forest health in general and in particular the problem of age class distribution. The Warren County School District is deeply concerned about the age class problem because the lack of early structural habitat bodes poorly for ANF forest health for generations to come.

The Environmental Assessment for this project is a microcosm of the problem that exists across the entire Allegheny National Forest. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the assessed area is 81 to 150 years old. As you know, that is grossly out of balance with what the Forest Plan calls for and out of balance with what is required not only for the health of the vegetation, but also the health of the wildlife that is supported by the Forest. That so little of the assessed area (5%) is less than 20 years old, is another marker of the serious problem that must be overcome.

Our concern is that the project, as planned, does not go far enough to remediate the gross imbalance. If this project goes forward, it is unlikely that the assessed area will be treated again in the near future. Therefore, we must make the most of this opportunity. For that reason, we encourage the consideration of more treatment, be it shelterwood or other types of treatment, in order to remove additional older vegetation to make way for earlier structural habitat.

We believe our concerns are urgent. As we compare the current status of the Allegheny National Forest to the status that prevailed nearly 15 years ago at the time of the adoption of the Forest Plan, we see that conditions have worsened, not improved. In other words, the age class problem that was cited in the Forest Plan is now worse today than it was 15 years ago.

The Warren County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or employment practices and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries may be directed to Mr. Gary Weber, Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator at 6820 Market Street, Russell, PA 16345 or (814) 723-6900.

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We encourage you to modify the Pleasant Project so that it does more to increase early structural conditions and we also encourage you to take other actions, in the form of other projects across the Allegheny National Forest, so the early structural conditions are more rapidly achieved across all of the Forest.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Donna Zariczny
Board President

