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December 28, 2010

H. Thomas Speaks, Jr., Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
ATTN: Appeals
2800 Ocoee Street N.
Cleveland, Tennessee 37312
tspeaks@fs.fed.us
appeals-southern-cherokee@fs.fed.us

BY E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Re: Informal Disposition Resolution of Appeal of the Big Creek Project, Nolichucky/Unaka
Ranger District, Cherokee National Forest.

Dear Mr. Speaks:

As documented in the enclosed Informal Disposition Resolution agreement, Cherokee Forest Voices, the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition and Wild South have resolved their November 24, 2010, administrative appeal of the Big Creek Project with the Nolichucky/Unaka District Ranger.

The Appellants particularly thank District Ranger Terry Bowerman and North Zone Vegetation Management Program Manager Jim Stelick for engaging in the highly informative and productive telephone discussions, in lieu of an in-person resolution meeting, that led to this mutually beneficial resolution. We look forward to further discussions and learning opportunities during field visits with Forest Service staff to the timber harvest stands remaining in the project, including to an improved understanding of the manner in which the Forest Service implements Tennessee's Forestry Best Management Practices.

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 215.17(d)(1) and the terms of the enclosed Informal Disposition Resolution agreement, the Appellants hereby withdraw their appeal of the Big Creek Project in its entirety.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your support for this resolution process.

Sincerely,



Sarah A. Francisco
Counsel for Appellants

Enclosure

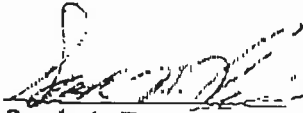
cc: Terry Bowerman, Nolichucky-Unaka District Ranger; Stephanie Medlin, Forest Environmental Coordinator; James Bennett, Regional Appeals Coordinator (by e-mail).

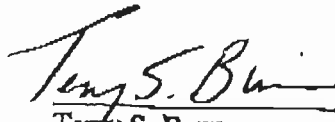
Informal Disposition Resolution of Appeal
by Cherokee Forest Voices, Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition and Wild South
of the Big Creek Project, Nolichucky/Unaka Ranger District,
Cherokee National Forest (CNF), Cocke County, Tennessee

The Responsible District Ranger, Terry S. Bowerman, and the Appellants, Cherokee Forest Voices, the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition and Wild South (represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center), have agreed upon the following resolution of the Appellants' administrative appeal of the Big Creek Project:

1. The Forest Service will withdraw all commercial timber harvest (regeneration harvest) in the area known as the Laurel Mountain Area from the Big Creek Project because of poor economic feasibility of cable logging. This action consists of a withdrawal of the following stands from the project: compartment 242, stands 51 and 52; compartment 244, stands 13, 16, 57 and 70; and the portions of compartment 249, stands 22 and 24 that are west of FS road #22421. The withdrawn acreage totals approximately 1221 acres.
2. In the remaining stands planned for timber harvest (regeneration harvest and overstory removal of prior shelterwood stand), when laying out and marking the timber harvest units, the Forest Service will locate "on the ground" areas with slopes 30% or greater (hereafter such areas with slopes 30% or greater are referred to as "steep slopes") and will implement the following measures:
 - (a) Skid trails and temporary roads will not be constructed (i.e. "bladed") for sustained distances over 200 feet long on steep slopes. An exception may be made, during harvest unit layout, identified by the CNF North Zone Vegetation Management Program Manager (presently Jim Stelick), the Nolichucky/Unaka District Ranger, and the CNF Forest Hydrologist where the construction of skid trails or temporary roads located on sustained steep slopes is greater than 200 feet long, such construction is needed to traverse the steep area in order to access the remaining harvest unit, and with the agreement that trees are not harvested in the traversed steep area. Where such an exception is granted, additional attention must be given to water control and drainage structures.
 - (b) Trees in areas with sustained steep slopes over 200 feet in length or width will not be harvested, except by cable winching cut trees to equipment stationed outside the steep area.
3. At mutually agreeable date(s) and time(s), the Forest Service will invite and take Appellants' representatives to observe and discuss the layout and marking of the timber harvest units in the Big Creek Project, prior to advertising the sale(s) for bids. The Forest Service will contact Appellants to make the invitation(s) as early as possible and as far in advance of the expected sale advertisement date(s) as possible, but, in the event that no feasible date(s) and time(s) can be identified (based on initial consultation) due to irreconcilable scheduling conflicts, weather, personal sickness, etc., then consultation over telephone and faxing of unit map layouts will substitute for an on the ground field review.

4. In return, Appellants will withdraw their appeal, in its entirety, by letter to the Appeal Deciding Officer on or before December 29.

 Date 12/27/2010
Sarah A. Francisco
Southern Environmental Law Center
Counsel for Appellants

 Date 12/27/2010
Terry S. Bowerman
Nolichucky-Unaka District Ranger
Forest Service Responsible Official