Happy New Year!
I hope that you had a great holiday season full of fun, family, and food. This time of year is a good time to reflect on all we accomplished last year. We have shared many great conversations, learned together, and spent a lot of time seeing one another’s perspective. It was a lot of work, but it paid off. We have a great foundation to continue to define the right work in the right places for the right reasons. I have also been thinking about how to guide the community through the next phase of the project meeting our objectives of trust-building, shared learning, listening and understanding.

Moving Forward -- What's Next?
We need you more than ever. This year, we will be working on developing alternatives to the proposed action. We will have a few large workshops, and you can also expect more smaller, focused meetings and field trips this spring and summer. The project will start to become more concrete. We will be working together to find the best way to share feedback during implementation and what accountability will look like. We will learn more about the best science from experts, researchers and other authorities. And of course, drink coffee, eat cookies and maybe even enjoy a potluck or two. We are going to kick things off in February with a collaborative meeting and a workshop.

Together we will move toward discussing a multiparty monitoring plan. The Foothills Interdisciplinary (ID) team will be completing the effects analysis and the environmental document throughout the summer. Then we'll have another round of Community Conversations to discuss the anticipated environmental effects of the project. After that we'll release the document and have a formal 30-day public comment period. Expect that in the fall.

As always, join us at any time throughout this next phase. We’ve tried to create a variety of opportunities to engage, and everyone is always welcome. See below for upcoming dates, and stay tuned for future ones!

Collaborative Workshops
At the workshop, we will focus on the feedback we received during the scoping period that ended on December 22, 2017. You can check out all of the great feedback we received on the project NEPA webpage (use the "Public Comment/Objection Reading Room" link on the right side of the page.) The Foothills Team has been reviewing the comments and has begun considering our next steps. Of course, we can't move forward without your help. Together, we will be laying the foundation for the alternatives that will be brought forward for environmental effects analysis. I invite those of you who
have been on the bus to join us as we continue our Foothills journey. If you are new to
the project, this is a great time to get on board. Feel free to attend just one or both,
designed to fit your different schedules:

**Day-long Workshop:** Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 9:00am to 3:00pm
(lunch on your own 12:00-1:00pm)
Lumpkin County Community Center
365 Riley Road, Dahlonega GA 30533

**Evening Workshop:** Thursday, February 15, 2018, 5:00pm to 8:00pm
Lumpkin County Community Center
365 Riley Road, Dahlonega GA 30533

I want to invite everyone to discuss the vegetation treatment decision matrix that is
part of the adaptive management strategy for the project. We will be talking about
how, in the Foothills Landscape, we would determine when a vegetative stand
needs to be treated and how we would choose which treatment to implement. The
meeting will be a great primer for the workshop later in the month:

**Small Group Meeting:** Wednesday, February 7, 2018, 10:00am to 3:00pm
(lunch on your own from 12:00-1:00pm)
Union County Public Library
303 Hunt Martin St, Blairsville, GA 30512

I can't express enough gratitude for all of the energy you have put into this project.
I am very lucky to be a part of this great journey and look forward to another great
year.

All the best,

-Angie

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