

Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 4:10 PM

Subject: Gap Creek Project

Dear Staff:

I wish to make my concerns known about visual and environmental impacts from this project as follows:

1. Sedimentation into Lake Ouachita is not acceptable due to water quality degradation of this extra ordinary waterbody. The upper end of the lake is already significantly filled with sediment and the lake should not be further degraded.
2. Use of herbicides is not appropriate due to water quality impacts on Lake Ouachita.
3. Management for pine production significantly reduces the hardwood component of the forest and especially the amount of older hardwood trees causing cumulative negative impacts on hard mast for wildlife. Since the forest management plan did not assess this impact it must be done at the project level and consider the impact with all other projects. The plan approach was basically to accept a quilt work of hardwoods mostly along north slopes and narrow stream zones that historically have not been protected as the agency claims. The rest is to be managed mostly for pine timber production with no regard for hardwoods on the pine farm stands.
4. The project must consider the impact of cumulative channel scour caused by increased storm runoff especially from more frequent 2-25 storms that have are now much more frequent due to climate change. Agency projects only consider erosion/sedimentation from the site activities and not the impact of increased runoff that continues for a few to several years depending of level of timber removal and road construction. In addition, the burning of 150-200 thousand acres annually increases runoff to some degree for 3 years after initial burn.

Since the Ouachita National Forest activities are by far the main source of land altering impacts in the lake basin, it must take this issue seriously. Just get out of the timber quota mindset and look at the stream channels in just the Ouachita River Basin and the reason for major sedimentation of upper Lake Ouachita will become evident. This impact is evident in the far upper stream channels unless they are armored with rock.

5. All trails must be protected by leaving at least a 100 foot no logging corridor with full canopy retention. The project analysis must consider the damage already done to the Lovit Trail aesthetically due the weed and brush growth after canopy removal on past projects. In addition, the trial in such areas will require years of maintenance. This environmental degradation must be taken seriously even if less trees can be cut.

6. No activity should be done if visible from the semi-primitive Lake Ouachita due to degradation of visual quality.
7. The project must consider the cumulative impact of burning upon air quality and human health since the agency burns vast amounts each year adding to all other air pollution sources

Sincerely

Jerry Williams
Ouachita Watch League