



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 5 November 2019
To: United States Forest Service
From: Jacob Pries, Policy Intern
Re: Pine Creek Forest Restoration Project

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), we would like to state our support for the actions outlined in the Pine Creek Forest Restoration Project. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals. Hunting is a tradition that runs deep within the state of Kentucky and across the country. Hunters are the original conservationists and contribute immensely to the preservation of wildlife through funds generated by excise taxes on hunting gear and hunting license fees. At QDMA, we would like to see the Pine Creek Forest Restoration Project continually take into consideration the interests of those conservationists and keep public hunting access a priority. We greatly appreciate and support the inclusion of hunting access as priority mentioned on page 55 of the final environmental assessment and ask that you continue to build upon this goal moving forward.

Hunting access is crucial to the economic well-being of Kentucky. According to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Kentucky's sportsmen and women contribute \$2 billion annually to the state's economy and support 35,000 jobs. These vital contributions to the state's economy provided by sportsmen and women must not be ignored. Kentucky stands to benefit immensely from increasing and maintaining public access to the lands available to sportsmen and women. Additionally, we request that you take into consideration furthering the habitat suitability for white-tailed deer through responsible management activities. At QDMA, we believe that proper habitat management practices are vital to the preservation of deer, wildlife habitat and the deer hunting tradition. With proper management of habitat being so vital to their successful preservation, it is important that we encourage sound, science-based management activities. We fully support the various management activities that increase the suitability of habitat for white-tailed deer such as woodland creation and grassland enhancement outlined on page 46 of the final environmental assessment.

Whitetails are the most popular big game animal in the U.S., and whitetail hunters are the foundation of a nearly \$67 billion hunting industry. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately three of every four hunters pursue whitetails. This is a staple within the hunting community and a staple for conservation in the state. As you allow for sportsmen and women to garner experiences on our nation's public lands, you allow for those individuals to develop an unbridled passion for them that will last a lifetime. This passion turns into action, this action turns into conservation, and this conservation turns into generations of wildlife for the people of Kentucky to enjoy. On behalf of the QDMA, we would like to thank you for your time and consideration of our comments on this matter.

Respectfully,

Jacob Pries
Policy Intern
Quality Deer Management Association