

FORESTRY/BIOGEMS Letter to the Editor of Fentress County Courier- published
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To the Editor of Fentress County Courier,

The Natural Resources Defense Council has added most of the Cumberland Plateau to a list of the 12 most endangered wildernesses in the Americas. The 19.4 million acres of hardwood forests that include the Cumberland Plateau are the most biodiverse in North America, yet they're dying "the death from 1,000 cuts" because of unregulated clear-cutting in Tennessee.

Tennessee is experiencing a disproportionate ecological burden as a source for the world's timber consumption. The United States Forest Service reports that more than two million acres of Tennessee's native forests were cut between 1989 and 1999, including nearly 600 thousand acres of clear-cuts. More than 500 thousand acres of forest were converted to other uses between 1989 and 1999, and replanting has created more than 500 thousand acres of non-native species pine plantations. Seventy-five percent of these plantations were planted on land previously occupied by native forest types.

Nearly all of Tennessee is either globally (East and Plateau regions) or regionally (Central, West Central, and West regions) outstanding based on species richness, species uniqueness or global and regional rarity of habitat and forest types.

Unfortunately, nearly all of the eco-regions of Tennessee are considered endangered based on the degree of habitat loss already incurred. Tennessee already has lost 60 percent of bottomland hardwood forests, 60-75 percent of cypress-tupelo forest in West Tennessee, and 59 percent of the state's wetlands.

In areas outside of our suburban counties, the largest driver of loss and environmental damage to hardwood forests are chip mills and plants that make paper and building panels from chips. The chip, pulp and paper industry uses unsustainable practices.

- ___ drives the increased cutting of hardwood forests
- ___ requires thousands of acres be clear-cut without regard to ecological or environmental impacts
- ___ causes the conversion of hardwood forests to monoculture pine plantations.

It is long past time for the State to control the chip, pulp and paper industry mills and unlimited and unregulated pulpwood harvesting. We call on the legislature and the governor to develop policies commensurate with their publicly expressed concern regarding clear-cutting and pine plantations.

Tennessee is struggling to hold its head above water as far as clear cutting the forest in Tennessee. The Plateau and Fentress County are no exception.

Recently, 1000+ acres of prime forest was cleared near Jamestown. It is the duty of the responsible citizens of Fentress County to make the public aware of this action.

There are currently few regulations for cutting or clearing land in Tennessee.

Solve the problem and become a part of the solution. Save the future now before we lose it.

SAVE OUR CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS:

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SOCM is an organization located in Knoxville currently voicing to the government of Tennessee the importance of reconstructing legislature to pass laws governing clear cutting and chipping on the Plateau.

Concern yourself with the problem. There is a forest lending itself to tourism around Crossville as well as Jamestown. When we lose these lush forests and the beauty they hold, people in Jamestown and Crossville lose business as well.

Please help by contacting with your concerns for saving the forests of Tennessee:

Governor's Office State Representative

Tennessee State Capitol John Mark Windle

Nashville, TN 37243-0001 Fax: 615.532.9711

Phone: 615.741.2001 Email: rep.johnmark.windle@legislature.state.tn.us

Email: phil.bredesen@state.tn.us

Jamestown Office

629 North Main Street Tommy Kilby

Jamestown, TN 38556 Email: sen.tommy.kilby@legislature.state.tn.us

Phone: 931.879.2361 Phone: 1.800.449.8366 ext.11449

Fax: 931.879.2389

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 964, Jamestown 38556

Thanks for your support and interest in preservation of Fentress County forests.

Sincerely,

M Taulbee

Jamestown, Tennessee