

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 7/17/2019 12:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

July 17, 2019

Hannah Bergemann

Espanola District, Santa Fe National Forest PO Box 3307 Fairview Station

Espanola, NM 87533

RE: Support for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resilience Project, #55088

Dear Mr. Hurlocker,

The Forest Stewards Guild supports the proposed use of thinning and prescribed fire in The Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project (SF Mountains Project) to protect important ecological and human values from increased wildfire and drought associated with climate change and a legacy of fire suppression.

As global climate changes, temperature increases create dramatic, cascading effects in the water-limited state of New Mexico, making it critical that we do everything in our power to protect our water resources. The combined effects of climate change and a century of fire suppression have changed the structure and composition of the forests surrounding Santa Fe, increasing their vulnerability to high severity wildfire. The vulnerability of adjacent forests to high severity wildfire, of our watersheds to dramatic post-fire flooding and erosion, and the of our local economy from wildfire translates into vulnerability in our communities. Almost half of The City of Santa Fe's municipal drinking water comes from the forested mountains that surround us, and protecting this clean drinking water from high severity fire requires the ecologically sensitive forest management that is proposed in the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project.

We acknowledge that managing wildfire hazard is not the only consideration on federal forestland, and therefore propose that the SF Mountains Project develop an old and large tree retention strategy to build trust and preserve biological legacy trees. The Forest Stewards Guild has worked on creating old and large tree retention strategies on past projects (e.g. NM Restoration Principles and the Zuni Mountains CFLR), we strongly advise that a strategy be developed specifically to the unique social and ecological context of the SF Mountains Project. The Guild is willing to collaborate with diverse partners to develop this strategy, and would like to see it built into prescriptions to ensure that it is implemented in an effective manner.

Sincerely,

Eytan Krasilovsky

Deputy Director