

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 8/6/2019 12:00:00 AM

First name: Anne

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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Re: Scoping Comments for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Dear Mr. Melonas,

I add my voice to those asking you to protect the forests above Santa Fe and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement regarding this project. There are significant impacts to the health of the forest and there is scientific controversy regarding this method of extensive clearing and burning. These are our precious public lands, and the health of our community is tied to the health of this forest. At the very least, there should be a full EIS and more time for the community to learn about this issue and voice concerns and opinions about how to best manage our forest.

Roadless forests above Santa Fe should be protected to help mitigate climate change, provide recreational opportunities, and provide habitat for species that, as we all know, are in dangerous decline. Roads harm water supplies, degrade wildlife habitat, spread invasive plants and disease and allow more access for poaches and human-caused fire.

Instead of reducing fire risk, cleared areas may become more flammable by encouraging the growth of combustible grasses, shrubs, and small trees. The land quickly becomes more dry, which also increases fire hazards. I am aware there is scientific opinion on both sides of this issue. Please do a full environmental review and allow the public time to understand this project and offer meaningful input.

In this time of climate unraveling, we must be careful that management strategies are truly helping to both adapt and mitigate quickly changing threats. We have a responsibility to manage forests for the health of vulnerable species, and you have a responsibility to allow meaningful debate and public input.