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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Mr. James Melonas, Forest Supervisor

Santa Fe National Forest

Mr. Melonas,

We live in Santa Fe County. We are extremely concerned about the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project, which will cause enormous damage to the Santa Fe National Forest near our home and close to the pueblos of Tesuque and Namb[eacute], including our beloved Namb[eacute] Falls Recreation Area.

We are especially concerned that you are allowing only a very short comment period and that there will be no Environmental Impact Study done before launching into this huge and destructive project. Why the rush, unless you believe that more people will object to the project if you allow a full 90 days?

We understand that the Forest Service believes that thinning and burning will help save the forest from disastrous large wildfires. However, the latest science suggests that this is the wrong approach, and furthermore that this decades-old policy has led to fires with far more disastrous consequences, such as the recent fires in California.

We suggest you take a look at the recent policy document on California wildfire policy entitled "A New Direction for California Wildfire Policy-Working from the Home Outward," in which a panel of experts explains that the hundreds of millions of dollars being poured into logging and burning would be far better spent taking preventative measures around homes and structures, "working from the home outward."

These scientists argue that our forests are not unnaturally dense and "overgrown," and denser forests do not necessarily burn more intensely. Also, "thinning" really means intensive commercial logging projects that build or improve roads and remove most of the trees, allowing winds and fire to spread more quickly through the forest. "In fact, extensive research shows that commercial logging, conducted under the guise of 'thinning', often makes wildland fires spread faster, and in most cases also increases fire intensity, in terms of the percentage of trees killed (Cruz et al. 2008, 2014)."

Moreover, climate scientists argue that one of the main causes of fire is global warming. Thinning and burning will contribute to global warming not only from the burning, but from removing trees and habitat that help sequester carbon, cool the ground, and contribute to the cycle that brings us life-giving rain.

Prescribed burning often uses aerial ignitions containing potassium permanganate, ethylene glycol and diesel fuel, which are disastrous for the environment and human health, as well as our tourist economy. Already the prescribed burns in the Santa Fe National Forest have been horrible for the health of our own family members with asthma, and have poisoned the skies and driven tourists away.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Elizabeth Gold

Debra Lynn Denison