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First name: Lyn

Last name: Lowry

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Jun 26, 2019

Forest Supervisor James Melonas

Dear Forest Supervisor Melonas,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Scoping Document for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project. I have a number of concerns with the Forest Service's proposal, not the least that it is conservationally inadequate.

An EA is inappropriate for a project of this scale and complexity that impacts many threatened and sensitive species, old growth forests, roadless areas and streams and riparian areas. Because this project will have significant effects on these and other resources, a thorough, site-specific analysis of all environmental impacts in an Environmental Impact Statement is required, and the Forest Service must analyze a full range of alternatives to the agency's proposal, including the Santa Fe Conservation Alternative submitted by WildEarth Guardians and others.

The Forest Service must identify and implement the minimum road system on a landscape scale and employ a thoughtful, strategic approach to assuring public access while reducing negative impacts from forest roads to water quality and aquatic habitats, and improving watersheds and forest resiliency by returning expensive, deteriorating, and seldom-used forest roads to the wild. And it must consider the best available science. The agency cannot cherry-pick the science and data to support its proposal while ignoring contrary, credible views and data.

Climate change intensifies the adverse impacts associated with tree thinning, prescribed burning, and roads. The proposed project risks increasingly disturbing the affected environment, and as part of the agency's hard look at impacts. The Forest Service must analyze the cumulative effects of the project with all other past, present and foreseeable future projects within the broader landscape, including the Hyde Park and Pacheco Canyon projects, livestock grazing, and motorized use. We cannot afford for the Service to get this wrong.

Sincerely,

Lyn Lowry
1538 Kimbark
Longmont, CO 80501
lynlowry9@gmail.com

