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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

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Good Morning Supervisor Melonas:

Because there are many more erudite individuals and organizations opposed to this ill-advised thinning project I'll leave the heavy lifting to them.

1. The Map

Sir, the inaccuracies in the map provided to the citizenry by the USFS are such that it appears intentionally designed to mislead the public. No Roadless Areas are included on the map, yet this information is critically important. A corrected map must be issued so that accurate and thoughtful comments from the public may be included in the discussion.

Because this inaccurate map has been distributed, and it will take time to send out a corrected version, the Public Commentary Period must be extended.

Frankly, a cynic might believe that the map, with its missing portions, was issued to purposely mislead the public.

2. Roadless Areas

With the courts affirming their objections to logging in roadless areas, why is thinning being proposed in these areas?

3. Wildlife in the area proposed for thinning

Sir, there are no scientific studies in support of this and similar thinning projects. If there were the USFS would be extensively quoting them to gain public support. Beyond the impact this thinning would inevitably have on the Endangered Species known to be living in the proposed area, where are the scientific studies that say otherwise? They don't exist. Therefore there appears to be little justification for this project other than to generate money for a few specific thinning-friendly and supporting groups.

This project reeks of efforts by some groups to generate funding through their inclusion in the project. The residents in my "neighborhood" saw this first-hand in a recent thinning project when the Forest Steward Guild pushed very hard for the thinning because they were going to be paid to do a considerable amount of the work. Despite their having what appears to be an environmentally-friendly moniker, they are anything but that. Again, despite there being no scientific studies backing the thinning, they pushed hard for it, and won.

They won while the forest and all of its denizens lost.

I'll close with a prediction. The thinning project will make significant money for a few groups. Despite claims to the contrary, most of the trees cut down will be stolen during the dark of night, as has happened repeatedly in thinning projects in my area because there's virtually no budget for law enforcement. When these wood thefts are reported the USFS will promise to stop it, but will then do nothing. When the trees are gone, and there's been absolutely no appreciable increase in fire protection for the public, and your children and grandchildren are asking where the trees, birds, deer, bobcats, squirrels and everything else has gone maybe you'll be able to cobble together a sensible response, but I doubt it.

Despite knowing your negative reaction to my closing statement, it must be said: The USFS is one more example of why so many Americans no longer trust their government to do what's "right" for the public.

Jon Asher
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