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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Dear U.S. Forest Service:

I strongly oppose the plan to do mechanical thinning or hand thinning of up to 21,000 acres and prescribed burns on another 43,000 acres. These actions could destroy up to 90% of a more than 50,000 acre section of the Santa Fe National Forest.

To use fire to prevent fire in this district, which is heavily inhabited, is a very dangerous prospect with our unpredictable summer winds. Please analyze this further. There are other solutions that could be advanced, such as the Santa Fe Conservation Alternative. Please evaluate which is the better plan with the least potential for widespread destruction of our very special habitat.

For example, it is highly risky to cut trees, sometimes with heavy machinery like masticators, and leave slash on the ground while bark beetle and other insects are on the increase. Also slash left on the ground is a fire hazard. Please evaluate the risks of the widespread thinning that is proposed, both in terms of the potential for increasing bark beetle outbreak due to the slash management methods that are proposed for use and the resulting fire hazard which would be left behind. This does not seem like a good idea and there are better ideas to consider. Please carefully evaluate all of the options you have available before determining a course of action. Every decision has impacts that will last for decades and generations.

I live outside of Cañada village and would be devastated to witness such destruction. It would have a direct impact on our lives, our well-being, our watershed and the local wildlife, including endangered plant and animal species. Please evaluate the actual impact on human health, including those with asthma and other health conditions. We have many, many elderly residents in this area, including my mother. Many people report feeling ill during prescribed burns, and I am concerned about effects of the potassium permanganate that is used as a fire accelerant in prescribed burns once it is volatilized in wood smoke. Please quantify the amount of potassium permanganate contained in prescribed burn smoke on average. Please analyze the health impacts of potassium permanganate in prescribed burn smoke on humans, especially the elderly, and on our wildlife.

Trees sequester carbon. It is a well-known fact that forests serve as 'carbon sinks' and help reduce the impact of both local and global climate change. Standing, living, breathing trees are the only natural solution to carbon reduction in our environment. Killing even one tree has a negative impact on this service to a healthy environment. In addition, this is a highly sloped area and tree-thinning will certainly result in erosion which will choke local springs and waterways - already a highly specialized source of life for plants, animals and people. We should be doing everything possible to protect our local springs and waterways and not adding the irreversible impact of soil erosion. Please analyze this. Another related concern is soil compaction as a direct result of the effects of heavy machinery in a fragile soil system destroying the ability of the ecosystem to recover. Please analyze this further.

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement is required for a project of this scope and size that may have significant impacts on the human environment and human health, and on resources such as recreation, roadless areas, our watershed and wildlife. Analysis must be site-specific. The condition-based approach is too general and vague for it to be possible to even make meaningful scoping comments. I am doing my best as a concerned citizen to make these general comments today, but if I was made aware of all the specific impacts and outcomes, I am certain I could make an even more meaningful contribution for your consideration. Please evaluate your responsibility to provide the public with the most detailed information available in order to receive comprehensive comments.

Thank you for your serious consideration of these concerns.

Yours,  
President Ann Filemyr, Southwestern College, and local resident of Cañada de los Alamos

"Our cells are more than just fortuitous arrangements of chemicals. They are a community of trillions of sentient entities cooperating to create a sanctuary for the human soul."

Sondra Barrett, biochemist and author, *Secrets of Your Cells*