

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 7/8/2019 10:14:51 PM

First name: Gail

Last name: Larsen

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Attn: James Melonas

Dear Mr. Melonas,

As a resident of Santa Fe and host to many visitors through my work, I cherish our forests and the rich resource they represent in terms of beauty, wildlife, tourism, and quality of life of our area.

I am deeply concerned about the enormous size of the "landscape resiliency project," the short comment period allowed to the public, and that there will be no Environmental Impact Statement regarding its effects on our beloved forest. It took longer, with more public input, to approve the small Railyard Project, in comparison to the 50,000 acres in this project.

I would like to know why there is such a rush to push this permanent cutting and burning of our forests? Please extend the comment period to 90 days for a more democratic process.

The Forest Service is arguing that the entire forest needs to be thinned and burned, but, the research of Dr. Chad Hansen and Dr. Jack Cohen shows that the most effective mitigation of damaged property in the event of wildfire is to directly treat around homes and structures. This current science must be considered carefully.

I would like for you to allow the climate scientists with experience in forestry, such as Dr. Dominick Della Salla, PhD, to weigh in during this critical time of massive loss of species, habitat, and plants in our local Santa Fe area and throughout the world before settling on the final draft of this plan.

I feel the last thing we need is to cut our carbon sequestering plants. They provide Santa Fe our only buffer against the climate crisis. We truly need every tree we have and every other plant in Santa Fe to help us bring moisture and rain, keep the ground cool as the temperatures rise, and decrease winds and the spread of pests and other parasites on trees that occur with thinning.

I would also like you to consider the health of the wildlife and the public when using aerial ignitions containing potassium permanganate, ethylene glycol and diesel fuel and how these are currently affecting our health and well-being. These harmful chemicals also impact the economy, tourism and reputation of Santa Fe as one of the cleanest cities in the country. Many citizens of Santa Fe are complaining about current fires and the health effects (whereas the equally impacted wildlife cannot).

I am also concerned about opening roads (either lightly loaded or inventoried roadless areas) and increasing the exposure of our wilderness to further exploitation by industry which can degrade wildlife habitat, spread invasive species, and allow arsonist and wildlife poachers free access. Many roads in the forest should be completely obliterated, not improved for access.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,  
Gail Larsen

Gail Larsen  
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