

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 8/5/2019 12:00:00 AM

First name: Richard

Last name: Welker

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

RE: Scoping Comments-Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Dear Mr. Melonas,

It has come to my attention that the Forest Service intends to thin some 50,556 acres located in the Santa Fe National Forest ostensibly for the purpose of fire adaption and mitigation. I have studied the science pro and con behind the rationale for controlled burning and cannot agree that it significantly reduces fire risk, that it reduces carbon emissions, that the smoke generated poses no risks to our collective health or that such thinning and burning practices actually contribute to the health of our forests, protect the wildlife or preserve the watershed.

Regarding the air pollution generated by this amount of controlled burning: A recent mega study published in the prestigious journal *Chest* says this:

Air pollution poses a great environmental risk to health. Outdoor fine particulate matter exposure is the fifth leading risk factor for death in the world, accounting for 4.2 million deaths and > 103 million disability-adjusted life years lost according to the Global Burden of Disease Report ... Air pollution can harm acutely, usually manifested by respiratory or cardiac symptoms, as well as chronically, potentially affecting every organ in the body. (My emphasis)

I am also deeply concerned not only about the scope of this project but the attempt to circumvent an Environmental Impact Statement. 50,556 acres is equal to nearly 79 square miles which is enormous. The impact to the economy, to tourism and to the reputation of Santa Fe cannot be understated.

Although the present administration continues to deny and suppress all data on climate chaos, I cannot and will not support your intended thinning project in our forest. To me it will destroy what we barely have left with none of the stated objectives realized.

I therefore ask you to abandon this project and at the very least, re-orient your awareness to the reality and the urgency of climate change and the damage a project of this magnitude will do to our forests and to us.