

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

First name: Kenneth

Last name: Collins

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Re: Scoping Comments for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Dear Mr. Melonas,

Learning that areas in Santa Fe National Forest close to Santa Fe may be subject to heavy clearing, I am submitting these comments, reflecting my concern. One area that I know well, having hiked and snowshoed extensively there, is Black Canyon, off State Highway 475.

I add my voice to those asking you to protect the forests above Santa Fe by preparing an Environmental Impact Statement that acknowledges the significant cumulative impacts and scientific controversy of extensive clearing and burning over many decades. Roadless forests above Santa Fe should be protected as Wilderness to stabilize the climate and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation critical to Santa Fe's economy. Clearing vegetation and burning in roadless areas does nothing to improve the safety of residents living adjacent to the forest. Most old road should be completely obliterated instead of improved for access by tree clearing equipment. Roads harm water supplies, degrade wildlife habitat, spread invasive plants and disease and allow access to arsonists and wildlife poachers. Instead of reducing risk, cleared areas may become more flammable by encouraging the growth of combustible grasses, shrubs and small trees and opening forests to drying sunlight and wind. Public health is negatively impacted by repeated burning close to urban areas. There is no known safe level of exposure to small particulate matter in smoke. In addition, I am concerned about the cumulative exposure of people and wildlife to toxic fire accelerants.

It is difficult to provide meaningful comments due to the lack of sitespecific information and the short 30 day comment period. Please provide more detail and extend the comment period to 90 days.