

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 7/8/2019 12:00:00 AM
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Title:
Comments:
Email to the following address: comments-southwestern-santafe@fs.fed.us

Re: Comments for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

July 8, 2019

From:

Bill Dam

To:

Mr. James Melonas, Forest Supervisor

Hannah Bergemann, Fireshed Coordinator

Joe Norell, Deputy Forest Supervisor

Josh Hail, Ecosystems

Lance Elmore, Fire and Aviation

Julie Anne Overton, Public Affairs Officer

c/o Santa Fe National Forest

11 Forest Lane

Santa Fe, NM 87508

Dear Mr. Melonas, Ms. Bergemann, Mr. Norell, Mr. Hail, Mr. Elmore, and Ms. Overton:

The USFS Scoping Document provides a general description of the proposed actions for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project. The purpose and need statement does not adequately provide justification for burning up to 43,000 acres which is about 40% of the project area. This also contradicts establishment of a multi-age young to old growth forest as desired in the forest structure. Additional historical context is needed to describe extent of significant previous fires to explain how these devastating fires were not adequate in order to justify that new fires are beneficial to the environment.

Given the significance of the Santa Fe National Forest and major federal action impacting many diverse cultures, a full EIS is needed rather than an EA and the public comment period should be extended to 90 days. The cost-benefits must consider numerous factors including impacts on public health, socioeconomics and the environment.

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. Leaving downed trees/ slash on the ground can also draw bark beetle infestations. We cannot afford to lose thousands of healthy trees as occurred in the past due to bark beetles.

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.

I have asthma and know many citizens of Santa Fe are complaining about current fires and the health effects (whereas the equally impacted wildlife cannot). I personally am severely affected as are many people I know by the smoke and the toxic chemicals that are in the air when prescribed burns are being conducted.

This year, 2019 has been especially difficult as the USFS has extended prescribed burns and "managed burns" into July. These burns are becoming larger and larger and smoke from burns from other US Forest Service areas of New Mexico are reaching Santa Fe. People with Chemical Sensitivities, Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Emphysema, Heart disease and other serious health and respiratory disorders are being made extremely ill from all the smoke. Our children and the elderly are especially affected. Santa Fe has a large population of elderly and retired people.

It appears the US Forest Service does not consider smoke from the prescribed burns to be a public health hazard. It is time to wake up to this fact. This smoke is literally life threatening for many people.

Please take into consideration all the impacts of this Santa Fe Mountains Resiliency Project. Please consider the health of the people and animals. Please extend the deadline for public comments. Please provide an Environmental Impact Statement.