

Mr. James Melonas  
Forest Supervisor  
Santa Fe National Forest  
11 Forest Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87508

RE: Scoping comments for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Mr. Melonas,

As a resident of Santa Fe, I am deeply concerned about the enormous size of this project, the short comment period allowed for the public and the repeated response by the Forest Service employees that there will be no Environmental Impact Statement regarding its effect on our beloved forest. It took longer to approve the small Railyard Project than it did to decide on the "fire adapting" of this 50,556 acre project. It forces me to wonder why when the ramifications are so significant.

I would like to know why there is such a rush to push this cutting and burning of our forests when it is such a permanent, irreparable action? If fire is a natural process of these forests, why are we pushing it unnaturally? Yes, the odds that fire will occur is obvious, but, why exacerbate the risks? Fire suppression was the rule for 100 years and now the Forest Service proposes the exact 180 degree opposite as the new rule? This seems to be an equally dangerous and short-sighted view.

It appears the Forest Service is using the fear of fire to convince citizens — especially those in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) — of the potential danger instead of providing them with funds (if needed) and resources to treat around their homes in order to be more protected in the event of a fire. I do not see where Dr. Chad Hansen's or Dr. Jack Cohen's research is considered and used as a baseline for home protection.

I am also concerned there is not an obvious opportunity for climate scientists to weigh in during this critical climate crisis which is causing devastating losses of species, habitat, and plants in our local Santa Fe area and throughout the world. I request the Forest Service to investigate the work of more climate scientists such as Dr. Dominick DellaSala before the implementation of this plan.

With climate change looming over us, the last thing we need is to reduce our carbon sequestering plants. These plants provide Santa Fe our only buffer against the crisis. We truly need every tree we have and every other plant in Santa Fe to help attract moisture and rain, keep the ground cool as temperatures rise, help decrease winds and prevent the spread of pests and parasites traveling from tree to tree fostered by thinning.

There already is a natural thinning occurring due to the drought conditions of the last decade. Why increase those conditions now rather than follow the lead of the natural environmental cycles?

I would also like you to consider the health of wildlife and the public when using the aerial ignitions using potassium permanganate, ethylene glycol and diesel fuel. A true interest in public safety could include investigating how these chemicals are currently affecting our health and well-being. Additionally, it must be noted how the impact of implementing the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project applies to the economy, tourism and reputation of Santa Fe which was once rated as one of the cleanest cities in the country and now is rated B.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these great concerns.

Sincerely,  
Ann Crouse