

Imler-Jacquez, Sandra R -FS

From: Norman Vigil <norman.vigilsr@outlook.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2019 7:49 AM
To: Imler-Jacquez, Sandra R -FS
Subject: Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project #54965

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Sandra,

The following comments are being submitted to the proposed Encino Vista Restoration Project proposal from the Coyote Ranger District.

After attending the community meetings at Canoñes, it was apparent that the major obstacle to any watershed improvement plans is the lack of trust between the USFS and community members. There are many reasons but mostly this has occurred over decades of interaction or lack off. In this particular proposal the local acequias and land grant were not notified formally. This indicates a basic lack of knowledge of both entities as major components of the community. Hopefully this will change in the future but the damage has been done.

1. A great deal of emphasizes is being placed on wildlife species as indicated by the amount of references and length of discussion in the proposal document at the expense of the other land uses (livestock grazing, Acequias, local customs and culture).
2. Support of the proposed treatment will only come when details of the project are outlined. There is a genuine concern with reintroduction of fire into an ecosystem in which fire has been suppressed for decades. A recommendation is to move forward with small treatments showing success before a large scale project is proposed. This approach might build the trust and confidence needed as opportunities arise in the future. Another recommendation is use silviculture treatments until the forestlands are in a "natural state" to allow fire as a tool.
3. Contingency plans should be part of the planning process in the event a prescribed burn gets out of control which could have a major impact on the grazing operations not to mention other land uses.
4. The USFS should clearly commit financial resources for implementation of the plan. Past performance indicates a lack of financial resources to many treatment plans on the shelf. At a minimum the financial plan should identify sources of funding or the approach to funding the proposed treatments. The current staff at all levels indicate a willingness for treatment but past history indicates a continual change in personnel with differing approaches and commitment. Almost impossible to build trust with a revolving change in personnel. Again, you started off on the wrong foot with the community of Canoñes.

Submitted by Norman Vigil. Mesa del Medio permittee.

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