

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 7/10/2019 9:31:04 PM

First name: David

Last name: Abram

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

To the Forest Service,

I wish to submit this comment regarding the "Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project" for the Santa Fe National Forest.

I am dismayed that the Trump administration - in cahoots with logging interests and lobbyists - are using the fear of wildfires to stoke such an ill considered plan to aggressively clear, thin, and burn our precious forests. Far too much research demonstrates the foolhardiness of this kind of blunderbuss approach to protecting our town. This plan seems, among other things, to be an ugly and mighty deceptive timber grab that would destroy the homes of countless woodland animals, wrecking the ecological integrity of these forests primarily to put money in the pockets of a few folks who couldn't care less about the lives of deer, and Abert's squirrels, and elk, of black bears and hairy woodpeckers and Mexican spotted owls and thrushes and goshawks. And who couldn't care less about those of us who really live here, or about the lives of the great trees themselves, these towering ponderosa pines or the aspen groves whose sensitive trunks all rise from a common rhizomal root system underground, whose chattering leaves grace our lives each summer with their hushed gossip, and fill our hearts with wonder every autumn as their honey-gold shimmer blankets the slopes (as if these mountains were all cloaked in Jason's golden fleece), and then in winter we're enchanted by their white trunks etched with black eyes gazing back at us as we ponder their linear black shadows upon the white snow, and the fractal complexity of their branches against the intense blue sky.

For any and all of us who've lived in this town for more than a few years, our own lives and our psyches are thoroughly entangled with the leafing and needled sentience of these forests - these woodlands are a part of our own health and our own wholeness (since, after all, the oxygen these trees breathe out is what all of us need to breathe in, and since what all us animals breathe out is precisely what all of these deep-rooted and needled folks need to breathe in for their own photosynthetic metabolism). These forests, these trees are completely a part of us, as we're a part of them - each a part of each other -- and we can't let their fate, which is our fate, be decided in such a slapdash fashion. I am not at all against carefully thought through selective logging, nor carefully planned prescribed burning when it can really help. But this is hardly such a thought-through and necessary plan. So why is this being rushed through, without even the research for a careful Environmental Impact Statement, when it will profoundly affect our lives, the culture of our city, and the integrity of our wildlands? To me it seems a travesty, and along with many I will stand strong against it.

Sincerely,  
Dr. David Abram  
director@wildethics.org

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 7/10/2019 8:59:12 PM  
First name: David  
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Organization:  
Title:  
Comments:  
Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Jul 10, 2019

Forest Supervisor James Melonas

Dear Forest Supervisor Melonas,

With all due respect, I much appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Scoping Document for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project. And I appreciate the Forest Service soliciting public comment on this project, but I have a large range of concerns with the Forest Service's proposal:

1. An EA is inappropriate for a project of this scale and complexity that impacts many threatened and sensitive species, old growth forests, roadless areas and streams and riparian areas. Because this project will have significant impacts to these and other resources, a thorough, site-specific analysis of all environmental impacts in an Environmental Impact Statement is required.
2. The Forest Service must analyze a full range of alternatives to the agency's proposal, including the Santa Fe Conservation Alternative submitted by WildEarth Guardians and others.
3. The Forest Service must identify and implement the minimum road system on a landscape scale and employ a thoughtful, strategic approach to assuring public access while reducing negative impacts from forest roads to water quality and aquatic habitats, and improving watersheds and forest resiliency by returning expensive, deteriorating, and seldom-used forest roads to the wild.
4. The Forest Service must consider the best available science. The agency cannot cherry-pick the science and data to support its proposal while ignoring contrary, credible views and data.
5. Climate change intensifies the adverse impacts associated with tree thinning, prescribed burning, and roads. The Forest Service must consider the risks of increased disturbance when analyzing the proposed project, as part of the affected environment, and as part of the agency's hard look at impacts.
6. The Forest Service must analyze the cumulative impacts of the proposed project with all other past, present and foreseeable future projects within the broader landscape, including the Hyde Park and Pacheco Canyon projects, livestock grazing, and motorized use.

Sincerely,

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