

My name is Carol J Johnson. I live in La Cueva directly adjacent to your proposed Santa Fe Mountain Landscape Resiliency Project (SFMLRP) for 25 years. My property borders the Santa Fe National Forest. In the past 15 years I have seen several thinning projects by the SFNF and the resulting destruction of the forest. I am strenuously opposed to the SFMLRP for the following reasons:

Carbon Sequestration: While uncertainty remains around climate change mitigation strategies, it is well-known that **carbon sequestration by trees and forests have the potential to positively impact climate change.** Unfortunately the SFMLRP does the opposite by cutting and burning our forests, causing carbon to be released into the atmosphere. While I applaud the Santa Fe National Forest for reducing the size of the trees cut from diameters of 24” to 16”, a sixteen inch diameter Ponderosa is over 150 years old. It will continue to contribute to carbon sequestration for hundreds of years. If cut and burned it may not be replaced due to climate change. A young tree will not store carbon for close to one hundred years. Thus when we “thin” our forests of mature trees we are killing all life on our planet. **The Forest Service must place a priority on land management which promotes forest Carbon storage.**

Since science cannot predict with certainty the long-term effects of cutting and burning, this project demands an EIS and alternatives to rampant thinning.

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs): The Santa Fe National Forest map of the project excludes Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). Thus the map misleads the public, resulting in the inability to accurately comment on the Federally protected IRAs included in the project. Further, it is impossible to cut and burn 50,566 acres of trees without creating or expanding roads. Very few roads exist in IRAs and road-building is prohibited. **An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is mandatory for logging in IRAs.**

The EA states “Overland travel by vehicles that do not require roads to be constructed (e.g., masticators, UTVs) may occur (U.S. Forest Service 2021).

This sentence indicates that tracked and/or wheeled vehicles will travel overland causing indiscriminate destruction of soils, plants and wildlife habitat. This is contrary to the stated purpose of the Roadless Rule and the SFNF Travel Management Plan and will destroy the primitive wilderness character and the wildlife population. The Thompson Peak IRA has been proposed as a potential Wilderness area.

This plan must include an Action Alternative that does not include logging in IRAs. Maps of the EA supplied to the public must include details of the proposed burning and thinning areas within the IRAs.

Wildlife: Wildlife is already being significantly negatively impacted by climate change and development. It is wrong to employ drastic measures such as the SFMLRP without knowing the ultimate impact on the area’s wildlife. There is extensive research on the critical benefits of

intact forests. The SFNF must conduct studies of the adequacy of the habitat before the project begins and must have a monitoring plan to therefore avoid a potential wildlife disaster.

Environmental Impact Study: A project of this size, scope and potential impact requires an Environmental Impact Study not an EA. It is insanity to proceed with only an EA.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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