



EL CAMINO SIERRA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF INYO

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November 9, 2021

US Forest Service - Region 5

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=60950>

RE: Post-Disturbance Hazardous Tree Management Project #60950

On behalf of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors, I would like to thank the United States Forest Service (USFS) for providing the opportunity to submit comments on the Region 5 Post-Disturbance Hazardous Tree Management Project. This is extremely important work in all of the Forests identified in the project and for Inyo County, the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra Forests are of special concern. The Board is very much in favor of this project and offers the following comments.

Inyo County encourages access to its natural beauty and its economy is heavily reliant on tourism. Having dangerous trees in proximity to citizens and tourists alike is obviously a critical issue and we heartily thank you for making it a priority. We believe that the danger inherent in this situation goes much farther than the parameters of this project description; however, and although this is a very good start, there is much more that should rise to a high priority status.

The Forests are blanketed with dead trees and woody debris. This has been a primary contribution to the recent high intensity wildfires across the western United States. These fires have caused devastation to communities, people's lives, wildlife and the health of our public lands beyond the imagination. The air has been choked with smoke in the communities near the Forests, as well as, communities hundreds of miles away. The health risks from this smoke are more insidious than trees that are on the brink of falling, but just as dangerous. The poor air quality also has negative effects on the economies of effected communities that rely on tourism. Because of these factors, the proposed cleanup defined by this project should be extended to all parts of the Forests with the goal of preventing high intensity wildfires in the first place.

Whitney Portal Road is not identified in the project description; however, it will likely be used intensively for hauling equipment into and debris out of the Whitney Portal area. We ask that the USFS and any contractors working on this project be respectful of this county maintained road and leave it in the same condition it is found at the onset of the cleanup efforts.

We appreciate that the Forest Service is attempting to fast track this important project and strongly encourage it. This is important work, especially for safety, but also so that the burned or otherwise damaged wood can be commercially viable. There is a short time window for this wood to be usable, so again we applaud the Forest Service expediting the project.

In closing, I would like to thank the USFS again for reaching out to Inyo County with the opportunity to comment on the Region 5 Post-Disturbance Hazardous Tree Management Project.

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors fully supports this project and hopes that it is just the beginning of a more comprehensive cleanup plan for the Forests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jeff Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Griffiths, Chairperson
Inyo County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Alex Padilla
Congressman Jay Obernolte