



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ELK FOUNDATION**

December 1, 2023

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E-mail: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=61651>

Subject: Comments – Draft EA, North Fork Crooked River Forest Resilience Project

The purpose of this letter is to state the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) fully supports the North Fork Crooked River Forest Resilience Project and concurs with the EA's purpose and need statement. RMEF is particularly pleased to see the statement there is a need to improve elk security.

Of the two Action alternatives proposed, RMEF supports Alternative 2 because it proposes to result in a residual forest that is likely to be more resilient to climate change, less likely to suffer insect and disease, and more resilient to wildfire.

RMEF is supportive of the EA's proposal for a Forest Plan Amendment to provide for harvest of trees greater than 21 inches DBH as described in the EA document under Alternative 2.

Additional comments:

1. The draft EA document released to the public for comment could not be searched for key words and this made it particularly difficult to review and comment on this project. Please, in the future, provide all documents where the public is asked to comment in a searchable format.
2. Enhancement of aspen and other hardwoods was mentioned in the EA; we suggest that this is a very important habitat and forage for wildlife. For big game mountain mahogany is quite valuable browse and will need protection when prescribed fire is applied.
3. Aspen enhancement work should be planned and executed using the best science. See [PNW-GTR-806, Aspen Biology, Community Classification. And Management in the Blue Mountains.](#)
4. Regarding prescribed fire and bitterbrush. Bitterbrush is prime deer browse and will need to be protected from prescribed fire. See [Habitat Guidelines for Mule Deer: Intermountain West Ecoregion, Mule Deer Working Group, Western Association of Wildlife Agencies.](#)

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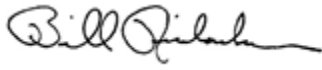
5. Juniper removal be considered, particularly where it is encroachment upon meadows.

In conclusion, it appears action Alternative 2 provides the most benefit for Rocky Mountain Elk, Mule deer and other wildlife by improving forage habitat, increasing security area, and reducing road disturbance.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat, and our hunting heritage. The Elk Foundation also works to open, secure, and improve public access for hunting, fishing, and other recreation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this project.

Sincerely,



Bill Richardson
Sr. Conservation Program Manager - Western
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation