



Intermountain Forest Association

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July 9, 2024

Josh Peck, Responsible Official/District Ranger
Pagosa Ranger District
San Juan National Forest
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

Submitted via: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61809>

Re: Comments on the Jackson Mountain Landscape Fuels Reduction and Vegetation Management Project Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Peck:

Intermountain Forest Association (IFA) is a member-based organization that advocates for healthy forests and healthy communities, including actively promoting sound forest management that provides a stable and sustainable supply of timber from public and private forestlands. IFA's members engage in many aspects of forest management and are an important stakeholder partner to the United States Forest Service (USFS). IFA's members presently, and plan in the future, to engage in timber removal in some capacity from the project area.

IFA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the environmental assessment for the Jackson Mountain Project. IFA is supportive of the USFS and their willingness to manage National Forest lands to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, improve forest diversity and resiliency, and to protect communities. We also appreciate that USFS has explicitly provided in the purpose and need intent to offer wood for both commercial and non-commercial uses, especially in light of the current state of the industry both locally and regionally. Maintaining industry infrastructure is of critical importance in order to restore and manage forests. IFA supports the Jackson Mountain Project and offers only one suggestion, detailed below.

Section 2.3 Design Elements

Watershed and Soils

IFA understands the importance of maintaining buffer zones around streams and wetlands. However, we suggest that USFS provide flexibility in design elements as it relates to streams and wetlands in light of current technology of ground-based logging equipment, making it possible to mechanically remove encroaching conifers without operating within sensitive areas. We recommend that mechanical harvesting be an option as long as tracks/machinery do not enter the restricted area.

Conclusion

IFA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Jackson Mountain Project and environmental assessment. IFA is supportive of the USFS and their willingness to manage National Forest lands for resiliency to disturbances and to support the wood products industry by offering wood for commercial uses. It cannot be emphasized enough that maintaining a viable wood products industry is critical to managing the forest.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Maxwell
Intermountain Forest Association
Colorado Programs Manger