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Title:

Comments: Attachments: Physicians for Social Responsibility.doc; Fire Indust 2, 7.15.doc These are my comments about your plan to burn and sell 2 million acres of Arizona forest: Please do not do this project. The potassium permanganate is too toxic and the toxins that the trees have been storing will be released. Also, every acre burned produces 4.81 tons of carbon = 14 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. This is not sustainable and I want future generations to have forests. We can hardly breathe in Santa Fe from the burns in this area. The scale of what you are doing is criminal. Getting rid of 95% of the Ponderosa Pines is insane. There is a persistent belief, due to oft-repeated misinformation, that the U.S. Forest Service is thinning and burning "underbrush" on our public lands. Many express shock at the actual scale of prescribed burns. Tom Ribe's recent op-ed ("Santa Fe must tackle overgrown forests," My View, April 3) makes clear the scale of the Forest Service's prescribed burning and logging agenda. Ribe bemoans the loss of 12,000 acres to fire, which is indeed tragic, and then goes on to call for the burning and clear-cut logging of more than 107,000 acres. We oppose the increasing aerial firebombing of our forests and wildlife. We are pro-forest, and we advocate for community decision-making on public land issues. New Mexico's 99 percent who are not politically connected and wealthy have had no voice in decisions to sell off our forests to the burn and logging industries. The Forest Service's "comment" process is a bad joke. Anyone who objects to landscape-scale chemical burning and clear-cut logging is harassed out of public meetings, disrespected and disregarded. There is no oversight nor community input in the shady underworld of prescribed burn contracting. I attend public meetings on prescribed burns, and I am appalled at what I see as the Forest Service's unbridled hatred for forests and the democratic process. Workers never use the word "trees." Only "excess fuel" and "timber." Ribe and the Forest Service appeal to fear, not logic nor science. They warn against the "big fire" that has never happened in our watershed, while avoiding mention of the Cerro Grande Fire, a prescribed burn set by the National Park Service in May 2000. Ribe wrote a book calling it "America's worst prescribed fire disaster." More than 250 homes were destroyed, the entire city of Los Alamos was evacuated, and Los Alamos National Laboratory property burned. We'll never know the numbers of wildlife lost, because no one cares to investigate. William Baker's Fire Ecology in Rocky Mountain Landscapes, the definitive, 628-page, peer-reviewed scientific text on the subject, concludes that the best approach is not to try to change or control fire, but to learn to live with it. He argues that the most effective action is to limit and redesign human-forest interfaces to withstand fire, which can be done in ways that are beneficial to forests and human communities. The Forest Service has been intentionally ignoring current peer-reviewed science for decades. Why? Because current science tells us that prescribed burns make forests more [mdash] not less [mdash] likely to burn. But there is no money in leaving the forests alone. Instilling fear into the public serves the interests of the multibillion-dollar burn contracting industry. Sincerely yours, Jan Boyer