

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/21/2020 9:05:56 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: We are owners of Lot that is directly adjacent to the Upper Rito Blanco area of this particular project. In general, we think the project and its stated goals are a good idea. In particular, the watershed restoration including rehabilitation of SJC trout and forest restoration for increased health and fire mitigation we feel are important. As owners, we are working on similar projects on our own forested areas. We do have some concerns with the current proposal however and some suggestions for mitigating these concerns.

When looking at the designated "harvestable" vs. "non-harvestable" areas on the proposal we noticed that a small part of harvestable land directly abuts our property. This smallish swathe is about ¼ mile in width and is directly east of the Rito Blanco ranch area in between a forest service road and the property line. Within this harvestable area there also look to be 5-6 springs one of which is extremely close to our property line and is the source of our well water. We assume, the other springs located in this area are sources of our neighbors' well water as well. We are concerned that tree harvesting and the use of heavy equipment in the area may inadvertently cause issues with water quality and our access to clean water. We have read the proposal and know that it includes well buffer zones but even with the best of intentions, accidents happen. Our thoughts in this regard are that this one small area that is currently designated as harvestable be changed to "unharvestable". We also have concerns with regard to the proposed roadway link up of previously dead end roads that will increase the ease of access to hunters and campers to parts of the forest that have been difficult to get to until now. We believe that, because there is a drivable FS road less than a quarter mile to the east of our property, there may be increased traffic from hunters and campers as well as inadvertent trespass and use of our lot. There are currently 2 drivable FS roads that are within one quarter of a mile (or less) from ranch property lines. So far this has not been an issue because there was not much direct access. We are concerned that opening this up could become a real problem so our proposal is to make these two unconnected roads that are very close to the Rito Blanco Ranch area be closed to through access by vehicles other than FS. One of these roads forms the eastern border of the above-mentioned harvestable area and that fact also increases our concerns about large equipment being brought in so close to the property.

In short, we would like for a "buffer zone" of one quarter to one half a mile in the proposed project zone to be implemented around the Rito Blanco Ranch to protect our water quality, safety, and privacy concerns. Thank you for your consideration.