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First name: Harold

Last name: Ragland

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Who It May Concern,

I am Harold Ragland representing Ragland and Son's Logging and Stonertop Lumber. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and appreciate your proactive approach to these issues. I have worked on the forest for 53 years and am passionate about protecting and responsibly developing our public lands.

First, I would like to address recreation. I think that all types of recreation can coincide with any and all logging operations and neither should be impeded. I have seen firsthand how logging and recreation can operate in a complimentary fashion.

Next, I'd like to address forest sales. I believe the Forest Service should be in more control over the forest sales. This could be accomplished by dividing the sales into 20 acres or less and must be completed before they start on another sale. This order of operations is necessary because, if the trees are cut and not removed before another season, it creates habitat/incubation for the bugs and Beetles that damage our forests' long-term health. The same goes for the Forest Service Thinning projects that go for firewood.

The Forest Service control Burns have been a complete disaster with no one to be held accountable. A better way would be utilize ground mixing strategies. Excess wood to be decomposed naturally by the microbes in the ground, Increasing in the water retention and the fertility of the soil. The controlled burn has several downsides that outweigh the benefits. All of the shrubs are affected from the burn which is a valuable food source for our wildlife including currents, acorns, serviceberry ,chokecherry, wild tomato, etc. Trees are affected though they continue to grow sometimes they are damaged. This damage to trees is backed by evidence: when the tree is cut you can prove what year it was burned by a mark in the rings. When the tree is cut into lumber it has pitch pockets in it as well. This fire damage turns a piece of wood that could possibly could be used as valuable molding to dunnage which is nearly worthless. The economic impact of the control burns decreases the value of the public's timber by amounts sometimes up to 100 times.

Finally, If the economic and biological reasons to stop control burns are not enough, I also want to express the cruel and inhumane damage done to our wildlife by control burns. It is not in the public interest to burn hundreds of thousands of animals alive. This is an ecological and moral disaster. In the 1970s you could walk to the Pine Forest and see several Kaibab squirrels. Now you can't even find one. If the control burns continue, I have serious concerns that these squirrels will be added to the endangered species list.

Sincerely,

Harold Ragland