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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

The Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

October 27, 2021

From:

Patricia Mann RN, MSN

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Re: My Comments on The Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

As a native New Mexican, Health Care Professional and resident of Santa Fe, I am deeply concerned about the enormous size of the proposed Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project and that there has been no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding its effects on our beloved forest or the health of people, our forests, wildlife and the quality of our soil, air and water.

I demand there be an Environmental Impact Statement. It is unthinkable that a project of this magnitude would not have a full EIS.

I am concerned about the ecological impacts on our forest as the plan includes major thinning and burning on thousands of acres of forest land, the use of heavy equipment and the creation of new roads (even if "temporary") into forest areas as well as the use of herbicides for invasive plant species.

I would also like you to study the health impacts on our air quality, soil quality and water quality and the impact on the environment as a whole as well as on our wildlife and people when doing prescribed burns. Toxic smoke is emitted from these burns and causes harm to all wildlife and all people, not just those who are "smoke sensitive" or who have underlying conditions such as COPD, Asthma, Chemical Sensitivities, Heart Disease, etc.

It is also important to study the impact of ignitions using accelerants, whether doing hand ignitions and/or creating containment lines using diesel fuel or doing aerial ignitions containing potassium permanganate, ethylene glycol or other toxic chemicals.

A thorough study should be conducted as to how these toxic chemicals being released into the environment are currently affecting our health and well-being. As I write these comments today, there is a prescribed burn going on in the Santa Fe Watershed that has been started using toxic chemical accelerants. This is our watershed. These chemicals will get into our air, soil and water. The smoke from prescribed burns and these harmful chemicals also impact the economy, tourism and reputation of Santa Fe as one of the cleanest air cities in the country.

Many citizens of Santa Fe are complaining about prescribed fires and the negative health effects (whereas the equally impacted wildlife cannot). I personally am severely affected as are many people I know by the smoke and the toxic chemical accelerants that are in the air when prescribed burns are being conducted.

These burns are becoming larger and larger and more frequent. Smoke from burns from other US Forest Service areas of New Mexico are reaching Santa Fe.

People with Chemical Sensitivities, Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Emphysema,

Pulmonary Fibrosis, Heart disease and other serious health and respiratory disorders are being made extremely ill from all the smoke. Our children and the elderly are especially affected. Santa Fe has a large population of elderly and retired people.

It appears the US Forest Service does not consider smoke from the prescribed burns to be a public health hazard. It is time to wake up to this fact. This smoke is literally life threatening for many people.

The proposal to use herbicides in the Santa Fe National Forest is also a public health threat. Herbicides are toxic chemicals that can get into the air and pollute land and water. An EIS should also examine the adverse health impacts of herbicides on the human environment, including impacts on vulnerable populations. Invasive plants can be manually removed thus avoiding introducing toxic chemical herbicides into our environment.

Recently, in August, 2021, (August 9-12) the herbicide "Rodeo" containing the toxic chemical glyphosate, was sprayed on invasive plants, the Oxeye Daisy, on the East Fork trail in the Jemez Mountains. The trail was left open during the spraying and any hikers as well as the pesticide applicators would have been exposed to this toxic chemical. These herbicides can also persist in the environment.

Glyphosate has been linked to many forms of cancer and class action suits are currently ongoing on behalf of those who have been chemically injured by exposure to glyphosate including applicators of glyphosate-containing herbicides as well as others who have been exposed to glyphosate and now have terminal cancers.

Additionally, these herbicides are severely impacting our wildlife. Every year the Wildlife Center in Espanola treats birds, including our beloved raptors, for herbicide poisoning. Many cannot be saved. These herbicides go right up the food chain and are impacting not only people but all of our wildlife including our beneficial pollinators such as bees, butterflies and moths.

Please take into consideration all the impacts of this Santa Fe Mountains Resiliency Project. Please consider the health of the people and animals. Please provide an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Patricia Mann RN, MSN
Health Care Professional, Registered Nurse
Santa Fe, New Mexico