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Comments: Comments on Carson Forest Plan: Oct. 25, 2021

My objection to the Forest Plan is centered on habitat protection for Pacific Marten, especially in the area of Taos Ski Valley. All of the recreational developments at TSV are destroying the integrity of the old growth spruce-fir forest that the marten and its prey species depend on. Glading and tree mastication in spruce-fir is totally inappropriate, and should be halted immediately. Complex forest structure with abundant down woody debris (DWD) harbors the microtine habitat of voles and other rodents that martens need to survive. Taos Ski valley is one of the best areas for martens left in NM. These complex forests with abundant DWD provide access for martens to the subnivean (under snow) zone where their prey are. Gladed areas are dead zones for both prey and martens. Snowshoe hare and Goshawks are other species that requires these complex forest habitats.

I have heard it claimed that glading and thinning do not affect marten, but I have witnessed a steady decline in marten numbers over the last 15 years in this area, based on the number of tracks found on snow tracking surveys. The same is true for snowshoe hare.

It appears to me that Carson National Forest allows every recreational development proposed by the Ski Area without questioning the effects on wildlife. The CNF should require the wildlife studies that need to be done before any more forest is disturbed.

Sincerely,

I have been studying Pacific marten in Northern NM since 1998.