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Comments: We definitely support making our communities more resilient to wildfire, however, we are concerned that, despite the St. Vrain Forest Health Project's extensive coordinated planning and scientific expertise, future work will suffer from implementation problems similar to those of past projects. The past USFS fire resiliency work around our cabin in Meeker Park has left many piles of dry, dead wood and slash and led to many newly fallen trees, which have likely increased the risk of severe fires rather than reduced them.

Several years ago, the USFS clear cut many areas near our cabin and others on USFS land (part of the recreation residence program), stacking the wood and slash in piles. After a few years, the USFS returned to burn the piles, but no one remained in the area to make sure the piles burned completely. Most piles did not burn at all, leaving many piles of dangerous dry, dead wood. Please see the attached pictures of an area within 50 yards of our cabin and an area on nearby Coyote Ridge (near 40 13.872, -105 32.402). We are surrounded by a tinder box.

We and our neighbors have tried to communicate our concerns about these dangerous piles of dead, dry wood to the USFS many times, but nothing has been done. In one conversation, a USFS ranger explained that the piles no longer have enough needles to burn them now and that the piles weren't large enough to have enough wood above the snow to burn. In other words, the pile burning process wasn't completed at the right time or in the right way as part of the original project work, which illustrates our concern about any future St. Vrain Forest Health Project work. (And really, these wood piles need needles to burn?)

Based on questions during the NEPA June 2 webinar about wood piles being left for long periods of time and concerns about increased fire risk, it seems many other people have had similar experiences. The USFS webinar speakers' responses to questions about dangerous wood piles suggest that they don't understand the current situation, despite community efforts to share concerns. One speaker responded that the wood piles have to season for at least a year, our piles are more than five years old, and that they need sufficient snow to burn them safely, not a problem near Meeker Park.

This clear-cutting work has increased fire risk for other reasons. With clear cutting rather than thinning, we have had dozens of live trees blow down on the edges of and near the clear-cut areas. As a result, in addition to piles of dead wood, we now have dozens of large dead trees on the ground within 100 yards of our cabin, drastically increasing fire fuel. (See attached picture.) We have removed the slash from the fallen trees directly around our cabins, but we can't clear all of the fallen trees in the area.

These trees have fallen on two sets of electrical wires near the five cabins in our area. It seems that selecting clear cut areas so close to cabins has also increased potential fire risk due to downed electrical wires.

Fortunately, so far, none of the fallen trees have hit any of the cabins, but some have been close. This is another possible negative consequence of the way fire resiliency work has been and might be completed.

We hope that given the strong encouragement for comments on this project, we may see some response to our concerns and that future work can be completed appropriately. We hope that remedying past damaging USFS work that has increased fire danger will be a priority for this project and might even be completed sooner. We don't understand how leaving piles of dry, dead wood is good for our area's fire resiliency and don't believe the one ranger's suggestion that the existing wood piles can't be burned now in appropriate circumstances.

We hope that in the future the USFS will truly be able to adopt the new conditions-based approach that responds

to changing conditions, current fire hazards and community concerns.

We hope that any future work will ensure that:

- piles of cut trees and slash will be burned completely,
- piles of dead wood and new fallen trees from previous incomplete fire mitigation work will be burned at an appropriate time in the future,
- fuels reduction will thin trees rather than clear cut them to reduce the likelihood of trees blowing down and increasing the amount of risky dead wood, and
- any clear-cut areas will be further away from cabins and electrical wires to avoid damage to cabins and electrical wires.