

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/16/2023 5:00:00 AM

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Comments: Wilderness areas must be excluded from this proposal on the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests. for the proposal to be in compliance with the Wilderness Act. These are beautiful areas that should remain untouched and where natural processes are permitted to occur. I have spent time in the John Muir and the South Sierra Wilderness. They are beautiful and serene and yes, trees die, are burned, and fall to insects and disease. This is part of the processes that these forests have adapted to over millenia.

Instead natural, ecological fire should be allowed to occur in the Wilderness areas in the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests. It should also be allowed in all areas of the forest except in close proximity (less than 40 acres from structures and infrastructure). That is how they have adapted and how they remain viable ecosystems. Prescribed burning especially with the necessary maintenance increases fire and smoke on the landscape well beyond historical occurrences (See <https://www.bushfirefacts.org/report-5-prescribed-burning.html>). It also happens out of the fire season when wildlife is nesting and attempting to procreate.

Too burn over 2 million acres including continued maintenance will put public health at risk (see <https://cosmosmagazine.com/earth/climate/bushfire-smoke-increasing-global-public-health-concern/>).

Please reconsider this project even a recent Forest Service report makes it clear that the empirical evidence simply does not exist to show that landscape scale measures like these prevent wildfire community disasters. Jain et al note large gaps in research. Only 8% of the papers they evaluated considered landscape scale fuel treatments (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treearch/63869>).

Sadly there is a lot of money available for these landscape scale projects without the evidence to prove their efficacy. Please follow the best available science and cancel this project. It not only violates the Wilderness Act, it could put people and wildlife at risk.

Please rethink this project.

ATTACHMENTS:

Bushfire Science Report No. 5: Does Prescribed Burning of Native Forests Reduce The Risk To Infrastructure From Bushfires?