

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/30/2024 9:28:29 PM

First name: Rita

Last name: Jankowski-Bradley

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to address a few items in the Lolo National Forest Plan Revision #62960.

1.Fungi as a main point

2.Availability of forests and their vital role in health of local communities as affordable recreation for local Montana residents. Green spaces are critical to physical health, as well.

3.Privatization of forest land is not in the best interest of forest protection, usage by the majority of residents and protection of wildlife in the area (wildlife corridors and endangered species.). Forest service land should not be turned into for profit enterprises/venues.

FUNGI

Diversity of fungi is tremendous. There are millions of species yet they are not present as one of the most important pieces of the Lolo National Forest Land Management Plan Revision #62960. Fungal Diversity Revisited: 2.2 to 3.8 Million Species <https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/microbiolspec.funk-0052-2016>
Fungi and their relationship to plants are essential to the life of the forest. The majority of fungi we find in the forest are beneficial to the overall health of the stands they are living with.

I would like to state that I feel it should be called the Lolo National Forest "Protection" Plan. The use of management in this context takes away from the important role the forest plays in its own ecosystem protection and the fact that forests for camping and recreation are vital for members of local communities in Montana. A forest service publication included the importance of the ecological role of fungi in improving sustainable forest practices in their conclusions.

Unexpected results from recent studies (Hoff 2002) indicate a great need to further explore the diversity and ecological roles of fungi associated with woody roots of various forest trees in diverse ecosystems. As the role of fungal diversity in ecosystem processes is better understood, information should become available to improve sustainable forest practices. https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs/rmrs_rp047.pdf

Healthy forests require fungi. Mycorrhizal fungi have symbiotic relationships with host plants within the entire forest ecosystem.

The hyphae of the mycorrhizal fungi is thinner than the plant's roots and is able to come into contact with more soil on a per-volume basis. The mycorrhizal fungi are made up of a root-like structure and possess a network of mycelium external to the tree roots that extends into the soil. This mycelium absorbs nutrients and transfers them back to the host plant. As a result, there is an increase in the absorption surface area of the roots.

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/mycorrhizae/>

All elements of the Lolo National Forest Land Management Plan Revision #62960 need to include the role of fungi as integral to forest ecology.