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First name: Daniel
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear North Fork Recovery Project Planners,

I submitted a comment regarding the fire recovery project that I have worked on since the Dixie Fire, on the Heart K Ranch in Genesee - which is adjacent to Forest Service land. I indicated that through consultation with a team of scientists, we have done post-fire treatments on the Heart K Ranch without the use of heavy equipment for fuels reduction, and without herbicides for brush control.

I have reviewed the response to my comment in the EA, and the response does not address my concerns about the use of herbicide. Our fire-recovery project work has included habitat imperatives, and the use of herbicide in the area does not align with the habitat goals of the work that we have done on the Heart K - where we have already spent significant time and money on our treatment. Furthermore, the use of herbicide poses hazards to human populations in the area, who have expressed strong opposition to their use - we have honored their concerns in our work and have not used herbicides in Upper Genesee Valley. The preferred alternative for brush control is goat grazing.

The other concern in my comment was about the use of heavy equipment - we have not used heavy equipment in out fire-recovery work because of concerns about soil damage, not to mention the steep slopes in the burn scar. The response in the EA mentions mitigations for soil damage in mechanical operations but does not engage with the concerns about the impacts of mechanical operations in general. All things considered, we have treated our project area using hand thinning, and in order to not unnecessarily dilute the results of our treatment, it would be helpful if adjacent landowners employed hand thinning as well.

I have attached a map of the area in Upper Genesee that includes forested areas on, and adjacent to, the Heart K Ranch.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Kind Regards,
Daniel Kunches, Ph.D.