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First name: Catherine

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: Custer Gallatin National Forest Supervisor, Matthew Jedra

Subject: Objection to the Cooke City Fuels and Forest Health Project: Final Environmental Assessment

From: Catherine Logan, Emigrant and Cooke City, Montana resident. This coming winter will be my 19th season living in the Cooke City area.

Date: August 26, 2025

Your response on p. 150 of the Final Environmental Assessment did not address my concerns. As it stands now, your fuels reduction treatments would more likely cause negative impacts on our forests' health, as well as increase user conflict and safety problems in our community.

In Particular, regarding winter recreation conflicts and safety issues, relief to this concern would be to omit forest thinning south of Highway 212. Thinning will encourage more motorized intrusion into areas off the roads that historically have not been ruined by motorized disruption. This is true, not only to mitigate the increasing demand for non-motorized recreation opportunities but also to provide a more diverse economic base for the struggling Cooke City and Silver Gate's winter economy. Backcountry skiing is the fastest-growing sector in the ski industry, and our area is no exception.

Other local citizens have expressed concerns about the increased debris flow hazard resulting from forest thinning. The same problem applies to winter avalanche hazard. As stated in my previous comment, all treatments south of the Bannock Trail are questionable and pose serious public safety issues, not to mention potential damage to private property.

My previous concerns about treatments with ambiguous outcomes, such as the daylighting treatments proposed for whitebark pine, have the potential for irreparable ecological damage. The entire project is in need of a full EIS that weighs the full potential for unanticipated and undesired ecological outcomes. The EA was deficient by lack of including the best available science.

My love and concern for our National Forest in the Cooke City area deserve more than vague assurance that everything will turn out OK. A full EIS is warranted, and failure to do so will be a NEPA violation.

A lot more work and serious analysis is required before you initiate this expensive project with an uncertain outcome. At the very least, a vastly scaled-down demonstration project instead of the boondoggle presently proposed.

Sincerely,

Catherine P. Logan

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