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First name: Ned

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please find attached my Word document with comments/objections regarding the "Sierra National Forest Land Management Plan for Fresno, Madera and Mariposa Counties, California" dated June 2022.

I have included my contact information on page 1 of this document. Also attached is a PDF of page 1 of my document containing my personal signature for "authorship verification".

I previously submitted comments/objections to the June 2019 Sierra National Forest Plan Revision in September 2019 which is what I understand makes me eligible to submit comments to the June 2022 Plan Revision.

Please confirm receipt of my submission. Thank you.

Subject: June 2022 Sierra National Forest Land Management Plan June 2022 Revision Objection/Comments

Submitted by:

Ned F. McDougald

Livestock Grazing Permittee, USFS Sierra National Forest, Madera County

Submitted: August 14, 2022

Name of Plan Revision Responding to:

USFS "Land Management Plan for the Sierra National Forest Pre-Objection Version for Fresno, Madera and Mariposa Counties, California" dated June 2022

Name and Title of Responsible Official:

Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor, USFS Sierra National Forest

Prior Objection Comments regarding USFS Sierra National Forest Plan Revision dated June 2019 submitted by Ned McDougald on September 24, 2019

Subject: Sierra National Forest Land Management Plan June 2022 Revision Objection

COMMENTS:

1. Federal Law: "Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act" of 1960

A federal law passed by the U.S. Congress in 1960 authorizes and directs the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to develop and administer the renewable resources of

1. timber
2. range
3. water
4. recreation and
5. wildlife

on the national forests for multiple use and sustained yield of the products and services. This is the first law to have the five major uses of national forests contained in one law equally, with no use greater than any other.

The June 2022 "Land Management Plan for the Sierra National Forest" selectively places some threatened or endangered wildlife species in a category that makes them more important than the other managed resources of timber, range, water and recreation. This is in violation of the federal "Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act". This needs to be addressed/resolved in the SNF Forest Management Plan by de-prioritizing the endangered wildlife species over the other four federally-mandated multiple uses of national forests.

What is the history in the Sierra National Forest with regard to the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act from 1960 to present with regard to timber and range utilization? How have those two uses been managed equally with wildlife, water and recreation?

The following current multiple uses as identified in the 2022 Forest Management Plan are negatively affected by large uncontrolled forest fires yet there is no proposed fire management plan based on first-hand experience over the past several decades of catastrophic fires on the Sierra National Forest? How are these multiple uses currently managed "equally"?

- * sustainable recreation
- * scenery
- * timber and other forest products
- * range and livestock grazing
- * geology and minerals
- * energy
- * cultural resources
- * tribal relations and uses
- * local communities
- * volunteers, interpretation, partnerships and stewardship
- * lands
- * infrastructure

1. Fire and Forest Management

As the Sierra National Forest has experienced numerous large, devastating, uncontrolled fires over the past few decades, it seems critical that the Sierra National Forest Land Management Plan should have prominently-stated goals concerning forest management and fire management, but it does not. All of the other uses of the forest (range, water, recreation and wildlife) are dependent on successful forest management and prevention and/or control of catastrophic fires. Planning for management/control of catastrophic fires needs to be incorporated into the SNF forest management plan.

A key safety issue in the SNF is identification of two means of access to/egress from SNF use areas as well as designated safe areas developed in the event of fires. These plans need to be incorporated into the Forest Management Plan for the safety of both USFS staff and the public.

Another proven tool for preventing/managing catastrophic fires is the development and maintenance of fire/fuel breaks. The plan should include implementation of fuel breaks in key areas of the SNF to inhibit or slow the rapid spread of future large fires.

1. Range

In SNF Forest Management Plan, page 92, under Goals: RANG-FW-GOAL 03:

Working with stakeholders ensure livestock grazing management strategies are adaptable to changes in available forage due to wildfire or drought, and to post-fire transitory range.

The 2020 Creek Fire changed the character of the San Joaquin River drainage in the SNF from a forest to a grassland. As such, the grazing management strategy should be adapted to allow earlier grazing in the spring/summer season and with greater numbers of livestock. This is a unique opportunity to quickly adapt to the changing post-fire range landscape. This adaptation/flexibility is not included in the 2022 Forest Management Plan[hellip]but should be.

Guidelines & Potential Management Approaches: RANG-FW-GDL 01-10, pages 92-94:

All of these range guidelines are subject to interpretation and implementation by the USFS. Although the potential management approaches state "coordination with" and "collaboration with" livestock operations, permittees, tribes, other agencies and stakeholders[hellip] they also state that if desired conditions and other plan components are not being achieved, the USFS can "modify or suspend grazing in the affected areas".

This gives the USFS absolute power over the development of an assessment, the determination of future management, and the execution of a modification or suspension to a grazing permit - without an independent, third-party expert consultation provided for considered. This reads like the USFS has become a regulatory agency serving as jury, judge and executioner without fair due process for the permittee. To ensure a fair due process, a procedure needs to be developed wherein an independent third-party range expert could provide consultation to scientifically and fairly address proposed USFS adverse actions. All federal (and state) regulatory agencies have such due process procedures in place and so should the USFS.

Potential management approaches modifying or suspending grazing in the affected areas are mentioned to correct desired conditions on a three to five-year sampling frequency. Any suspension of grazing rights is inconsistent with the federal Multiple-Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960. This law states that the five major uses defined in the law (timber, range, water, recreation and wildlife) are to be treated equally, with no one use greater than any other.

Range Guideline - RANG-FW-GDL-08, page 93:

When grazing under intensive grazing systems where riparian conservation areas receive scheduled rest (such as rest-rotation or deferred rotation), utilization levels may be higher than the levels described under season-long use if the meadow and/or riparian area is maintaining mid-to-late seral ecological conditions and meadow-associated wildlife are not being adversely impacted.

The terms "rest-rotation" and "deferred rotation" are not defined in the glossary. These terms should be defined so that everyone understands what they mean.