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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important project. These comments are based on my 30 years of working as the Forest Biologist for the San Bernardino National Forest, and cooperating with the local residents, communities, and environmental/conservation groups to protect the National Forest and its natural values. Native plants and animals are extremely important to these groups. They want to protect their communities from wildfire, but they also want to keep the native plants and animals as a part of their communities. The fact that can occasionally see deer, bobcat, coyote, bear, spotted owl, flying squirrel and other species makes them proud of where they live and they are active in trying to maintain the natural character of the communities. Protecting wildlife is very important to the residents of these communities.

This project is very important to the well being of the adjacent communities and residents both from the fire protection and habitat maintenance standpoint. I totally support fuel treatment adjacent to homes and major access roads. I also support repairing infrastructure, reforestation, unauthorized road and trail closure, and invasive plant control.

Since you have gotten expert input regarding spotted owl, I will concentrate on other important aspects. Please consider these comments in your final design and implementation of this project.

- Need to maintain or create some 3+ acre patches of dense vegetation to serve as hiding and escape cover for deer, bobcat, coyote, bear and other species. This is especially important where this project borders the long-recognized wildlife corridor linkage to the south up Grass Valley Creek and through the Eagle Ridge (Lake Arrowhead Ridge) Preserve. Uniform heavy thinning and brush removal would have a significant adverse impact on animal use and movement, and have a long-term adverse impact on the recognized wildlife corridor/landscape linkage up Grass Valley Creek.

- Need to retain as many snags and down logs as possible. This is important for long-term soil condition and development and many plants and animals that use snags and down logs.

- Consider the mast production, cover, and forage value of shrub stands as deciding what needs to be treated. Treat as little as possible to let the untreated areas provide important habitat diversity. Away from structures and roads, retain the unburned shrub stands.

- Need to get input from Dr. Borchert regarding the project design to best provide for plant and animal recovery following the fire. His research for the Forest Service and continuing work on the north side of the SB Mountains after retirement puts the Forest in the unique position of having a local expert. Please take some time to run this project by Mark for his thoughts. I sure he wouldn't mind spending an hour or two sharing his thoughts. You may have already done this.

Thank you for all you and your staff do for our Forest and considering our public input. Please let me know if you have a public field trip to review the project.

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