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Comments: The vegetation plan for the Foothills Environmental Assessment calls for herbicides to be applied on over 65,000 acres. Some limited applications are probably necessary to treat infested trees and reduce fuel for fires; however, the incredible amount of forest to be treated with chemicals under the plan is appalling.

The Forest Service references the US EPA as its guide for what chemicals are safe to use and how to use them. That may have been reasonable several years ago; however, the EPA seems to no longer be looking out for the well being of this country's environment. In addition, the Forest Service is required to do an independent assessment of the safety of pesticides (reference the Forest Service website page regarding Pesticide Management and Coordination) before going forward with their use. Impacts of chemicals on our ecosystem has become well known and every day citizens of this country learn more and more of those impacts. The newest data must be considered by the Forest Service. For example, the significant chronic risk of the widely used herbicide Atrazine on amphibians, fish, mammals, birds and terrestrial plant species was finally recognized and reported by the EPA in 2016 yet the Forest Service is still citing data from 2011 for its decision making. It is imperative for the Forest Service to recognize and use current, up-to-date science in its decision-making not data from 2011.

Another aspect of the forest that the Forest Service has not considered in its Foothills planning is the underground network of fungus and microbes that permeates the forest floor discovered only 15 years ago. Research in the years since is beginning to unravel the importance of mycorrhizal networks in a forest's survival, growth and defense. It is not known what the potential damage would be to these network from the types of logging and chemical application the Forest Service plans in the 157,000 acres of the Foothills Landscape project.

I am also concerned that this Foothills Landscape Project as currently formulated will not allow the public to utilize the established NEPA process at the time site-specific locations for treatments are being established. Please do not closeout the NEPA process before the public can know specifically where you plan to do the projects.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.