Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/3/2020 11:55:32 PM
First name: Ian
Last name: Barrett
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment and ask questions.
It appears from the outside that only tool considered for forest management in this analysis is logging. Which conflicts with an existing EA in the same area for prescribed fire. Will that be analyzed in the cumulative effects section or has prescribed fire been deemed less valuable for restoration?
What other desired conditions of the LRMP are encompassed in the Salter area and pertain to vegetation management? I would suggest considering these desired conditions as seriously when managing the landscape as the two that have been selected in support of this project. How and why were those other desired conditions considered less important?
Will there be analysis of other methods to manage vegetation within the project area?
What timeline can we expect for impacts to forest user groups and where? Will the logging occur in a shotgun blast pattern or will it start on one side of an area and gradually work across?
Will the document analyze the "current level" of economic activity that the USFS is supporting? It seems as though; one would need to know how much timber (CCF) is required to support this industry over a certain period. If there are other methods to restore the forest structure such as fire or prescribed fire that cause a fraction of the ground disturbance and recreational impact that large scale logging causes then these should be considered as well.
IS there an option to meet the need of the industry without treating the entire area with logging and then potentially utilizing a method closer to a natural process like fire. How do these costs differ? Which one reaches a more desirable ecological condition?
What are the economic impacts of large-scale logging to the recreational interests of the area? In turn, how does this impact the local economy? What brings more economic boost to the area recreation (hunting/biking/etc) or timber industry?
I also think the following statement: "Due to fire suppression resulting in longer fire return intervals and ungulate grazing, the understory is dominated Gambel oak that is dense, shrubby, and primarily even-age." Is partially accurate but misleading. It should be emphasized how timber management has affected the current vegetation in the project area as well as these other factors, which are both valid. We don't have even age and over stocked forests because of fire suppression and grazing alone; timber/forestry management had a pretty big role in shaping the affected environment that should be made clearer. I understand that it's not the "fault" of the USFS, because industry and litigation played a pretty big role in that outcome. But this should be discussed. What happens if in 5 years the timber industry becomes unsustainable again?
I am generally supportive of the project, but I think there needs to be full disclosure of how this EA integrates with previous decisions. From the public perspective, there is a mixed message on what is planned on the landscape. Is prescribed fire to restore the ecosystem still an option? Or is that plan out of consideration and now the intent it to log the entire forest. Or is the plan to log and then burn? It's hard to get a clear grasp of how these large projects are functioning together and hard to have faith there is a coordinated long term management plan for the forest.
It should also be made clear what the costs to the taxpayer is for these treatments, do the sales cover all the analysis and program costs? Or is the taxpayer paying for private industry to log under the assumption that the landscape will be better off in the end? Having toured some of the areas out in Lake and Doe Canyon, I find it troubling to blindly support the use of timber sales to achieve a desirable end state. Many of those sites are devoid of trees and then impacts from the heavy equipment is alarming. What will the checks and balances look like? If the beetle continues to spread across the project area, will this document need to be revisited to include sanitation sales as well? Or does the decision allow the near 100% cuts that have occurred elsewhere on the glade?
I understand that I have asked more questions than provided helpful comments but in summary my suggestion is to fully plan, analyze and communicate the multiple management actions (fire, timber, grazing, recreation, etc)

occurring across the landscape and these impacts to the full economic picture not just timber industry.

Thanks,
Ian