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First name: Glenn

Last name: Gay

Organization: Gay Ranch Inc

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Hecker,

I hold a grazing permit on the Bloom Creek Allotment and own private land bordering the Bloom Creek Allotment. Fires have been controlled in the area since the homestead days. This has allowed juniper trees to encroach, tree density to increase, and fuels to build up in the forest. The Bloom Creek Allotment was partially burned in the 2011 Maverick Fire and again in 2012 in the Dutch Fire. These were uncharacteristic wildfires and in places burned all the trees including the mature trees. As a result there are large areas with no living trees and no seed source to reestablish trees.

With the increased density of trees and buildup of the fuels, the forest will burn in the future with large uncharacteristic and difficult to control wildfires. The South Otter Project with thinning and bringing fire back into the ecosystem will be very beneficial to the forest. Controlled fires will minimize the burning of the large mature seed source trees, decrease the tree density and still remove the ladder fuels. This will help restore the biodiversity and over all health of the forest.

Using roads and natural barriers as the fire lines will reduce the environmental impact of fire control and increase the safety for fire control personnel. In some places these roads and natural barriers could be on land outside the forest boundary. The forest ecosystem and watershed does not stop at the forest boundary. As a private landowner bordering the forest, I am interested in cooperating with the project to benefit both the forest land and my private land.

I support the purpose and need for the South Otter Project and look forward to the implementation of this project.

Thank you,

Glenn Gay