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Organization:

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Comments: I favor reduced Alternative 2, for the Fire Restoration Project. Here are my reasons:

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Shasta Trinity National Forest is proposing to log over 4,000 acres in Forest Glen and the Wild and Scenic South Fork Trinity River in the Smoky, Red Mountain, and Prospect Creek tributaries. The stated purpose of the project is public safety and recreational access, reforestation, reduced fuels and economics.

Public safety and community protection should be a priority. However, these priorities are best managed by focusing on home hardening, defensible space, creating strategic shaded fuel breaks, and removing legitimate hazard trees along major roads. Road construction and widespread ground-based logging with heavy equipment in impaired watersheds detrimentally harms the soil and decimates natural regeneration. Furthermore, leftover logging slash creates immense ground fuels and increases future fire risk.

In addition to the 4,000+ acres of mostly tractor logging, the project proposes nearly 1,000 acres of stream side logging, 6 miles of "temporary" roads and the opening of 2 miles of decommissioned roads. South Fork Trinity is already listed as sediment impaired under the Clean Water Act. Additional sedimentation would further harm struggling salmon and steelhead populations and water quality.

The proposed project runs directly to the river's edge in some places and throughout multiple stream systems, project implementation would negatively impact the National Wild & Scenic South Fork Trinity River. The river is designated as "wild" because of its outstanding fisheries, and it is legendary for its Chinook salmon and steelhead trout fishing. Both of these species are Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, and in June 2021, the spring Chinook was listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. Logging fire-affected forests is well known to cause sedimentation, which directly harms juvenile salmon, and diminishes their aquatic habitat.

Burned forests are important for wildlife. Snag forests rival green forests in biodiversity. Snags, especially the largest trees, will stand and store carbon for decades, contribute valuable soil nutrients, provide shade and important habitat for many species, including northern spotted owls, woodpeckers, bats and small mammals.