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Comments: I support the North Big Bear Landscape Restoration Project and believe it should be approved, funded, and implemented as soon as possible. I believe that the Environmental Assessment and supporting documents adequately describe the purpose and need for the action and discloses the potential for significant environmental effects, but that these effects can be mitigated by the design features listed in Appendix B.

Our family cabin in Fawnskin and the adjacent National Forest has blessed four generations since it was built in 1963. We are personally aware of the fact that natural and periodic low intensity fires have been suppressed for over 100 years in this area, and that with each year more trees and shrubs are dying, and the threat of massive and uncontrollable wildfires grows ever greater.

1.Actions to Restore Forest Health Are Essential

This Jeffery Pine forest and the plants and animals that live there evolved with fire and will benefit from the thinning and controlled burns that are described in the EA. This needs to happen in forests all over the west, and it becomes even more essential in the face of climate change. Proactive forest management needs to proceed in the project area.

2.Bald Eagles and other sensitive animals and plants can and must be protected.

Among the supporting documents are Biological Evaluations of wildlife and botanical resources that identify a significant number of species that may be impacted by the project. Buffer zones and management protocols that are identified can and must be implemented as part of the project. The EA should explicitly incorporate mitigation monitoring and public reporting measures for which the Forest Service will be accountable.

3.New Recreational Trails and Motor Assist Bicycle Use Should be Carefully Implemented and Monitored

The project includes recreational trail development and proposes permitting motor assist bicycles to use those trails. Conflicts between bicyclists, hikers and horses are foreseeable, but the Forest Service can and should include within the EA explicit measures to closely monitor this, report to the public periodically, and respond appropriately. This should include possible prohibition of motor assist bicycles on some or all of these trails if necessary.

Thank you for considering these comments.

David Bolland