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Title:

Comments: I oppose in general any removal of live or dead timber in our nation's forest, especially in designated Wilderness. Natural processes must be allowed to play out without timber harvest. The only way for forest humus to accumulate is to allow the trees to collapse naturally and decay on the ground until they replenish the soil to support tree regrowth. Of course, in Wilderness, there cannot be any use of chainsaws. Trees should be allowed to fall and then the use of crosscut saws could be used to clear trails as needed. We are in a phase with climate change where regrowth of trees is threatened by excessive heat and drought. Some studies, like the Montana Climate Assessment of 2017, state that the species of trees currently existing will be changing to species like Ponderosa and sagebrush that are more drought tolerant. Removing trees from the forest in Wilderness or elsewhere will dry the remaining forest, making regeneration more unlikely.

I have lived in California and I regularly travel to many of the forests involved to hike and enjoy nature. Please do not proceed with the intentions to remove material in burned forests that should be left in the ecosystem to play the natural role that fire plays.

Thank you.

Nancy Ostlie