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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the Forest Service,

I will leave the technical comments to professionals in that area and will comment on the Forest Service approaches that are evidenced in this project and so many others.

I first became aware of the high handedness of the Forest Service in 1982, when I was pregnant with my first child. At that time, the Forest Service's focus was on "spray and log" rather than the current "burn and log" approach. The Forest Service attempted to block our every attempt to address the carbaryl spraying near our homes. My phone was tapped, and I was forced to evacuate at 35 weeks pregnant for the sake of my unborn baby. I realized that the Forest Service actually did not follow its own guidelines and operated independently of public opinion and of the forest's and the community's needs.

Apparently very little has changed. The Forest Service is still getting away with not doing an EIS for gigantic projects. They are giving a very short period (30 days) for public review and then hiding public comments, which they ignore, from public access. They are still following their own and their industry partners' agenda, and that agenda is still harming the forest and public health.

Cows are still trampling our riparian areas, as any hiker has seen, and now Forest Service people are burning our forests. I have seen "prescribed burn areas" that are nothing but desolation. The forestry people come in with lines of green vehicles, damaging the forest floor as they go. How many hundred people are really needed? It looks like a spurious jobs program to us locals.

They subject the public to weeks of intense smoke, which exacerbates existing pulmonary conditions and damages the lungs of children and the placentas of pregnant women and their babies. Yes, as a midwife I have seen those grey, gritty placentas.

I have gone in after these projects and have seen such sparse living tree growth that it really isn't a forest anymore, with a missing understory, blackened and dead old growth trees and devastated soil.

Trees are the hope of our planet; we need them to sequester CO₂ and to cool our earth. The irony of a "Forest Service" that destroys forests does not escape me.

The proliferation of roads further damages our forests and our watersheds. Roads need to exist for public recreational access to the most important areas and for a bare minimum of forest maintenance, and any roads need to be structured so as not to damage waterways. The many extraneous roads need to be allowed to return to nature. We do not need to have more roads for loggers, and our roadless areas need to remain roadless.

I have very little hope that these comments will be heeded, but I feel that it is my duty once again to try. This time I will cc my MoCs. The Santa Fe Project needs to be completely rewritten or abandoned, and the Forest Service's tactics need to be utterly transformed to serve the forests and the community. The public should no longer be subjected to miserable months of hazardous smoke, and our forests should be nurtured rather than assaulted.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Brannin