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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Public Comment on 2020 Fire Affected Road System Risk Reduction Project

Dear 2020 Fire Affected Road System Risk Reduction Project Elsbeth Gustavson,

Please accept these scoping comments on the 2020 fire-affected road system risk reduction project:

I appreciate that you are limiting the scope of the initial project and working to prioritize the most severely burned areas and roads with the highest use and access needs.

I would like to see the Forest Service to focus roadside treatments on roads that provide access to rural communities and roads that provide access to developed recreation sites and trails. And, of course, trees uphill and within 100 feet of roads and infrastructure that are likely to fall on roads should also be a priority.

On the other hand, I urge you to leave riparian reserves, Late Successional Reserves, and other sensitive areas alone. I also urge you to avoid roadside treatments that cut trees more than 100 feet from roads, downhill or leaning away from roads, or in areas that burned at low fire severity.

While this proposal includes fewer roads than last year's nearly 400 miles, the project could still be scaled back more and still provide adequate access to infrastructure, recreation sites, and private land inholdings. There are already too many roads on the landscape. Prioritizing which ones are reopened is important to minimize damage to scenic and recreational values. I would like to see only level 3, 4 and 5 roads, which are most used and needed for public access, prioritized. Those level 2 roads that access recreation sites or important infrastructure could also be included. Low-use and duplicative level 2 roads, all level 1 roads, and roads that don't show up on Motor Vehicle Use Maps should be avoided.

Finally, in your environmental analysis, please provide enough alternatives and detail that the public can make informed comments and weigh the potential impacts to our public lands.

In summary, management of sensitive fire impacted forests should be site-specific and only target trees that truly pose a threat to public safety. Hazard tree removal should not occur in places that are rarely visited or that could reasonably be closed to the public to allow nature to take its course.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Harrison