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Title:

Comments: I just learned that the U.S. Forest Service wants to remove trees affected in some way by the fires we've had in California forests in recent years.

I wish to object to this plan for so-called 'salvage logging,' particularly-though not exclusively in the designated Central Sierra zone, where I hike and backpack most frequently. I certainly don't want to overlook the North Zone that includes the Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, Mendocino and Klamath National Forests. I've enjoyed trips to all of those national forests over my long history as a backpacker.

This proposal seems sneaky, given the benign-sounding title, "Region 5 Post-Disturbance Hazard Tree Project." Moreover, it's just a project an out of scale to the problem the damage poses, too large by far to be allowed to escape closer scrutiny. I certainly can't accept your meager Environmental Analysis that repeatedly concludes that the proposed logging would not create any significant impacts. It's a well-known trick of bureaucracies, which Congress has entrusted with public duties to carefully consider environmental consequences of their rules and other actions, to just sweep aside in-depth review in hopes that they won't be challenged.

While I agree that trees that present significant hazards for those who use roads and trails must be removed, I'm not convinced by the USFS contention that the proposed ambitious program of logging is necessary to maintain its road and trail network. Moreover, it's just not true that these forests affected by the fires are completely dead.

Many of the affected trees may not succumb to their wounds from fires any time soon. But what if they do die rapidly? Dead wood still plays a big role in those forests, according to knowledgeable tree scientists.

And I don't want the service to overlook that large-scale logging after a fire, especially clear cutting through these damaged lands, stands to generate greater erosion, yielding a lot more sediment to enter the surrounding watersheds. Greater sediment pollution may well affect a lot of municipal water supplies, not to dwell on the effects on fish populations like salmon. Moreover, what about effects on endangered species besides salmon? Just focus the proposed logging on roads that get a lot of use, as well as those that serve a vital purpose. This could well serve as a great opportunity to examine networks of existing roads, in order to identify those that are not indispensable. Please re-consider this gigantic timber sale in the watersheds damaged by the fires. That must, of course, include thorough study of environmental impacts on California's national forests and critical wildlife habitats.