

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/19/2022 6:00:00 AM

First name: Eric

Last name: Milner

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I wish to comment on the Bitterroot Front Project.

In my opinion, people move to, live in, and visit the Bitterroot for its quality of life, views, recreation, abundant wildlife, and wildlands. The Bitterroot Front Project is ostensibly aimed at reducing wildfire risks particularly along the urban wildlife interface. While there is some merit to this notion, the primary responsibility has to lie with the landowners who choose to build within the interface. Since the Forest Service does not undertake projects on private land, a significant basis for the project is, in fact, non-existent. The notion that the proposed remedial steps will significantly reduce risk is, at best, uncertain. Therefore, the project should take a minimalist approach.

Protection of wilderness and preservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat are of utmost importance. It is unclear from the project documents how close to the wilderness boundary logging and other activity will occur. A complete environmental impact assessment must be done.

It seems to me that there is no need to log the thousands of acres proposed. At the very least, no old growth should be logged; no trees over 16 in diameter should be logged; no clearcuts should be permitted; no new roads should be built. There should be no intrusions into recommended wilderness and roadless areas.

To the extent that creating jobs is an objective, jobs should be locally sourced.

Before the project moves forward, all proposed activities should be completely detailed and subjected to public scrutiny. No reductions in public involvement in the name of efficiency should be permitted. The argument that this is an extremely urgent project is unfounded. Time can be taken to get it right.