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Comments: I am writing to register my objection to the South Plateau Area Landscape Project.

It is mind-boggling that a project of this size and duration was put forth in an Environmental Assessment, not an Environmental Impact Statement.

It is also unusual that there are no other alternatives offered in this proposal other than the one, which is unacceptable because of its proximity to Yellowstone Park, and one of only two good-size populations of grizzly bears in the lower 48 states.

Part of the sale is in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Area, where bears are supposed to be given special protections. This sale will hinder their movement, and fragment their habitat. Habitat loss is the single greatest threat to biodiversity.

There is no justification given for this project, other than mention of mountain beetles and mistletoe in the lodgepoles. A friend who is a biologist did an ATV tour of the area, and could find no sign of either.

This project, at almost 40,000 acres, will clear cut 5,500 acres and thin 9,000 acres, over a duration of 15 years, with 56.8 mi. of "temporary" roads built. This is a huge sale, over a lengthy period of time! And, the locations of the roads are not detailed, because the USFS says they don't know where they will go. Is this not a violation of NEPA? How can we comment on location of roads if they are not given? And, how can you call 15 years of "temporary" roads temporary? That is much of the lifetime of many species.

The South Plateau area, the heart of the project, is a wildlife connectivity corridor north and west to the Centennial and Madison Ranges from Yellowstone Park. It is so wildlife-rich that the State of Idaho is now working to mitigate wildlife/vehicle collisions. This is also the corridor biologists hope grizzlies will travel to connect with other populations in the state.

This project will hinder not only movement of grizzlies, but also the threatened lynx and wolverine. There are thought to be only 300 wolverines left in the United States. How can you possibly conduct a project that would threaten even a few of such a miniscule number? You say that the project would adversely affect lynx in the area, but not their species overall? Once again, when a species is low in number, how can you justify losing even a few?

Something else the project proposal does not address is the impact of climate change on the re-growth of the forest. As this area gets hotter and drier, who knows if there will even be any re-growth.

I should think the USFS would have learned some lessons from the disastrous clear-cutting to the south in the Targhee Forest in the 70's and 80's. The re-growth of that forest was exceedingly slow, and grizzlies were not even seen there for decades.

This project is also in direct opposition to President Biden's directive, Executive Order 14,072 to conserve mature and old-growth forests for their wildlife, carbon storage and water protection values.

Finally, I have stood on the top of Mount Hebgen and seen the magnitude of the clear cuts you have already engineered across Hebgen Lake, and their size and number are appalling.

Please cancel this project and do what's right for grizzlies, wolverines and lynx! You have already destroyed an unconscionable amount of their habitat!