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Organization:

Title:

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1. I strongly support safe, prescribed burns in the Dixie National Forest to reduce wildfire risks. I also strongly support allowing the public the opportunity to participate on a more meaningful basis than is proposed here.

2. Of course, any and all prescribed burns must be done only under conditions when it is absolutely safe to do so! The Forest Service must employ all necessary resources to assure that there is absolutely no risk of the Forest Service letting a fire get away and burning uncontrolled, as it did recently in New Mexico. Public, worker and forest health and safety should not be compromised in any way whatsoever!

3. The huge scope of this proposed action -- 1.477 million acres and 10 years -- prevents meaningful public participation. The Forest Service should divide the proposal into smaller areas and smaller time frames that would allow for more meaningful notice and public comment. For example, as the public sees what work is done on areas treated earlier in the overall plan, people would be able to provide more focused and meaningful comments regarding areas not yet treated.

4. Much can be learned by continuing experience and public participation. The notice letter states that the action would be "implemented across . . . 1.477 million . . . acres . . . over the next 10 years, after which, this decision will be re-evaluated . . ." It is shocking that a decision of this magnitude would only be re-evaluated "after" 10 years and doing prescribed burns across almost a million and a half acres. The Forest Service and the public should have the opportunity to reflect lessons learned in earlier areas in public comments on later portions. Some of the major reasons for the current condition of the national forests are the disastrous policies of the Forest Service itself for decades in mismanaging the forests.

5. The Forest Service must undertake more extensive and intensive efforts for forest restoration. This would include logging and thinning projects, wildlife habitat improvement, grassland restoration, watershed maintenance, and stream channel restoration, as well as prescribed burns.

6. It is disappointing that this proposal does not include any commercial timber sales or broad-scale mechanical treatments. Such work should go hand-in hand with prescribed burns to adequately treat and restore the forest.

7. The Forest Service should restore and improve the Dixie National Forest. I have reduced fire risks on our own property. I recently purchased an unimproved lot in Duck Creek Village. I promptly hired an arborist to remove the dead trees on my lot. This was not cheap, but it was necessary. Some areas in the Duck Creek Village area have been treated and restored, but many other areas have not been done and they are thick and choked with small trees and undergrowth. This is a critical wildfire risk. The Brian Head fire demonstrated beyond question the need to reduce fire risks. Substantially more forest restoration is necessary on the Dixie National Forest.

8. I call to your attention efforts in the Coconino National Forest to reduce wildfire risks and restore the forest. This has been going on for years after some devastating fires that threatened watersheds and caused massive flooding. Coconino National Forest, Coconino County, the City of Flagstaff and others are participating in these collaborative efforts. I also call to your attention the efforts of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/4fri>

<https://coconino.az.gov/2083/Forest-Restoration>

9. I also call to your attention the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University. The Institute has done many research studies showing the benefits of forest restoration.

<https://eri.nau.edu/>

10. It is of the utmost importance that the Forest Service restore fire-adopted ecosystems in the Dixie National Forest. The notice letter states that "[t]here is a need to take action at a[n] . . . increased pace to improve the health and resiliency of vegetation communities and habitat in the fire-dependent ecosystems on the Dixie National Forest . . . ." For what have you been waiting?