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Title:

Comments: [External Email]Antelope and Tennant Fire Project

[External Email]

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Dear Project Leader Lisa Bousfield,

Dear Supervisor Smith and Project Leader Bousfield,

The Medicine Lake Highlands are one of the most spectacular, geologically diverse and culturally significant places in the nation. The proposed Antelope Tennant project, that includes over 20,000 acres of commercial logging with heavy equipment and 8 miles of road construction on recovering post-fire soils, would be devastating to this special area. Post-fire logging does not contribute to the recovery of forest ecosystems. It is undeniable that a strong consensus exists among fire ecologists that post-fire "salvage" logging harms and delays forest recovery.

I am very concerned that the Environmental Assessment does not provide any site-specific information on wildlife, soil, archeology, botany or other resources. This does not allow for meaningful public participation. Additionally, the location, impacts and alternatives to widespread ground-based heavy equipment use throughout the project area is not quantified, documented or analyzed. The area is home to the endangered gray wolf Beckworth Pack, Northern spotted owls, Great grey owls, goshawks, Pronghorn antelope and many other rare animals that have likely already been impacted by the fires. Please re-open the public comment period when the surveys, specialist reports and analysis are completed, so that I and others can provide more informed input on the project.

The remaining living trees and green forest stands are exponentially critical in providing habitat for surviving plants and animals. Please do not remove any living trees, especially as proposed with the "sanitation/regeneration" prescription. Mistletoe provides habitat structure and benefits to wildlife. Heavy handed industrial logging may actually spread mistletoe and would do more harm than good.

I respectfully urge the Klamath National Forest to more fully engage in the stated restoration objective for the project rather than focusing primarily upon logging activities, which would directly and cumulatively result in significant impacts to the environment. Please avoid the significant impacts associated with extensive ground-based post-fire logging on thousands of acres and the construction of 8 miles of new logging roads, retain all living trees, provide the maximum retention of snags and re-open the public comment period when the analysis is completed.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Heidi Merkins

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