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First name: Doug

Last name: Gledhill

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Environmental Analysis leaves much to be desired. It covers land well outside of the Urban-Wildlands Interface, under an assumption that "fuels" reduction is the best way to contain large forest fires, which are naturally occurring in various fire rotations and are made more likely when extreme fire weather conditions exist.

This idea of fuels reduction also includes logging, especially of mature and old growth forests, because they are the most profitable to industry but logging is one of the most destructive to the forest ecosystem and to the wildlife that depends upon those ecosystems. Mature and old growth trees provide habitat, cover, microclimates, sequester carbon, maintain soil stability and the soil microbiome.

Logging creates more carbon releases, erosion, introduces invasive species, destroys the soil microbiome, opens the forest canopy, drying out the forest and requires constant monitoring and remove of fine fuels that regenerate on a yearly basis. It is also an expense to the American people, their public lands and wildlife.

In Yellowstone National Park for example, the park realized small, numerous fires that were naturally extinguished, prior to 1988. In 1988, when, under extreme fire weather conditions, 1.4 million acres were burnt, put out by nature, when atmospheric conditions changed. The resultant snag forest continues to this day, providing habitat to numerous species within the park.

The Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest is critically needed to provide and sustain wildlife populations in this era of poly crises, that the natural world is facing today. It would be nice to see the Forest Service embrace a paradigm shift that considers ecological health over logging and other managerial techniques that will compromise the ecology of the forest.

I believe the Forest Service should conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement I.A.W. applicable federal laws. It should prohibit "fuel reduction techniques" in sensitive areas, roadless areas and recommended Wilderness, and give greater consideration to wildlife and their needs.