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First name: Carol

Last name: Beckman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thanks for working on this. Fire mitigation is important work and badly needed.

When planning the specifics of where and how and which trees to remove, it is important to consider not inadvertently opening up routes that people can use to take vehicles where they should not go. Thinning trees and removing brush can unintentionally open areas that then lead to off-road use from motor vehicles. Social trails could also be an issue, but less of a problem than opening areas that then allow vehicles access where they do not belong.

The plan talks about decommissioning temporary roads, which is important. But it also talks about using existing unauthorized roads. That makes sense, since that reduces environmental impact. But the plan does not seem to say that unauthorized roads will also be decommissioned and restored. Those roads should also be closed and restored. It would also be good to restore other unauthorized roads that are discovered in the area, even if they are not used for access for the mitigation work.

It is also important to check back after the decommissioning and restoration work, 6 months, 1 year, or more, later, to ensure that the restoration has worked and also to ensure that no one has reopened the old road to use it illegally. If restoration has not taken, or the road is being used, additional work should be done to close and restore it again.

It is also important to plan to check for and treat noxious weeds after the mitigation. Disturbed and newly opened areas are prime targets for noxious weeds to move in. The plan should include checking for and treating any noxious weeds, for some reasonable interval after the mitigation work, until native vegetation has stabilized.

When practical, mechanical mitigation should be preferred over hand work. I've seen a very interesting presentation from a forester comparing mechanically mitigated areas and hand mitigated areas in an actual wildfire. Not only is the mechanical mitigation more efficient (accomplish more for the same cost) but it is also more effective. The mechanical mitigation did a much better job of keeping the wildfire on the surface and out of the tree crowns.

If the area has many dead trees, from beetle kill or some other cause, the removal should prioritize the dead trees. The plan does not seem to mention anything like that. Some snags are useful for habitat, but it would be better to remove dead trees when possible.

Perhaps not to address in the plan, but you might want to consider before and after photos for some PR for future projects. Immediately after many fire mitigation projects, the public objects that it was too severe, more than needed, etc. They don't realize that in a near the scrub oak will be back and ground plants will have sprouted. Take photos from the same spot before the mitigation work, immediately after the mitigation work, then 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc., after the mitigation work. Use those to show the public that, sure, it looks severe immediately after, but give it a year, and it will look great. If you have some from other projects, you could use those for PR for this project. Photos from this project you can use for informative displays about fire mitigation work, PR for future projects, presentations to the public, ...

Thanks for your work on this.