

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/7/2024 4:06:25 AM

First name: Wyatt

Last name: Blankenship

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Dixie-Comstock project would be a detrimental project to an area that does not need the proposed actions taken. I say this because the area has already been burned previously in a diverse and mosaic pattern. This means that there is very minimal threat from any new fire. There is no emergency at all in this area and to propose such a flagrant project is a serious abuse of existing law. I would also add that the area in question is HEALTHY! The USFS position that it is not has been repeatedly disproven, particularly by the recent fire cycle that has recently went through this forest with a majority of trees being lodgepole pine. This is how this particular type of forest evolves.

NO logging should occur in this roadless area. It has been proven by thorough scientific research that logging after a burn considerably damages the soils and the watersheds around it. So, not only does this project increase the probability of mudslides in and around the project area, it also affects the drinking water that the local residents rely on for basic survival. This clear and present danger to the health of the area's citizens makes this project a very useless endeavor. Also, if you step foot into the area for hiking, you will see that the prevailing winds reveal that any fires that may happen will burn from outside of the roadless area toward Dixie. Yet another reason why logging this area makes zero sense.

So, you are probably asking by now, "What can we do?"

Well, for starters the USFS needs to immediately re-implement the 2001 Dixie Fuel Break Project. This approach was a SCIENCE-BASED way to remedy the issue of fires in the area. The agency's own research proves that anything above 40 meters from a structure is totally ineffective. Also, the agency needs to encourage all private landowners in the area of this project and all of the surrounding areas to engage in fire-wise measures on their own private property. This will make it so where the people's land does not have to suffer for the ignorance of the few who decide not to be fire-safe in the area. It is also the best way to save the structures of the landowners.

I will close by stating this, logging has been proven to increase the risk of wildfires by removing the fire-resistant large trees and leaving highly flammable slash behind and opening up the forest to wind which has been proven to drive fires. As evident by the forest fires in North Montana in August of 1949.

The USFS must do the sensible and responsible thing and withdraw this action immediately.