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First name: Michael

Last name: Bald

Organization: Got Weeds?

Title:

Comments: My comment of 16 February 2023 alerted you, the GMNF staff, to the presence of PFAS compounds in pesticides. More recently, I sent a pesticide sample to a certified laboratory in Vermont to confirm that information. I cannot reveal the product brand name or manufacturer due to personal safety and legal vulnerability concerns. Instead I submit that the USFS is obligated to prove to the people of Vermont that pesticides utilized by the agency are free and clear of PFAS / PFOA compounds. This is a simple and appropriate task, since PFAS compounds are harmful, enduring, and inevitably find their way into water supplies. The people of Vermont deserve a legitimate certification that toxins are not being applied to already stressed, depleted landscapes. You completely ignored this topic in your assessment of issues raised as public scoping comments; the term PFAS is nowhere to be found. That is troubling.

It is far beyond time to end the traditional obfuscation and issue avoidance regarding "all things pesticide-related". This is my health, our community water supplies, and the health of future citizens. It is also an issue of ethics. Should the Forest Service wish to employ pesticide products, I and others insist on current certifications that PFAS compounds are not present in the formulations. Get the certification from the EPA or from a certified laboratory, but do not hide behind legalistic boilerplate and "to the best of our knowledge" phrases. I am drawing a hard line on this issue after decades of compromise and complete disregard. Not happening any more, and perhaps we should add social justice concerns as another basis for this comment.

Thank you.