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Organization: Mineral County Chamber of Commerce and WHITE HORSE FORESTRY, INC

Title: Board Secretary

Comments: Balancing Act: Prioritizing Active Forest Management Through Local Input in the New Forest Plan
As the Mineral County Chamber of Commerce Board Secretary and Owner of White Horse Forestry, INC, AnnaMarie White, it's evident that the revision of the Lolo Forest Plan by the US Forest Service holds significant implications for Montana's economy and environment. The plan must prioritize active management and integrate local input to effectively address the concerns of communities like Mineral County. Timber harvest, recreation, wildlife management, and wildfire mitigation are vital aspects that must be balanced in the plan. The reduction in suitable acres for timber harvest proposed by the Forest Service is concerning, as it could exacerbate issues like wildfire risk and loss of timber-related revenues. Moreover, the plan's approach to wildfire mitigation in wildland-urban interface areas needs improvement to safeguard homes and public access. Restricting active forest management activities could hinder the achievement of desired landscape conditions and ecological resilience. Additionally, the addition of new wild and scenic river segments must be carefully evaluated to ensure they meet legal criteria and do not exacerbate wildfire risks. The revision process must be inclusive, incorporating local expertise and knowledge to develop a balanced and sustainable forest plan. Ultimately, the forest plan revision is an opportunity to align ecological integrity with economic and social needs, and the Forest Service must strive for a plan that supports multiple uses, active management, and community interests.

Respectfully,

AnnaMarie White

Owner, WHITE HORSE FORESTRY, INC

CANDIDATE SENATE DISTRICT 45