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Comments: To Jay Strand, Chris Mattrick, et.al,

I've looked over the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) for TGIRP and also attended the zoom meeting on 3/27/24. First of all, I would like to commend all of you for the tremendous amount of work that has gone into this. Although I have disagreements, your dedication and professionalism are unquestionable.

I was especially thankful for your diligence in constructing the "Action Alternatives Summary Table" (pages 26-28) for a comparison of Alt B, C, and D. What a help!

Studying the comparison chart is the best way to discern and parse out what I would consider your genuine and good faith response to the original TGIRP proposal. Significant reductions have been made across the board, in all treatments as well as road work. All in all, some 3000 acres have been eliminated from harvest treatments, leaving some 5000 acres still planned for harvest of one kind or another, from clear-cut to thinning to individual tree selection- a far cry, by the way, from those who care to believe the plans are to clear-cut 11,000 acres!

The most significant change though, is the proposal for late successional enhancement treatment to some 3600 acres that are on their way to becoming old growth forest, but not quite there yet (by your definition). In my opinion, this proposal represents a small but hugely important shift in thinking for the USFS. It is a clear and direct acknowledgement- for the first time, I believe- that moving in the direction of expanding old growth forests on public lands is in our best interest. The obvious conclusion is that we need as much mature forest as possible, and as soon as possible, to help mitigate what has become a climate emergency.

And so I want to offer conditional support for Alt's C and D because they are at least moves in the right direction. However, I don't think they go far enough. If you acknowledge that enhanced treatments to promote old-growth forests on 3600 acres are important to mitigate climate change, then climate change should be the priority in assessing treatment options for ALL acreage, not just some of the more mature stands. In the face of the climate emergency, climate science should be the driving force behind all decisions of forest management. There's no time to lose.

I can understand the stress you must experience at times like this working for the USFS. The stress was built into the USFS from the very beginning, I believe, when it was formed under the USDA and given the impossible mandate of simultaneously satisfying environmental, commercial, and recreational interests.

But right now, during these precarious times we find ourselves living in, we need a fundamental shift in the direction of how our forests are managed. TGIRP could be the example in pointing the way- possibly even as a pilot project-with the right leadership and political will, and professionals like you to do the job.