

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/12/2024 4:55:12 PM

First name: Karen

Last name: Cochran

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Service,

I have lived in Park County for almost 30 yrs. I am writing as a very concerned citizen about the proposed Cooke City Fuels and Forest Health Project. I am convinced that the proposed plan would not create a healthier forest or decrease risk of wildfire...nor is even a proven scientific strategy for sustaining healthy forests.

From what I understand from friends who live in Cooke City and Silver Gate, their concern is very high as well.

They have the history of industrial mining in a tourist town and know about 'well intended' consequences. At this point with our understanding of the importance of healthy forests and the role that play in a changing climate, we need to be practicing proven scientific strategies for healthier forests.

From what I have read and learned from my work on climate change, science has shown that the most effective way to protect structures, residence and the public is to create defensible space at the residence first. No amount of tree removal in the surrounding forest will keep a home from igniting that is crowded with growth and vulnerable to sparks...which can be carried by the wind for miles ahead of the burning trees.

Some years ago, my husband and I applied for a grant from the US Dept of Agriculture to use off-duty firefighters to assess our property for fire hazard and then clear only the dead trees and underbrush by cutting them and putting them thru a very large 'mulcher' that were especially brought in to broadcast the mulch from the dead trees on to the ground. It provided a great bed for animals, who loved the new spaces, and made it possible to walk thru the forest because the undergrowth was gone. It was so successful that several neighbors also did the same program and were also very pleased. Dead trees and underbrush that was so concerning as a fire hazard was reduced dramatically. But healthy trees were not logged.

I do not see logging as a deterrent for-round tourist spot. Destroying a forest, especially a section in the Beartooth, is a grave mistake.