

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2024 5:04:58 PM

First name: Maria Louise Morandi

Last name: Long Zwicker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: It is my understanding that the U.S. Forest Service has moved forward a massive burning project for the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests in California that covers 2.4 million acres-including all 866,741 acres of designated Wilderness on both national forests! The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has now been completed and public comment is requested . Due to massive public outcry against the original proposal, the agency has included Alternative C in the draft EA-the Wilderness Exclusion Alternative.

Under Alternative C, the Forest Service would exclude all designated Wilderness from the burning project plus the recommended Monarch Wilderness-South addition-a total of 871,472 acres.).

Unfortunately, Alternative C is not the Forest Service's preferred Proposed Action. Since this is the case I wish to comment again to protect these wilderness gems from the tree cutting, burning, and manipulation that the agency wants to do.

While it is recognized that fire has played, and continues to play, an important ecological role in these Wildernesses, the Forest Service proposal represents a huge human-driven manipulation of Wilderness that is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the 1964 Wilderness Act. In fact, the Forest Service is even proposing to ignite some fires in Wilderness using helicopters and drones!

From a wilderness perspective, it is far better to allow natural, lightning-caused fire to play its role, rather than to invade Wilderness to cut down "undesirable" trees and burn forests based on human wishes and desires.

I strongly and very adamantly urge the agency to spare these crown jewels of the National Wilderness Preservation System from its misguided cutting and burning plans and recommend the following instead:

I support Alternative C, the Wilderness Exclusion Alternative. The Forest Service should exclude all designated and recommended Wildernesses from its proposed cutting and burning plans for the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests in order to comply with the Wilderness Act.

The Forest Service should also add the Moses Mountain Recommended Wilderness to be included in the Alternative C.

The agency should instead allow natural, lightning-caused fire to play its ecological role in designated and recommended Wilderness on the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,