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Comments: I write as someone who has hiked through much of these national forests and several of the Designated Wilderness Areas within them, so I know well the wild landscapes they encompass. I also know what Wilderness designation by Congress is supposed to mean. Wilderness Areas are to be left alone by humans, places where natural processes hold sway without manipulation by people, including employees of responsible government agencies.

I have a hard time imagining a proposed action that would more obviously that criterion than this one. There is only one alternative offered that is acceptable for proceeding with this proposal and that is Alternative C, which would exempt Wilderness Areas from the planned treatments. That should be the preferred alternative if the Forest Service took its responsibilities under the Wilderness Act seriously. There should be no widespread cutting of trees and no extensive starting of fires within Wilderness. And, of course, no use of helicopters or other mechanized equipment to carry out such measures or other steps that that are incompatible with the purposes of Wilderness designation.

I think that the Forest Service should similarly protect recommended wilderness from such heavy handed manipulation. Please add the Moses Mountain recommended wilderness to the exclusions in Alternative C.

I realize that fire as played a significant role in shaping the composition and ecology of forests in the Sierra Nevada and elsewhere. I find it ironic that I have in the past tried to encourage agencies to ease up on the goal of suppressing all fires and now must resist its desire to set more fires. But I can accept allowing naturally started fires within Wilderness or that cross into Wilderness to burn. Or even in other places.

To summarize, I call on the Forest Service to adopt Alternative C (with recommended wilderness also excluded) and instead allow naturally occurring fires to burn in Wilderness.