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Comments: Hello public lands stewards,

Intensive management, including prescribed burning is not allowable legally in designated wilderness areas as the law was originally intended nor should it be allowed even if the goal is to restore fire, an ecosystem process. Fire will inevitably come into these areas due to lightning or from human ignitions which is what has been happening in the wilderness areas that I am familiar with in southern Oregon and northern California. The impact of conducting a prescribed burn such as digging lines and manipulating vegetation is clearly not compatible with wilderness designation.

The purported need for humans to prescribe burn in wilderness is highly overstated. The wildfires that have burned in wilderness areas that I am familiar with such as in the Trinity Alps, Marble Mountains, southern Oregon Cascades (Sky Lakes WA, Crater Lk. NP, Thielsen WA) in the last decade or two have been mixed severity fires which is in line with the historic fire regimes of these regions. Recovery of native early seral plant communities has been profound in all areas that I have seen where fire was moderate to severe. Biodiversity in the severely burned areas within wilderness appears to be higher than or equal to areas that didn't burn or burned at low severities. Late successional forests, particularly in the lower portions of drainages or old growth stands at higher slope positions that have shaded out the understory burned at low severities due to old growth stand structure preserved now by wilderness designation (Stuart Fork in the Trinity Alps and old growth Shasta red fir forests above Caribou Lakes in the Trinity Alps are two examples that I noticed last summer).

Wilderness areas are in many cases reference ecosystems and as such are unique on the planet. They are invaluable for among other things as places to observe the effects of ecological succession and disturbance ecology.

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 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.

Please do not conduct prescribed burns in wilderness areas - it is incompatible with wilderness designation and unnecessary. Keep wilderness wild.

Sincerely and with appreciation to those who care for the land,

Pat Uhtoff

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