

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/25/2024 4:55:53 AM

First name: Caroline

Last name: Adams

Organization:

Title:

Comments: It is with a heavy heart and yet hope for the future of the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests to respectfully urge the adoption of Alternative C: the Wilderness Exclusion Alternative in your forest management plans. In particular, I implore the Forest Service to exclude all designated and recommended Wildernesses from its proposed cutting and burning plans, in full compliance with the Wilderness Act of 1964. Moreover, I request the inclusion of Moses Mountain Recommended Wilderness in Alternative C, sparing these vital landscapes from the undue intrusion of human-driven manipulation.

As stewards of these crown jewels of the National Wilderness Preservation System, it is incumbent upon the Forest Service to ensure that its management practices respect both the letter and spirit of the Wilderness Act. This landmark law envisions wilderness areas as places "where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." If you see any car ad or ad for a vacation, you can see that people long for the beauty, majesty, and peace of the wilderness. Without it, I wonder if life is worth living.

The Act underscores a hands-off approach that prioritizes the preservation of the natural, wild character of these lands, and yet, the proposed plan threatens to undermine this fundamental principle by allowing invasive and aggressive human intervention through cutting, burning, and even the intentional ignition of fires using helicopters and drones.

While it is well understood that fire is an essential ecological process, particularly in these fire-adapted ecosystems, the use of controlled burns and tree cutting in Wilderness areas represents a profound departure from the natural, self-willed character these areas are meant to maintain. Allowing natural, lightning-caused fires to play their ecological role offers a more balanced and truly wilderness-compatible approach. This is the kind of fire management that aligns with both ecological science and the enduring intent of the Wilderness Act.

The notion that helicopters or drones might be used to ignite fires in Wilderness areas is especially troubling, as it flagrantly disregards the Wilderness Act's mandate against motorized equipment and mechanized transport. This kind of intervention not only violates the statutory framework but fundamentally disrupts the autonomy of these ecosystems, which have evolved over millennia without human interference. The proposed plans introduce a level of human control and manipulation that is antithetical to the core values of Wilderness.

It is far better, from a wilderness perspective, to allow natural processes-like lightning-caused fires-to dictate the course of events in these forests. This would foster a healthier ecosystem that evolves according to its own inherent rhythms, rather than according to human desires to selectively cut down so-called "undesirable" trees or artificially burn large areas. We must resist the temptation to mold wilderness into our preferred image, as doing so erodes the very essence of what these areas are meant to represent: nature unshaped by human hands.

I respectfully urge the Forest Service to embrace Alternative C and protect these Wilderness areas from actions that are inconsistent with the integrity and purpose of the Wilderness Act. By excluding these lands from cutting and burning plans, and by allowing natural fires to serve their ecological function, the Forest Service can honor its responsibility to preserve the wild character of the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests for generations to come. Please consider the ecological, legal, and ethical imperatives that make Alternative C the wisest and most just course of action.