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Comments:
Thank you for receiving comments on the Stone Creek Vegetation Management Project. I am pleased to see among other things that the Forest Service recognizes 1) a future of dryer, warmer summers due to climate change and 2) the benefits of using prescribed fire to reduce the risk of larger, more frequent stand-replacing wildfires.

I am also pleased that the Forest Service plans to decommission or downgrade some 22 miles of forest roads in total. I look forward to learning more about how the Forest Service plans to do so in an effective and ecologically sound way.

With regard to the scoping letter statement...

"There are networks of diverse habitats within the planning area including multiple streams, meandering drainages, mesic and wet meadows, riparian areas,wetlands, and small lakes. Mature and old-growth plant communities surround Timothy Lake and are within the Stone Creek sub-watershed. The largest meadow complex is Big Meadows, located in the north-eastern boundary of the planning area."

…there should be a thorough analysis with explicit, accurate mapping that addresses how the SCVMP might impact these diverse wetland areas. Analysis should also be conducted to determine whether and how the project can 1) enhance wetland connectivity and 2) promote restoration of wetlands and/or meadows in order to enhance water retention, habitat quality and forest hydrologic health through the warmer, dryer summers.

I am pleased that the Forest Service is planning to use prescribed fire while conducting Roadside Fuel Treatments; also that the Forest Service has stated its intention to retain big trees and protect sensitive habitat in the roadside treatment area. That masticators can still be used up to 150 feet from the road edge demands a more explicit analysis of how big tree/sensitive habitat protection would be best achieved along many miles of diverse terrain and diverse forest type.

Again, regarding prescribed or cultural burns, I support incorporating the indigenous knowledge of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs wherever possible, most of all in project areas nearest to the Warm Springs Reservation. With that in mind, a site-specific analysis of how best to apply prescribed burns in any area where prescribed burns have never been previously applied should be in order.

Thanks again for receiving public comments.