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First name: Cathy

Last name: Whitlock

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms Williams,

I am writing to oppose the Hyalite Cottonwood Fuels Project, which is planned for a part of the CGNF that is widely used for recreation. I am a retired Montana State University professor who has studied fire history for much of my career. There is no ecological justification to support logging of lodgepole pine forests as these forests experience infrequent stand-replacing fires naturally. Removing trees and opening the canopy will alter the natural fire regime by increasing the fine fuel load. With climate change increasing summer temperatures and decreasing soil and fuel moisture, open lodgepole pine forests will be more prone to burning than they are now. Please don't unnecessarily destroy a natural, functioning forest that we all cherish in an project that only benefits the timber industry. Thank you for your consideration.