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Title:

Comments: Comment regarding Hyalite Cottonwood Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project #67535

May 30, 2025

My wife, daughter, and I have lived in Bozeman since 1998. We have recreated in the Hyalite Cottonwood forest lands since then. In review of this project, I am not in favor of the proposed actions of the Hyalite Cottonwood Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project #67535. The reasons are the following:

1-I feel that the project will have limited effectiveness for all the impacts it will generate. Cutting down a relatively small amount of the forest, among an "ocean" of surrounding forest will not be effective in mitigating/lessening a fire travelling across the Bozeman Creek and Hyalite Cottonwood landscape.

2-The Hyalite drainage, along the creek, is of obvious concern and should be considered for smaller, focused fire mitigation projects, such as removal of deadfall and dead trees standing. I am not in agreement with the fuels reduction activities along the east slope of the Hyalite canyon, Cottonwood Creek, and Fox Creek drainages to the west of Hyalite Creek.

3-I am not in favor of another logging project with logging roads altering another area of relatively pristine forest ecosystem along Fox Creek and Cottonwood Creek.

4-I am not in favor of the cutting down of big trees and construction of logging roads with remaining timber falling over during wind events. I have seen the work of fuel reduction projects in the Bridgers, Bozeman Creek, and above Kirk Hill and, in my observation, they have not been thoughtfully done. Too many trees have been logged. Remaining trees have to stand by themselves to be vulnerable to wind events. Slash piles have remained for years afterward. The cleanup (burning of slash piles and reclamation of logging roads) from these projects has been very slow to not occurring.

5-The east slope of the Hyalite valley, the Fox Creek valley, and the Cottonwood valley are beautiful Nordic and backcountry skiing and recreation resources. These are resources that would be much degraded from the fuels reduction treatments. I am not in favor of the degradation of these skiing and recreation resources, upstream of the Langhor campground and the divide between Hyalite and Cottonwood Creeks.

6-I do not agree that our new federal administration mandates that our national forests be logged. These are priceless and pristine lands that provide habitat for wildlife, among other values.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.