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Comments: I am certainly in FAVOR of proper management of our nation's forests.

Too little proper, hands-on management of these wild places often results in catastrophic wildfire, with the resulting loss of Nature herself - the actual wildlife as well as the homes, hiking trails, and camping sites of taxpayers who love and respect wild places, teach our children about their value, and rely on these places for a much-needed re-set.

I am ABSOLUTELY OPPOSED to mass CLEAR CUTTING: mass clear cutting destroys everything - the old, the young, the healthy, the sick. The very interconnectedness of living beings is thoughtlessly, NEEDLESSLY destroyed in a mass clear cut. Mass clear cuts DO NOT result in a safer forest; mass clear cuts lead to mud slides. Mass clear cuts push the wild life away. Mass clear cuts pave the way for one thing only: lumber harvests. Mass clear cuts that destroy acres and acres of wildness are a foolish, unnecessary, ill-thought choice.

A healthy forest can rebound from disaster. a healthy forest can sustain habitat for wild animals and recreation sites for people. A healthy forest should be the goal of proper forest management. Well-thought, judicious cuts of a swath of forest - for the purpose of ingress and egress of Forest Service personnel is a necessary choice.

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a Potawatomi botanist, author, and the director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. In her landmark book, "Braiding Sweetgrass", she writes, "...[mass] clear-cutting [is] a profound ecological wound and an act of insatiable consumption that reflects a broken, non-reciprocal relationship with the natural world."

Suzanne Simard, author of "In Search of the Mother Tree" and a forestry scientist and conservationist who is best known for her research on forest ecology and plant intelligence, views [mass] clear-cutting as destructive, creating simplified, vulnerable ecosystems, destroying crucial tree networks, releasing carbon, and leading to less resilient forests prone to pests, disease, and extreme events like wildfires. She advocates, instead, for respectful, place-based management that protects old-growth and integrates native species. She acknowledges her own shift from logging practices to advocating for holistic forest health after witnessing clear-cut scars and realizing the interconnectedness of trees.

I am in agreement with the philosophies of these learned women. My big question surrounding this proposed action (the Pikes Peak Vegetation Management & Restoration Project) is who is "in charge"? Who is deciding what measures to take, and who is doing the taking? Is this action meant to make an ailing forest well again, or is this a timber grab? Alarmists refer to this project as a clear cut. Lovers of the Forest hope it will be a considered solution.

In his favorite of all his books, "The Lorax", (published in 1971), Dr Suess chronicles the plight of the environment. In the story, the Lorax, who "speaks for the trees", confronts the Once-ler, a business magnate who causes environmental destruction. The story is commonly recognized as a fable concerning the danger of capitalism and humanity's greed causing destruction of the natural environment. The story encourages activism and involvement in making the situation better: a concluding quote from the Once-ler states, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not".

We should all care - a whole awful lot! - about making our forests better.