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First name: Rick

Last name: Larimore

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comment on Bear Palmer Forest Health Project - ProProject with Targeted Safeguards

Dear Mr. Ulrich and Project Team,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Bear Palmer Forest Health Project. I support the overall intent of the project-specifically, reducing hazardous fuels, addressing insect and disease impacts, and improving resilience in a highrisk wildfire landscape adjacent to the communities of Gardiner and Jardine.

Given the use of Emergency Action Determination authority and the absence of an administrative review process, I offer the following targeted comments to help ensure the project achieves its stated goals while maintaining ecological integrity and protecting nearby communities and resources.

1. Prioritization of the Wild-land-Urban Interface (WUI)

I support focused treatments in and immediately around the WUI. Please clarify:

How treatment intensity and methods will be prioritized within the WUI relative to more remote backcountry areas.

Whether defensible space and structure protection are the primary drivers in areas closest to Jardine.

2. Treatment Methods and Forest Structure Outcomes

To ensure the project aligns with longterm forest health:

Please specify the proportion of mechanical thinning versus prescribed fire.

Clarify whether commercial timber removal is anticipated and how it is distinguished from fuel reduction.

Describe desired post treatment forest structure (e.g., canopy spacing, species composition, age diversity).

I encourage prioritizing ecologically appropriate thinning and prescribed fire over broad or uniform removal approaches.

3. Watershed and Riparian Protections

The project area includes Eagle Creek, Bear Creek, Palmer Creek, and Crevice Creek. These are critical resources.

Please detail:

Riparian buffer widths and protections

Erosion and sediment control measures during and after treatments

Restrictions on equipment use near waterways

Protection of water quality should be a core constraint in treatment design.

4. Wildlife Habitat Considerations

Fuel reduction and forest health work can be compatible with habitat protection when carefully implemented.

Please address:

Retention of key habitat features (snags, downed wood, canopy variation)

Seasonal restrictions to avoid impacts on nesting or migration

Connectivity considerations within the greater Yellowstone ecosystem

5. Road Use and Ground Disturbance

Temporary or expanded road use can have lasting impacts.

Please clarify:

Whether new roads will be constructed or existing roads expanded

Decommissioning and restoration plans post-treatment

Measures to limit soil compaction and longterm disturbance

6. Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Given the accelerated process under emergency authority, monitoring is especially important.

I recommend:

Clear, measurable success criteria (fuel reduction, forest resilience indicators)

Post-treatment monitoring commitments

A framework for adjusting methods if outcomes do not meet expectations

7. Transparency and Ongoing Communication

Because this is the sole opportunity for formal comment, continued transparency will be important for maintaining public trust.

Please consider:

Providing periodic public updates as the project progresses

Making monitoring results accessible to the public

Closing

I support moving forward with this project given the real and immediate wildfire and forest health risks in this region. At the same time, careful implementation, clear prioritization, and strong safeguards will be essential to ensure that short term actions produce longterm benefits for both the landscape and surrounding communities.

Thank you for your work on this project and for considering these comments.

Sincerely,
Rick Larimore