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Comments: Nancy Hilding

President

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RE: Benchmark Vegetation Management EA

Dear Forest Service,

I regret I have not had time to read this EA, however the Norbeck Society ,in it's alert on the project, says: "It is one of the worst projects we have seen so far and if implemented, promises to do much ecological and economic damage."

We have long been concerned about the unsustainable cutting of timber on the Forest, the vast road system, the impacts of the aggressive timber program on biodiversity, especially on the goshawk and black backed wood pecker. We see the Forest Service's program as wrong headed, creating a huge amount of regrowth baby pines, that are the next fire risk.

As we have not had time to read the EA and write our own comments, we incorporate the Norbeck Society's comments by reference and adopt them as our own. Mary Zimmerman submitted them on June 22, 2026.

Here's a URL for the John Muir Project 2024 comment/sign-on letter on the Old Growth DEIS: (36 pages):
<https://johnmuirproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Biden-MOG-DEIS-JMP-et-al.-comments-17Sept24RFS-compressed.pdf>

We provide this to you as a reference.

We also provide you a link to view the video of Chad Hanson speaking on Oct 22nd, 2025 to PHAS and Norbeck Society on Forest Fire Ecology - <https://vimeo.com/1130322112>

The topic is Forest Fire Ecology. Dr. Hanson discussed the science regarding the high ecological importance of the unique wildlife habitat created by fire, including patches of high-intensity fire, for many native species, such as the Black-backed Woodpecker. He also discussed the science indicating that the current forest management paradigm, dominated by mechanical thinning and post-fire logging, damages wildlife habitat, kills more trees than it prevents from being killed, increases carbon emissions, and makes fires spread faster, often toward towns, which can increase threats to public safety. Dr. Hanson discussed and proposes a new way forward, one that is better for forest ecosystems, our climate, and community safety.

We hope these reviews by Dr. Hanson will be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Hilding

President

Prairie Hills Audubon Society

