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Comments: I am writing you in opposition to the Akawa Butte Fire Recovery Project.
There are numerous reasons why this is a very bad idea. But first and foremost, the Forest Service has implemented an unprecedented one-week public comment period. This gives people no time to research the project or for the agency to analyze and incorporate any comments.
Secondly, the proposed amount of logging (over 5,000 acres) is shockingly excessive and the number of snags left behind (3-4 per acre) is not nearly enough for wildlife that depend upon trees for food and cover. These are animals who have previously been severely impacted by the ongoing drought and other recent fires. Mule deer, for example, are already in decline and need whatever biomass that is left for winter forage and protection.
By creating clearcuts along 37 miles of roads, any habitat remaining post fire will be decimated.
Thirdly to say that this project will help prevent further fires is just wrong. Logging does not prevent forest fires. Instead, it dries out our ecosystems and damages sensitive soils.
Eastside forests are fire adapted. Given time they will recover on their own.
Fourthly, many species of concern (white headed woodpeckers for example) thrive on dead trees. The perception that they have no value beyond a timber sale (simply logs on a stump), is not just irresponsible but inaccurate. Any biomass that remains in the Akawa fire zone, should be retained. It is the genesis of our future forests.
If you value the public trust, please follow the spirit of exiting Congressional laws (both NEPA and NFMPA) and stop the fast-track process for treating the post Akawa fire. The agency needs to extend the public comment period and to give its own scientists time to see what true, natural recovery might look like - over time. A timber sale in this area is both inappropriate and would be extremely harmful to a very delicate ecosystem.