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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am deeply connected to the landscapes of the Blue Mountains as a long time resident (since 1960), rancher, outdoor enthusiast and business person. I own a ranch property at the base of the Elkhorns where I also manage my vacation rental business. My livelihood depends on the health of this landscape as well as the value of this area to people who want to come here to recreate, hunt, fish and just enjoy the beauty of the mountains.

The proposed Blue Mountains Forest Plan does not support any of these objectives. After reading through much of the plan it appears to me that the new priorities will be logging and grazing. It also appears that previous standards meant to protect larger trees, the cornerstone of a healthy forest, are being scrapped in favor of "guidelines" that can be ignored for short term private business interests.

It is also clear that the current, Trump, administration is intent on opening up more lands to private interests. We need to provide more protections at the state level to insure preservation of our most valuable undeveloped lands. Failing to do this will be irresponsible to both our wildlife landscapes and to future generations. These lands are owned by the public and should not be sacrificed to private profit.

Given the immense problems and responsibilities that the Forest Service now faces with respect to wildfire management along with reduced staffing it seems counterproductive to allow even more roads and human activity within our forests. According to the US National Park Service 85-90% of wildfires are human caused. Increasing human activity in our currently road free forest areas will undoubtedly increase wildfire risk. How does the Forest Service plan to address that increased risk?

Please reconsider the proposed forest plan in light of these concerns. Our children and our forests will thank you for it.