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Amber Ingoglia,

I support and recreate on public lands. It is important that public lands be open and accessible for all users in order to gain the full benefits and what public lands were intended for. I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback for the 54 North Fuels

Reduction and Huckleberry Restoration project and support active fuels and vegetation management within our national forests. I support the Forest Service's proposal to thin overstocked stands, treat hazardous fuels, and reintroduce prescribed fire across

this project area. Decades of fuel buildup have made this part of the Blue Mountains increasingly vulnerable to large, uncontrolled wildfire. Active management, thinning, targeted burning, and follow-up maintenance, is the proven way to reduce that risk before a fire forces the issue.

I support the project's approach to roads: maintaining the approximately 156 miles of National Forest System roads needed to carry out this work, using temporary roads and reopened closed roads only as long as necessary, and keeping the permanent road network

intact rather than reducing it. Well-maintained roads are essential not only for this project's implementation, but for ongoing fire response, search and rescue, and public access to this part of the forest. I'd ask that the final decision keep road maintenance

funded and prioritized so this project, and the access it depends on, can actually be completed and sustained over time.

I'd also ask the Forest Service to weigh the cost of inaction here. Federal wildfire suppression spending averaged roughly \$2.5 billion a year over the last decade and topped \$3.7 billion in 2021; independent research on actual Forest Service treatment data

has found that fuel treatments in this region return \$5 to \$6 in avoided firefighting costs for every dollar spent, with the biggest returns coming from landscape-scale projects like this one. More than half of this project area is managed as wildlife habitat

or big game winter range. Treating the fuel load now, on our terms, is far cheaper than fighting an uncontrolled fire through that same habitat later, and it's the difference between wildlife and huckleberry that recover within a season and habitat that takes

a generation to come back, if it does at all.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and I hope the USFS will seriously consider my feedback and maximize treatment and access on these public lands.

Sincerely,

Paul Baker

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