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Comments:

My name is Mori Struve, Public Works Operations Manager for the City of Walla Walla. We operate the Mill Creek Watershed which supplies drinking water to the residents of the City of Walla Walla. I am providing public comments on behalf of the Public Works Department and our City Manager, Nabel Shawa.

The City is very supportive/appreciative of any and all activities proposed by the USFS to help prevent/control wildfire near the Mill Creek Watershed. The Tiger Webb Project is important because it will help create a defensible space just west of the Mill Creek Watershed reducing the risk of wildfire entering the Watershed.

The City appreciates the partnership we have with the USFS to protect and patrol the Mill Creek Watershed, provide fire response, and fire prevention.

Fire in the Mill Creek Watershed threatens the operation of our water system and will negatively impact the city's ability to provide drinking water to the residents of the City of Walla Walla. Particularly, the threat to the Water System would occur as a result of the effects of fire causing a reduction in natural vegetation that prevents soil erosion. After a fire, soils would be unstable at the surface and would be transported downslope into the Mill Creek. The City owns and operates an Intake Facility at the lower end of the Mill Creek Watershed where water is taken directly from the creek and transported via pipeline 14 miles to the City's Water Treatment Plant. Department of Health regulations for safe drinking water include maximum levels of turbidity. These regulations could not be met if excessive soil erosion were allowed to enter the Mill Creek. It is critically important that wildfire be prevented to reduce the risk of soil erosion impacting the operation of the City's Public Drinking Water System.