

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 4/20/2021 8:43:06 PM

First name: Michele

Last name: Dieterich

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

RE: Comments on Mud Creek Draft EA

Thanks for the opportunity to comment and thanks for your service.

I am vehemently opposed to this project. It leaves wildlife out of the picture. There is reference to improving forage in the purpose and need, but I have not seen good forage in any logging project on this forest. They are just full of weeds.

I fear the implications of the conditions-based process. To lock us into 20 years of whatever the current ranger and supervisor feel is best, flies in the face of science and common sense. Judging from the last 10 years, those positions will change two or three times before the project ends. You must know the forest well to make decisions. Conditions change. This project and concept does not truly take that into account. The actions are the same actions that have been going on for years. The ubiquitous amendments to the forest plan makes this project a rewrite of the forest plan without the required NEPA and public involvement. Old growth is much more than 8 old trees per acre.

This project affects bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, grizzly bears, lynx, fisher and wolverine to name a few. These animals only live in our area. They live very few other places in the United States. We should be doing everything we can to help them survive. They are treasures and we should treat them well.

The Westfork is a key corridor for GYE grizzlies to move into the Bitterroot Selway Wilderness. Bears have been sighted 10 miles east of the project area. There are probably already bears roaming within its high reaches. Why would we build roads and ATV trails to access to those high reaches where wildlife can hide and survive without human intervention and conflict.

I wish that we could get together and put together a proposal that preservea our forests and especially our old growth, improves habitat, and supports wildlife through natural means, proposal that asked people to let wildlife be in some areas.

We should allow the fires to burn. We should focus on helping folks make their homes fire resistant. Fire fighting should focus on the community. There is no reason for them to risk their lives high in the forest. The only thing that really puts fires out is rain, snow, and cool weather. Defensible space and education will truly save this community from the perils of fire.

We should consider biocontrols for weeds and it should be a focus of the Forest Service, not an afterthought. We should not be so concerned with insects. They are part of the food chain. Logging kills birds. The 2020 migratory bird count was fearful. Birds eat the beetles that kill the trees. It is all connected and we cannot pretend that we can mimic natural disturbances by running machines in the forest. We should introduce beavers and decommission roads that are unneeded or that cannot be maintained.

I know that all of you work really hard and care about the forest and the wildlife. We need to really put our heads together and come up with a solution other than commercial logging. We have been commercial logging for over 100 years and the forests are a mess. Maybe it is time to look for a new solution. We could do it if we really tried.

Please abandon this project. It is not the right thing for people, for wildlife, for trees, or for the ecosystem. Let's go back to the drawing board and create something innovative.

Thanks for considering my comments.

