

Community Protection- Central and West Slope

Comments submitted to Plumas National Forest on Sunday July 16, 2023

How did PNF go from the Dixie-proven, good work that was done in Genesee to this proposed raping and pillaging in less than a decade? There's a huge difference between hand cutting trees up to 10" dbh and mechanical thinning over 30" dbh! I guess that's the only way to insect- and fire-proof the forest. You can just clear cut, followed by massive burning every few years, or just nuke it all with herbicide. The problem is that the town-destroying fires are driven mostly by weather and climate and the proposed project aims to emit massive amounts of greenhouse gas while decreasing the ability of the forest to capture and store carbon, which will help worsen the impact of weather on fire behavior.

The hundreds of pages in the EA describe a convoluted plan, which appears to be meaningless because the public noticing states that "Due to the critical and time-sensitive nature of the proposed action, the Forest may elect to seek an Emergency Situation Determination (ESD), alternative arrangements (36 CFR 220.4(b)(2)), or use other emergency authorities to expedite implementation of all or portions of these projects." What the hell are you even proposing?

There needs to be an alternative that prescribes hand thinning up to 10" dbh, pile burning, and under-burning in the vicinity of communities, exactly like what we proposed and completed in The Genesee Valley Fire Restoration Plan (2016). You [Ryan Bauer] were personally instrumental in implementing the work presented in the plan, as well as developing the recommended prescriptions. Indeed, Genesee Valley survived the Dixie Fire, and the great work you did there was validated. However, the proposed Community Protection Project is like night and day compared to the work you did in Genesee.

By calling this project the "Community Protection Project" those living in these communities are thus deceived because they believe that the USFS is actually protecting them. However, the proposed project will not likely decrease the threat of fire in these communities, but it will promote complacency among residents and will not encourage them to harden their homes and manage the vegetation in the immediate vicinity of houses.

This proposed project is truly unfortunate, but of course there's nothing I can do about it. I'm really surprised that so many people that I thought had much better judgement are onboard with this massive forest destruction project.

Sincerely,

David Arsenault