



Ecological Society of America  
1990 M St, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036

May 3, 2022

Chief Randy Moore  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Moore:

On behalf of the Ecological Society of America, the world's largest society of professional ecologists founded in 1915, we thank you for authorizing the Forest Service to use the best available science to use managed wildland fire (resource benefit fires) and prescribed burns (planned fires) in National Forests.

The Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act of 2021 additional Forest Service funding offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to simultaneously tackle the dire fire problem, increase the resiliency of our federal forest lands to climate change, and prepare the next generation of natural resource managers who will be responsible for managing increasingly flammable landscapes.

When appropriate, ESA requests that the Forest Service fulfill its commitment and continues to prioritize resource benefit fire and prescribed burns over mechanical thinning and to prepare the next generation of natural resource managers with the ecological knowledge needed to make science-based, informed decisions for these reasons:

1. **Managed wildland fire increases safety** - Managed wildland fire requires fewer personnel, equipment, and funds, so it more effectively meets the Forest Service's safety objectives. Not suppressing fires that are remote and pose very low risk to people or property frees up resources for fires directly endangering towns and suburbs.
2. **Prevention costs less** - Proactive fire management can be much less expensive in the long-term than firefighting. For example, financial analyses of the Las Conchas fire indicate that proactive fire prevention could have reduced costs 55%<sup>1</sup>.
3. **Healthy ecosystems need periodic fire** - Without fire, trees are stressed by overcrowding, fire-dependent species disappear, and flammable fuels build up and become hazardous. Prescribed burns reduce hazardous fuel loads near developed areas, providing for firefighter safety and structure protection in the event of a wildfire and restore and maintain natural landscapes.

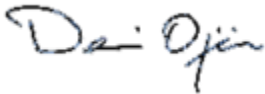
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<sup>1</sup> (Heines, B., S. Lenhart, and C. Sims. 2018. Assessing the economic trade-offs between prevention and suppression of forest fires. *Natural Resource Modeling* 31: e12159. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nrm.12159>)

4. **Better outcomes require a skilled workforce** - Developing and training a natural resource management workforce that is well-versed in disturbance ecology, especially fire ecology, with the knowledge to factor in uncertainty in management outcomes will protect people and landscapes.

Thank you for committing to using the best available ecological and scientific knowledge to manage National Forests by prioritizing managed wildland fire and prescribed burns over mechanical thinning when possible. Please contact ESA Director of Public Affairs Alison Mize, ([alison@esa.org](mailto:alison@esa.org)) if ESA may be helpful in achieving the Forest Service's mission.

Best regards,



Dennis Ojima  
President

cc: Senate Appropriations Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Chair Sen. Jeff Merkley and Ranking Member Sen. Lisa Murkowski