

Sample Email/Letter to the Forest Service on the Proposed King Fire Restoration

Dear Mr. Crabtree,

I am very concerned that the preferred alternative in the King Fire Restoration DEIS includes massive salvage logging, tree plantations and herbicide applications. There is very little effort in the preferred alternative to encourage biological diversity or restore low and mixed severity fire, which plays a vitally important role in the ecology of the Sierra Nevada.

Eldorado National Forest is guided by the Region 5 [Ecological Restoration Leadership Intent](#), which makes this commitment: "Ensure vegetation and fire management efforts are grounded in concern for biodiversity and ecological process both before and after disturbances like fire." However, in responding to the King Fire the Forest Service plans aggressive salvage logging that would exacerbate already declining populations of CA Spotted Owl in Eldorado National Forest. The plan would eliminate habitat for many post-fire opportunistic species which occupy standing and down burned trees. Plans for aggressive tree planting and herbicide applications halt natural regeneration and forest succession. The post-fire Complex Early Seral Forest is among the most biologically diverse and scarce of all forest habitats. Biological diversity is best served by allowing natural succession to occur; it is not served by hastening the return of a conifer forest.

The preferred alternative also reflects a lack of commitment to the expansion of the use of managed fire, despite recommendations by your own specialists. Fires have been suppressed for over a century in the King Fire area, although fire historically occurred at roughly 10-year intervals, keeping fuels in check. As we are faced with combating ever larger and more severe wildfires, we pay an enormous economic price for not working with fire and building a more fire resilient forest. While Regional Forester Randy Moore wrote in a Sacramento Bee op-ed about the importance of fire in the Sierra Nevada, "that it can be seen as medicine for ailing forests," Eldorado National Forest is relying on outmoded forest management that emphasizes timber production, while disregarding the essential role fire must play in ecological restoration.

I support Sierra Forest Legacy's Conservation Alternative, as discussed in the DEIS comment letter. This approach includes significant modifications to Alternative 3, including, 1) increased protections for California Spotted owl, 2) a serious commitment to fire-landscape realignment that mimics the ecological fire regime and fire return intervals known to exist on the King Fire landscape, 3) a reforestation effort, where needed, that moves away from the limited concepts of variable density presented in the DEIS to a system of ecological "cluster" planting based on site conditions and PSW-GTR-220 principles, 4) reforestation efforts that value Complex Early Seral Forest conditions and which are coordinated with fire ecologists and fuels specialists to ensure planting clusters and planting density support increased fire use, 5) limited to no use of herbicides for reforestation and control of native shrubs, 6) where reduced planting does occur, clusters are well-tended to ensure creation of first generation fire-recovery forests which become the seed-bearing trees that interact with future fire to provide the ecologically resilient forests of the future.

I request that the Forest Service takes seriously its stated commitments to enhancing the ecological integrity and biodiversity of our public forests. It is time to move beyond the management of the past, when economic considerations were given priority over other public values.

Sincerely,

Send to:

Laurence Crabtree, Forest Supervisor
Eldorado National Forest
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667
LCrabtree@fs.fed.us

Be sure to copy:

Randy Moore, Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592
RMoore@fs.fed.us