

MacKenzie, Tamara L -FS

From: Mack, Sandra P -FS
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 10:10 AM
To: Suzanne M Vernon
Cc: MacKenzie, Tamara L -FS
Subject: RE: Comment for Mid Swan Restoration Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello Suzanne,

Thank you for your comments. Please send any additional comments to bslrp@fs.fed.us.

Best wishes.



Sandy Mack
Team Lead, Landscape Planning Team

Forest Service
Region 1

p: 406-329-3817
c: 406-381-3478
spmack@fs.fed.us

24 Fort Missoula
Missoula, MT 59804
www.fs.fed.us



Caring for the land and serving people

From: Suzanne M Vernon [mailto:zanne.vernon@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2018 2:07 PM
To: Mack, Sandra P -FS <spmack@fs.fed.us>
Subject: Comment for Mid Swan Restoration Plan

I am not sure where to send this comment. Let me know. Thanks!

Also Congratulations on your upcoming retirement!

Suzanne

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Suzanne Vernon
Compensation Unit Leader

406-754-2369 home @ Condon, MT
253-448-9999 cell ATT

Verizon cell 406-546-4897

zanne.vernon@gmail.com

November 22, 2018

To: Flathead National Forest
Swan Lake Ranger District
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911

Re: Mid Swan Restoration Plan, Public Comment

To Whom It May Concern:

Please add my name to your mailing list. Please also accept this comment regarding the Mid Swan Restoration Plan.

Last week I learned that the comment period has been extended to December 24, 2018. Because of that, I am drafting other in-depth comments with specific references to proposals in named drainages. I hope to mail these comments to you in early December.

I have read briefly the scoping document for the Mid Swan Restoration Plan. I am concerned about the proposed new roads -- some 60 miles -- and the accompanying thinning and logging projects. My initial reaction is that the miles of new roads will cause excessive erosion, they will be expensive to maintain; and culverts will wash out as they have at the higher elevations in the past (affecting fisheries, for example, in North Lost Creek).

In addition, the thinning projects the Forest has proposed will disrupt lynx and grizzly habitat, just as they have over past decades. I am opposed to those disruptions. We have worked hard to protect and conserve those species. Heavy logging in the 1960s through about 1984 on USFS ground in the Swan Valley, along with the accelerated cut on corporate timberlands through the 1990s, negatively affected biodiversity of all species here. From a historical perspective, this new proposal appears to lack any real new or innovative science regarding true Forest Health, or even any return to the old thinning methods where hand crews spent hours cleaning the woods of debris, piling slash, and then burning hand piles to clean the mess. What is proposed appears to be mostly the same old commercial logging, where bigger trees are harvested to help pay the logger for "stewardship" work, in this case described as thinning.

As far as the fuels reductions in the WUI, I understand the concern. However, I believe that private homeowners, the community, insurance companies, the State, and the Counties must assume more of the burden in preparing properties' Defensible Space for the devastating results of wildfire. We must acknowledge that even if you could cut every section -- as the Flathead National Forest is trying with this project -- to appease the conservative political base who believe that logging will stop wildfires, private homeowners might still lose everything in the face of wind-driven flames on a hot August afternoon. Historically, storms crossing the Mission Mountains can produce freak winds that topple trees and spawn tornadoes on any given summer afternoon. Combined with lightning and drought -- whether there is fuel buildup or not -- even yew brush and aspen will carry flames and throw sparks.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my thoughts about this large project.

Sincerely,

Suzanne M. Vernon
PO Box 997
751 Triceratops Rd
Condon, MT 59826
406-754-2369