



April 8, 2020

Olympic National Forest Supervisor's Office
1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW
Olympia, WA 98512

Re: Wynoochee Restoration and Road Management Project Environmental Assessment

Submitted electronically via: nk <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=53124>

Dear Ms. Lau,

The Forest Service is faced with the challenging task of managing their land systems with limited funding, including the management of their complex transportation infrastructure. This often involves balancing the structural maintenance of some roads while making the hard but necessary decision of removing other roads. We appreciate the Olympic National Forest's efforts to weigh the need and risk of each road in the Wynoochee Restoration and Road Management planning area. The existing high road density and natural instability of the slopes in this area warrants the proposed changes in the road system to meet the stated purpose and need of the project; identification of a road system that meets transportation needs while reducing aquatic risk from specific roads. We believe that Alternative B provides an appropriate balance of keeping roads that are needed in the long term to manage and access public lands while also identifying locations where road decommissioning could improve aquatic system health.

As identified in Alternative B, we support the decommissioning of the Harris Creek headwater roads to improve fish passage and stream condition, decommissioning of the 2294640, and the decommissioning of the 2281 segment (from milepost 6.6 to 7.7). We also support the closure of the 2275100 road to motorized vehicle access. Unmanaged, high density motorized recreational vehicle use in this location is not consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives in the Northwest Forest Plan. The proposal to prevent vehicles from driving into the floodplain at this location takes the first step in addressing the degraded conditions at the site.


We support the inclusion of aquatic improvement projects as a component of the proposed actions in both Alternatives B and C. Identifying these projects now facilitates their completion simultaneously with other management actions (such as thinning). This increases the efficiency of on the ground management and the effectiveness of restoration.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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We look forward to working in partnership with the Forest Service to accomplish the aquatic restoration opportunities identified in the proposed action. This work will require substantial grant funding and multiple partners to achieve but will ultimately benefit the aquatic conditions in this critically important headwater system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica L. Helsley".

Jessica L. Helsley
Washington State Director