

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/15/2021 3:36:08 AM

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Comments: I would like to bring your attention to a unique and specific geologic feature which is located within the boundaries of the Nooksack Vegetation Management proposal (project 58218).

This site is located along the Glacier Creek Road, and is marked on standard topo maps as "The Gorge". Very few people are aware of its significance.

Use location (48.8212, -121.8985) for reference, and see attached map and photos.

This canyon is unique for the region, a true slot canyon, carved in stacked marine sedimentary layers that predate the volcano. The closest comparison in Washington is the popular 'Box Canyon' in Mount Rainier National Park. The canyon here is so deep, it cannot be seen from the road nor any potential opening in the forest canopy. It must be approached on foot, just off the roadside from the rim, through stands affected by this proposal.

The upper canyon rim lies within a portion of zone labeled in the overview map as "g36". It includes all the slopes east of the road above the main canyon slot feature. The timber in this zone is second growth, and large enough to be of "commercial value". It is currently slated for "commercial thinning" (not just "stand improvement").

Please refrain from "commercial thinning" along the rim of the Gorge.

A mature canopy here is most desirable long term goal for both slope stability and future access. Several portions of the rim are already affected naturally by slope failure and windthrow, producing brushy openings which are difficult to travel through. Additional loss of cover and runoff on the steep slopes above the canyon may have direct consequences on soil stability. Its important to retain the larger timber where it can re-establish into an old growth pattern from legacy clearcutting.

Commercial thinning of the larger second growth in this stand will cause more harm than economic benefit. With high visitation along the Glacier Creek road, recreation and conservation are the most valuable uses along the canyon rim. This site will serve a greater good with the larger timber left standing.

The action prescribed should be either "none" or "stand improvement only" with mature canopy structure in mind.

Thanks for considering