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First name: Roderick

Last name: Owre

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Although I work for an agency that cooperates/collaborates with the USFS, these comments I share are done so independently.

I am a water resource scientist. I spend much of my working and leisurely time within the national forests of Oregon, Washington & California. I sincerely believe the natural features in this region are most sacred. The USFS should not dismantle NEPA nor should it dismiss what the public believes, and sentiments we express about preserving ecosystems that contribute to overall greater health. Fundamentally this trickles down to water quality. The USFS plays an active role, the policies and management practices it follows are major drivers and have lasting impacts. It cannot be refuted that heavy-handed projects designed primarily for resource extraction are damaging to soil, water and habitat. Two attached photos dated this past summer illustrate this; heavy equipment operators, contracted by the USFS, detroying vital salmon habitat adjacent to a wilderness area of the Willamette National Forest.

Retrospective summary taken from the Federal Register:

"For nearly 30 years, Federal agencies have worked together and with partners to implement the NWFP to protect the long-term health of Federal forests in Oregon, Washington, and California in the range of the NSO. In many cases, the land management plans within the NWFP area are delivering effective, landscape-scale management, achieving positive community benefits and moving toward long-term desired ecological conditions by maintaining vegetation conditions that support NSO and marbled murrelets, protecting mature and old-growth forests, and retaining and improving habitat for aquatic and riparian-associated organisms."

While I agree that local, small-scale experimental restoration works can be effective, when considering conclusions drawn from some federal monitoring assessments during recent changing conditions - mainly rate, intensity and extent of wildfire occurrence - extrapolations with projections (made in the name of adaptive management) using select species at short-range periods will be regrettably misguided in the long term. They are rarely successful when inhabitant life cycles of key biota span far greater lengths of time. Measures should be guided by critically evaluating needs for biodiversity using conditions that include longer-term climate and disturbance patterns for greater resilience.

Attachment-Figure/Image: 14185600_20230724_1.JPG; photo of heavy equipment in stream

Attachment-Figure/Image: 14185600_20240723_2.JPG; photo of heavy equipment in stream