

P.O. Box 757
Darrington, Washington 98241
January 17, 2017

Peter Forbes
Darrington Ranger District
1405 Emens
Darrington, Washington 98241

Dear Mr. Forbes,

The Environmental Assessment for the Gold Basin Landslide addresses many concerns with the installation of the live crib structure, but very little about what the end result will be. I request a more thorough review of these issues before the DN is signed with a Finding of no Significant Impact.

1. The EA does not address the effects the check dams will have on the underlying stratigraphy of the area. Specifically with water being ponded in order to settle out the fines, this will cause water infiltration into the ground and possibly back beneath the slide face. Could there be a weakening of the underlying layers causing a massive slide similar to what occurred in Oso? If not, is this based on cores taken of the underlying stratigraphy, seismic study or some other method? What degree of confidence can be stated a scenario, such as the Oso landslide, cannot play out?
2. What does success look like? What have been the outcomes of other projects of this sort? Increase of fish runs by what amount? What is expected to happen in this case? Do similar projects have such a short life span of 10-15 years?
3. Though glaciers do not feed the Stilliguamish, this does not mean it was a clear flowing river. This is noted by the numerous reports dating back to the 30's and 50's reporting on both the North and South forks of the Stilliguamish. Yet salmon are still found in the Stilliguamish. What is the correlation of decrease in salmon populations and the slide? Might there be other reasons for the decrease in salmon populations besides the slide?
4. Is it normal to address a natural phenomenon as a pollutant instead of as background level? For instance arsenic was removed as a pollutant when its origin was found to be a natural condition of the watershed. Why is the sediment from GBL not labeled background?
5. How much sediment needs to be removed from the system for the fish to thrive and will removing 25-30% be effective?

There is a lot of discussion about the mechanics of building the structure and the effects the work will have in the short term of construction. There is little analysis demonstrating the benefits this project is professing to bring about nor a method to quantify the results. Addressing these issues would help clarify the need for this project.

Thank you,

Bridget Wisniewski

George Winters
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George Winters