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First name: John

Last name: Stuart

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Colville National Forest Plan revision

I am a private forest land owner for 40 years in Pend Oreille County and have an extensive background in forest contracting with the USFS and private landowners. During those same years, I have lived a full life backpacking, birding, botanizing and general naturalizing on both public and private lands and nearby waterways.

I agree with the wilderness proposal in Alt. P and think that the Special Use Area in the Kettle Range is a workable outcome for the wishes of many people of different opinions.

I have doubts about the logging quantities in Alt. P. Because the USFS has always avoided trying to define "sustainable" with the required columns of ages, acreages, trees/acre, etc., we really never know what is an ecologically sound cut-level. Political pressure from different groups pretty much defines the cut-level, as it always has. But as a private land owner, the cut-level on the national forest can cause the log prices to drop if too much wood is put on the market at one time. Does it actually help the local economy if the sawmills are glutted and drive the log-price down, leaving hundreds of small private landowners sitting on their hands. (For example, between 1992-1994 we were getting approx. \$500/MBF for DF and WL. Even after the so-called recovery of 2013-2016, the market has not paid more than \$425/MBF and today it is even below that.) This result cannot be attributed solely to the CNF, but a significant future increase in CNF cutting may make a considerable difference. I would like the cutting to remain at the 40 MMBF level.

A modern precedent that has been set within the national forests is the approval of ORV or OHV use. I can see no justification for this at all. With the vast percentage of private lands in this country and the millions of miles of roads already set aside as "sacrifice areas" for highways, roads and motorized use, in general, public lands should not be allowed to be compromised in this way. Since the people riding these vehicles already have legal rights to use the national forests like anyone else with vehicles on the forest roads, on foot or horseback on trails, or x-c skiing or snowshoeing in winter or mountain-biking you are essentially giving rights to their ATVs and dirt-bikes where they deserve none. With the fragility of most of the steep ground on national forests, there really is no place for these machines. Because these machines are intentionally designed to travel on steep, non-roaded areas, that is exactly what the owners plan to do with them. And even if only 5% of the riders actually do this, that is more than enough to cut a significant slice out of the USFS budget repairing the ground and enforcing rules. All OHV plans should be specifically tied to enforcement budgets and if there is no enforcement or repair money, then trails should be closed or any usage should be curtailed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opinions.

John Stuart