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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Heather Conger. I live in neighboring Okanogan County. I am against the proposed plan P.

I feel there needs to be more diverse thought and knowledge in adapting a workable plan for this revision. The draft seems to be written so that unless you are part of the drafting you won't be able to understand it fully without making it your new job to do so. Most people don't have the time or resources to do that. That cuts a lot of people out of the process.

The USFS system belongs to all of us, but I feel restricted in my use and opinions about what happens there. I live on 20 acres adjoining State, BLM, And USFS. I have to say they are not very good neighbors. None of these lands have been managed. They are overgrown, and have been infected with disease and insects. It's disheartening to drive by or hike these areas because of the lack of care.

(RE: Line 96 Insect & Disease) Behind my property is designated "Roadless". It's probably the worst thing that could have happened there. On top of the mountain where the old growth stands is a beautiful forest, maintained by nature. Below however is an unsightly mess created by State and Federal Agencies. Their "Forest Practices" have left nothing less than a mess of dead, dying, and diseased trees. There are so many trees lying down that hiking is prohibited, and passage is limited to a few squirrels, birds and rodents. It's not the idyllic setting people are led to believe. It is just a tinderbox. (97 & 98) Forest Service Regulations are what have caused the uncharacteristic conditions that have caused this.

The Public wants to blame the "greedy" logger, when in fact they have to adhere to Bureau Standards. Right now my neighbor is logging and the standard is to leave only 4 trees per acre!

In the past, local contractors were hired to thin these lands. I don't see that much anymore except in highly visible areas such as the Scenic Sherman Byway. It is highly needed to restore the forest to safe and healthy standards.

(RE Fire Management Line 107) If uncharacteristic fire may contribute to invasive plant species and reduce habitat, why then is there a "let it burn" policy? In some areas last year, the fire crews just corralled the fire instead of putting it out. Many areas burned so that the "natural" fire could restore things.

None of these areas are natural anymore. Once they have been logged, they need actively managed.

(Line 156 Access System) I am also for opening more access to the forest. There are many areas where woodcutters could help reduce the fire hazards. The roads are in a state of disrepair. My road which the forest service has easement through my property for access has not been graded in 20 years. Regulations have made it so the landowner cannot maintain it themselves, yet the USFS won't do it either after many calls and urging from our County Commissioner.

I see money being spent on fancy signs for the Byway, (that are covered for ½ the year) and even moving the fire viewing area, all the while roads and forests are crumbling. The rest areas are also not maintained. Money is spent to put them there, then they are left filthy, some unusable. Wasteful.

(Line 1989) I support Grazing on the Colville National Forest. I have seen firsthand the comparison of areas with and without and feel the cattle are beneficial for forest management. On my personal property that contains a large amount of bushes and grasses, we encourage the cattle to move through to help control overgrowth.

My area has been grazed continually at least since the 40's and the snowshoe hare population is abundant, along with grouse, deer, bear, cougars, bobcat and the occasional moose. Eagles and hawks also use and nest here.

The people in the area haven't seemed to stop any of the animals from making their home here. People have shown to benefit the animals by giving them cleared areas to forage and roads for easier access when the snow is deep.

I am against any additional "Wilderness Designations". The parties involved need to do a lot more work before a permanent solution has been taken. Once designated, there is no going back. So please take your time with this. I am concerned that the draft plan and alternatives fail to address the key issues facing the Colville National Forest.

Please accept this as my public comment on the draft Land and Resource Management Plan for the Colville National Forest.

Heather Conger

Wauconda, WA