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Organization: Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Title:
Comments: Natural Resource Department
P.O. Box 150 Nespelem, WA 99155-0150

Rodney Smoldon
Forest Supervisor, Colville National Forest
U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture
765 South Main
Colville, Washington 99114

Dear Mr. Smoldon

Our comments will focus on Alternative P, and proposed management actions. I would like to start by offering the Tribes support for the preferred alternative (Alt P) with a few comments and requests. I would also like to commend the Colville National Forest for its past work, and willingness to collaborate to move land management projects forward.

The Tribe supports both the General Restoration and Focused Restoration designations, especially on the Tribe's former north half. The Tribe would like to see those General and Focused Restoration areas included as "Anchor Forests" for the northeast region. Anchor Forests as defined in the Intertribal Timber Council's Anchor Forest report are "a multi-ownership land based area which will support sustainable long-term wood and biomass production levels backed by local infrastructure and technical expertise, endorsed politically and publicly to achieve desired land management objectives." The tribe sees active management of federal lands as a critical part of these anchor forests. By maintaining infrastructure and technical capacity, all land management agencies and private land owners will have the ability to respond to forest health and fuel issues in the future.

Active management will help move forests toward a desirable mix of species and structure that will make it resilient to fire, insect, and disease. A Predicted Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ) of 62 mmbf would be beneficial to this movement, especially if these management activities are strategically located to protect primary homes, critical infrastructure, and adjacent landowners.

Additional tribal benefits will be realized with active management. Forest health and fuels treatments will move federal forests toward a mosaic of mixed structure classes and seral stages. Within that mosaic will be openings that provide forage habitat for wildlife. Those openings also promote early seral plant communities, which include many culturally significant species for the tribe. Roads access will also be maintained through active management. Tribal members have become accustomed to the road access, and many elders are limited to roads as their only means of transportation to hunt and collect traditional and cultural plants. All these considerations are critical for tribal subsistence and maintenance of culture.

The Tribe does not support the proposed wilderness, research natural area, or backcountry designations along the reservations north boundary. While we understand the need and desire to have those designations, the Tribe prefers not to have them along the norther boundary of the reservation. The risk associated with unmanaged forests directly adjacent to the reservation is a huge concern. Insect, disease, and wildland fire have impacted the reservation from adjacent unmanaged federal land. If management actions aren't taken to address these issues, they will almost certainly spread to the reservation.

In closing, the Tribe appreciates the relationship that's been developed with staff at the District, Forest, and Regional offices. It is understood that the Forest Management Plan outlines high level goals and objectives. It is also understood that project level details are developed during project planning. We look forward to continuing a collaborative relationship in management of the Colville National Forest.

Sincerely,

Michael Marchand
Chairman, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
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