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Comments: To The Responsible Official:

Comments for Gold Basin Habitat Restoration Project, (Sediment Control Project)

As currently written the draft environmental assessment for this project does not provide adequate information to inform the public of impacts from the proposed project.

There is no analysis concerning the impact of reducing sediment inputs to the marine estuary environment.

If the Gold Basin site is a major sediment contributor to the South Fork Stillaguamish River, then reducing that sediment significantly will have an impact on marine estuary buildup and function. Studies on sediment transport in the Elwha River are showing the importance of sediment inputs to the marine environment. The Qwuloolt restoration project is another example of estuary importance to salmon, other fish & aquatic species life cycles. One of that projects goals is to "Implement a self-sustaining project that facilitates the transport and deposition of sediment and seeds for natural channel formation and native vegetation restoration." What will the impact be on the Stillaguamish estuary? No literature or studies are cited in the Draft EA to justify exclusion of analyzing impacts on the marine environment. The Draft EA is thus critically deficient.

The section on Social Justice is at best cursory. It does not address the cost/benefit of this project. Are there fish/riparian enhancement projects that would provide more benefit to the public at large or the identified impacted population? How was the functional service life of the proposed structures established? The 10-15 years stated is unsupported by any data. Something similar was done at the Hazel Slide on the North Fork of the Stillaguamish; how long did that function as planned? Are there other examples? To properly address the social justice issue, reasonable alternative uses of the funding and the expected benefits to an identified impacted population need to be accurately compared/assessed.

Gold Basin Campground has been closed for alleged safety reasons; how does this project address safety for workers directly on the landslide terrain?

What is the potential for wood debris catchment on the proposed cribbing? Will this direct river flows more towards the campground? Where is a study/diagram of the river flow dynamics pertinent to this project?

Using driven piles will subject the river bed and adjacent aquatic organisms and fish to possibly harmful vibration. Why were augured piles not considered? Or why were they rejected?

The slide area is of glacial era origin, and thus has been inputting sediments to the South Fork Stillaguamish River for something like 12,000 years. How is cutting off that historic sediment source restoration?

Sincerely

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