Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/20/2018 11:00:00 AM
First name: Bruce
Last name: Barnbaum
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Supervisor Kingsbury,

I am sending a hard copy of this email project objection to you at your USFS Everett office address. However, so you can have a copy of it in digital form, I am also sending it to you via email, below. I do not know if I have all the categories required filled in properly, hence my decision to send it as both hard copy and email. I trust you will not be offended by receiving my objects in both formats.

Bruce Barnbaum

Objection to Gold Basin Restoration project

Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest

Darrington Ranger District

Peter Forbes, District Supervisor

Jamie Kingsbury, Forest Supervisor

From: Bruce Barnbaum

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Date: March 20, 2018

I had previously submitted detailed comments about this project. The USFS Darrington Ranger District surely has

those comments on file. These comments, my objection, expand on the previously submitted comments.

My Objection:

Sheer stupidity may not be a violation of any law, but this project is based on sheer stupidity, and, if approved, will proceed on the basis of sheer stupidity.

The geology of the north slopes of the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River at the Gold Basin has produced thousands of years of small, medium, and perhaps large landslides created by the inexorable process of erosion of the glacial till cliffs at that location. Nothing can be done to alter that geological process.

That erosional process has filled many potential salmon spawning sites over the centuries with till, preventing them from becoming the spawning sites they would have been if that geological process were not an ongoing occurrence. Attempts today to somehow quell a natural geological process will inevitably fail because of its inexorable geological character, which cannot be stopped. This is a case of man taking on nature in a guaranteed losing cause.

Furthermore, the downstream geology of the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River presents a further impediment to greater salmon populations in the river. Specifically the Robe Gorge narrows, which creates a segment of river that is so wild and powerful that even salmon have difficulty negotiating that stretch of river to reach calm pools for spawning.

Hence, salmon are dealt a two-pronged blow: a treacherous stretch of river approximately 6 miles below Gold Basin, and a slumping set of glacial till cliffs at Gold Basin. The one-two punch of these geological obstacles have made the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River a minor salmon spawning river. Nothing will change that.

Efforts to sequester small glacial till landslides can slow, or even prevent, glacial till from filling potential salmon spawning hollows in the river, but only if the landslides remain small. In other words, nature must cooperate with man's desires for this project to be of any value. One large landslide immediately takes out the entire construction designed to hold back the slumping till. How often does nature conform to man's desires? What have been the results of man's efforts in other areas to work against an ongoing geological process that has apparently been going on for thousands of years...in this specific case, since the retreat of glaciers from the river valley?

The motivating goal behind this project, that of somehow improving salmon spawning in the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River is commendable. The reality renders it absurd.

Again, there is apparently nothing illegal about absurdity or stupidity. But common sense would dictate that the project should be cancelled because it is a modern day "tilting at windmills" concept that will inevitably fail. Much effort, cost and destruction of the existing magnificent Gold Basin campground forest will occur for no long-term purpose. Salmon will never populate the river in numbers that project proponents predict, or even hope for. This is a project based solely on wishful thinking. It has no future.