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Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the "Wynoochee Restoration and Road Management Project" EA. Having observed commercial thinning operations on the ONF for going on two decades, I remain highly skeptical of proponents' claims regarding their ecological/habitat value. My direct observations of many dozens of thinning units have confirmed that such operations have no natural analogue. Vast amounts of biomass essentially vanish overnight. Engineered linearity is accentuated. Soils are compacted or lost and water quality invariably suffers. Noxious weeds are spread. Carpets of hemlock seedlings regenerate. And new travel corridors invite a host of human abuses. Recent research indicates that our public forests are best left standing for purposes of carbon sequestration.

The Pacific RD has largely shrugged off these concerns, so I'm hopeful the Hood Canal RD will take them more seriously and mitigate as much as possible. An important part of this mitigation will be significant reduction of the road network in the Wynoochee watershed. I'm fully supportive of the road system proposal of alternative B and urge the Forest Service to stand firm with its eventual implementation. Putting unnecessary and/or damaging roads to bed across the National Forest system is a priority that must be maximized. This has great potential for functioning hydrologic processes, improved aquatic habitat, and improved wildlife habitat by reducing fragmentation, migration barriers, and poaching.

I do request that the Forest Service include FSR 2270-300 and its spurs among its decommissioning targets. This network, currently shown on accompanying maps as mostly ML1 status, was originally identified for decommissioning in the ONF's ATM plan that was developed in the aughts. It of course crosses over into the South Fork Skokomish basin and is immediately adjacent to acreage that would be designated Wilderness in bills currently being considered by Congress. Elimination of these 300 spurs would effectively preclude degradation of this nearby, likely future Wilderness via motorized activity.

On a smaller scale, the planned decommissioning of 2270-560 (Discovery Lake) will serve this same purpose. This specific spur does offer a reasonable location for conversation to non-motorized trail.

I applaud the USFS for plainly stating the obvious in the EA: that keeping a vast road system open ostensibly for fire suppression purposes in fact *increases* the risk of fire dramatically, by way of excessively abundant opportunities for humans to start fires in remote parts of the forest. The vast majority of wildfires, of course, are ignited by people. Fewer roads equate to fewer fires, proportionally.

Finally, I enthusiastically support relocating the Wynoochee Pass trailhead to the 2270 mainline road. A non-motorized buffer between 2270 and the national park boundary is necessary, in part because of reports of ongoing poaching of black bear inside the park.