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Comments: As a cabin owner in Gold Creek Valley I support science-based restoration of Gold Creek and the surrounding ecosystem, including restoring the natural hydrology of wetlands where Gold Creek Pond and other former borrow pits are now located, if warranted by evidence in the opinion of professionals.

Our ecosystems and the wildlife that depend on them are in crisis. The main cause of this crisis is habitat loss or degradation due to human actions. The direct effects of global warming are just starting to be felt but are already amplifying the stresses and threats to our ecosystems.

Healthy stream and wetland habitats are the most productive places on the landscape for almost every kind of wildlife, from tiny soil organisms and aquatic insects critical for food webs and ecosystem processes right up to top consumers such as cougar, bear, and elk.

Studies have identified Gold Creek Valley as a key link in the north-south movements of wildlife populations in the Cascades ecosystem. Such migration pathways are more important than ever in a changing climate and maximizing the habitat quality and productivity such places will provide critical support and refuge for a wide range of species.

If we are serious about saving healthy wildlife populations for our grandchildren we must look at restoring and maintaining these places, and at reconnecting migration corridors, as generally the best investments, acre-for-acre, for enhancing wildlife habitat for now and they are the habitats which are most likely to be resilient in a warming climate.

Global warming doesn't make these actions less important - it makes them more important than ever.

Public lands are by far the best places to do this work because they are owned by us all, because actions taken there benefit us all, and because they are the large-scale, interconnected landscapes that wildlife populations and ecosystem processes require. Where we have suitable public lands we should restore habitat and the ecosystem processes - such as hydrology -- that support that habitat.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to own property next to public wildlands have a responsibility to engage positively in planning processes for ecosystem restoration projects, and tolerant of short-term disruptions as projects are implemented. Our public land managers must plan restoration projects carefully using the best available science and prioritize projects as judiciously as possible, but we need to act without unnecessary delay. The factors that stress our ecosystems are not waiting for us.