

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/12/2020 3:03:43 PM

First name: Benjamin

Last name: McKinney

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The epic scale of the North Fork Nooksack "Vegetation Management" Project is a slap in the face to the greater communities who surround and interact with this space--including but of course not limited to outdoor recreation enthusiasts and Native residents of the region. Such a massive, reckless, destructive project is also incredibly short-sighted economically. Forested land is a resource that gives back to our communities in an ongoing way that cannot be replicated or replaced with short-term profit.

In addition to these concerns, the environmental impact of this project would be unprecedented in recent years and as such an EIS MUST be completed before it can proceed. The carbon sequestered in these forests is critical in the face of accelerating climate change; this is even more the case given that state and privately-owned timberlands in the region have been harvested aggressively in recent years, with serious impacts on the ecology and recreation potential of those lands.

Additionally, any new roads in these forested lands would be a vector for invasive species, while fragmenting habitats. Since the reasoning given for disallowing recreational development on federal lands in Washington has frequently been habitat preservation and invasive species management, this is nothing more than a slap in the face to the communities who are trying to advance a more permanent, forward-looking approach to managing our forests.

Thank you for your concern.