

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/18/2020 3:13:44 PM

First name: Leah

Last name: Ford

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello,

I am writing regarding the scale and scope of this project, particularly the possibility of clear-cutting up to 1881 acres of timber in the North Fork of the Nooksack River, a crucial habitat for salmon and other local wildlife.

I grew up along the Nooksack and it concerns me deeply that this plan is being pursued now, a significant change in forest management for the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie Natl forest with little chance for public input.

I am particularly worried about the following dangers that this project poses to the area:

- Water quality: What measures will be taken to prevent degradation of water quality as a result of these management activities? This includes but is not limited to increases in temperature, sediment and turbidity, pollution from equipment, and decreases in dissolved oxygen.
- Fish Habitat: The three forks of the Nooksack River are critical for fish, namely Chinook salmon. Millions of dollars have been spent to restore fish habitat by local watershed stakeholders including Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe in the North Fork watershed. How will this project prevent or mitigate damage to salmon and other fish habitat?
- Climate change: The MBSNF is largely a carbon sink when it comes to mitigating the impacts of climate change. How can this project be pursued to ensure there is not a net-loss in carbon capture potential in Whatcom County?
- Slope stability and landslide potential: Forest Road 31 and Church Mountain have a history of unstable slopes and washouts. How can clear-cutting be compatible with these unstable areas? What measures can be taken to prevent landslides?
- Water quantity and instream flow: The North Fork Nooksack and most of the Nooksack Watershed as a whole do not meet state-established minimum instream flow levels in the summer and early fall. Studies have shown that maintaining and allowing forests to mature has improved water quantity and streamflows compared to areas that have been logged (Perry and Jones, "Summer streamflow deficits from regenerating Douglas-fir forest in the Pacific Northwest", 2016.). What mitigation is available to offset the impacts to summer streamflow if these projects move forward?
- Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet: How will clearcutting on matrix lands and thinning in Late Successional Reserve (LSR) impact northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat? The intent behind LSR was to serve as habitat for these endangered species.
- Introduction of invasive species from roads: The USFS should not be in the business of building new roads as they are known vectors of invasive species and can fragment wildlife habitat.

the public deserves to see that the Forest Service has reviewed and publicly shared all of the possible environmental impacts of this proposal, and made plans to minimize damage to the forest and its future.

Thank you.