

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/29/2020 8:54:46 PM

First name: Jason

Last name: Martin

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is in protest of the North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management project. We are opposed to new logging operations on Forest Service lands along the Nooksack.

I represent the American Alpine Institute(AAI). AAI's mission is "to provide world-class mountain education, exceptional guided experiences and to inspire natural preservation." The Institute provides education, skills development and guiding in rock and ice climbing, mountaineering, backcountry skiing and snowboarding, avalanche awareness, technical rescue, backpacking, wilderness skills and Leave No Trace. With operations in eight different states, the Institute is widely regarded as a leader in the development and distribution of comprehensive technical mountain education, both for recreationalists, as well as for backcountry professionals.

Our headquarters is located in Bellingham, and we have been operating in the Mt. Baker Ranger District for forty-five years. We have lead countless expeditions on Mt. Baker, on Mt. Shuksan, and in the Baker Backcountry. We are deeply invested in the stewardship of our local mountains and want to ensure that the beauty along the North Fork of the Nooksack River is not marred by new logging operations.

We have several concerns about the proposal:

- 1) The Mt. Baker Ranger District provides world-class mountain recreation. Thousands of people flock to the area every year to recreate in and marvel at the profound beauty of the mountains in this part of the country.
- 2) This is a radical departure from previous direction of Forest Service management> It is clear that the impact will be great. It is controversial, will have a negative impact on local communities and on the environment. It is imperative that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed prior to any other action.
- 3) The Forest Service must fully weigh the importance of this National Forest for reducing the existential dangers of climate change to both our regional ecosystems and human communities. Logging these forests will defeat their carbon sequestration potential for decades to come.
- 4) In the face of extensive and ongoing clearcutting operations on private and state timberlands nearby, the Forest Service must prioritize allowing our National Forest to mature naturally for carbon capture, clean water, sensitive wildlife habitat, and compatible recreation.

If you have any questions about this letter whatsoever, please feel free to email or call me.

Sincerely,

Jason D. Martin
Executive Director
American Alpine Institute