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First name: Mary

Last name: Blackstone

Organization: retired

Title:

Comments: I am responding to the call for comments on the North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management plan. I am very disturbed that this project has not been properly evaluated, or even conceived. As a frequent visitor to the North Fork Nooksack and the area near Mt. Baker and a resident of Whatcom County, I am disturbed at this sudden proposal for thinning, clear-cutting, and road building in disregard of the last quarter-century of planning and activities by the Forest Service.

This area is important to citizens of Whatcom County, Washington State, and beyond, as a place of recreation, a source of water, important fish habitat, home to threatened bird species, and a sink for carbon in a time of accelerating climate change. The recreation activities in the area are a source of income for surrounding communities and throughout the county. Degradation of the environment for those activities could have a bad impact on the local economy.

In no way should the Forest Service be relying on assessments done in 1995 to determine the right management of the North Fork Nooksack area going forward. Conditions have changed and priorities have altered.

The Forest Service should be evaluating other options for forest health than clear-cutting, with attendant road building, disturbance of steep slopes with high possibilities of landslides, impact on water quality, etc. Roads themselves are avenues for invasive species; the Forest Service should be decommissioning no longer used spurs, rather than expanding the road system.

I call on the Forest Service to complete an up-to-date Environmental Impact Statement and consider other options to protecting the health of the North Fork Nooksack vegetation.

Thank you for your consideration of public input.