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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mt. Baker District Ranger Uloth,

I'm writing to provide scoping comments for the North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management Project #58218.

I have reviewed the proposed project for the North Fork of the Nooksack, and support many of the proposed restoration actions meant to improve forest health in the North Fork Nooksack River watershed, including careful thinning of dense, young plantations to increase structural diversity, and working to improving conditions for fish and wildlife. Unfortunately the details for whether this project will provide overall benefits are clouded by the lack of details and by added forest regeneration (clear cutting) projects.

Until fairly recently I spent 12 years as an elected member of the Whatcom County Council, and served as the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee for much of that time. The County has spent considerable money and personnel resources in the area of this proposed project, particularly to improve public safety and fish habitat in the Canyon Creek Area. As I am sure you well know this area is prone rain on snow events that have caused major flooding in the Canyon Creek area. In 1989, 1990, and 1995 large debris floods destroyed four homes and damaged a private resort, a county road, salmon habitat, and interim flood control efforts in the lower mile of Canyon Creek in the Glacier Springs community. Clear cutting has been shown to add to these debris flood issues in many areas. It is unclear from the material I have reviewed how clear cutting in the watershed upstream from this area as proposed in this project may impact future debris floods.

I am also sure that you are well aware of all the new research that has shown that due to changing weather conditions associated with climate change our area of the Pacific Northwest is looking at more temperate wetter winters, and hotter drier summers in the years ahead. This issue will clearly exasperate water quantity, water quality, and flooding issues that already impact endangered fish species that depend on the upper Nooksack for survival. Again the details for this project leave much unanswered regarding the broader impacts this project may have on these water quality and quantity issues, and the overall impacts on endangered species.

For these reasons I ask that you hold implementation of this project, or at least the forest regeneration parts of the project, until an environmental impact study is completed that provides the details needed to truly assess this project's overall impacts on our community, and allows all the agencies and organizations that have worked in and studied this area for years to provide you with input to make good decisions.

Thanks for accepting these public comments, and for so much of the work you do.

Carl Weimer