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Comments: I object to the U.S. Forest Service proposal to clearcut up to 1,881 acres of forest near vital salmon habitat: the headwaters of the North Fork Nooksack River in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. As a Whatcom County resident, I am very concerned about this project and its significant negative impact on the forest and watershed. I ask the Forest Service to pursue options other than clearcutting to improve the health of the forest and ask for an environmental impact study.

This area is a headwater to the Nooksack Watershed and a crucial habitat for Chinook salmon - a vital part of Pacific Northwest fisheries, and the main food source for endangered Southern Resident orca. As you know, clearcutting increases the risk of landslides, degrades the water running into the Nooksack, and welcomes invasive species. In a climate-changed world, when we need to focus on restoring forests, it's reckless to cut down over 1,400 football fields of forest - much less without even assessing the impacts before green-lighting the project.

This poorly considered proposal could put the economic and natural resource benefits that intact forests provide at risk, right at a time when we need forests to sequester carbon, moderate water quality and streamflows, and provide habitat.

I urge the Forest Service to look at options other than clearcutting for forest health and complete an Environmental Impact Study.