

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/1/2020 7:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments on North Fork Nooksack Project #58218.

Dear Mt. Baker District Ranger Uloth,

As a lifelong local, I am writing to comment on North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management Project #58218. I, of course, support holistic restoration efforts, which was the original intent of this overarching project. However, I vehemently oppose the proposal to cut and remove trees, specifically the 1900 acre clear-cut within the Canyon Creek drainage. It is irresponsible from both an ecological and an economic standpoint. I believe preservation will always outweigh recreation, but if we're making moves with dollar signs in our eyes, let's consider the true economic impact. We live in an economy that thrives on the hard-earned dollars of outdoor enthusiasts! Don't further endanger our fish and wildlife, but definitely don't tear down our playground. If we wanted 1400 football fields, we'd stay home and sit in our recliners on Sundays, and Saturdays, and Friday nights, for that matter. People live (and work) here, so they can play here. Take away what we love, and we'll find a new place to recreate. The economic gain of an individual outdoor recreationalist may be hard to quantify, but that's because the gain is so widespread, which is also why it's so impactful. Using myself as an example, the desire to be on/in/near the river involves thousands of dollars of purchases that have a positive impact on our local business economy: licenses, permits, gear, gas, loads of beer, even more food, pit stops at hole-in-the-wall establishments that could not persist without local tourism, and, ultimately, the purchase of my home[hellip] because this is where I want to be. Livelihoods beget livelihoods. The trickle-down may be hard to trace, but multiply that impact by thousands of others just like me, and we have a full-fledged river of cash money. And to protect that metaphorical river, we need to protect the actual river by protecting our forests.

Furthermore, how many times are we going to forge ahead with destructive decision making, only to backtrack and pour more even more dollars into reparation before we learn our lesson? Both the South Fork and the Middle Fork of this river system are shining examples of our destruct-to-reconstruct approach. There's no need to spend millions on restorative efforts if you take the right measures to protect the ecology of a region in the first place. The proposed Canyon Creek timber harvest is a blatant act of degradation, not part of a comprehensive restoration plan.

I'm imploring you to reconsider the proposal to clear-cut 1900 acres of precious, irreplaceable habitat in our backyard playground.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comments,

Nicole VanderMeulen