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First name: chama

Last name: archimede

Organization:

Title:

Comments: North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management Project

To USFS:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the scoping for the North Fork Nooksack vegetation management project.

Despite this current federal administration's lack of interest or regard for scientific data or environmental concerns, I sincerely hope the US Forest Service will thoroughly analyze with science and common sense, all the potential impacts of this proposal. If updated data, such as Watershed analyses more recent than 25 years old, are needed, please take the time to study the situation and all impacts, and perform an honest and thorough EIS.

I do have to question the motives for this proposal, considering the administration's push to extract as much as possible from our public lands. Is it mainly a greed based motive - to try to make money from our public lands, with disregard for impact on the ecosystem and people? There is mention in the proposal of interest in creating more old-growth and wildlife habitat. I do believe people who work for the Forest Service have a sincere interest in the health of the forest and ecosystem. But, I find it hard to believe these are truly of concern to the current Administration, and I assume there is a lot of pressure from above to do things a certain way, "or else", even if it goes against all the data and years of forest management already in place.

Also, please do us all a favor and tell it like it is. Cloaking intentions with "forestry speak" only complicates the issue and doesn't foster trust. If "non-commercial thinning", "commercial thinning", and "stand regeneration" basically boil down to "clear-cut", then own that and be honest about it.

Some of the concerns I have and wish to be included in the scoping process are:

With Non-commercial thinning - What happens to the trees which are cut? Left as Woody debris? (potential Wildfire fuel)? Burning it in slash piles seems like a waste and polluting - can it be used for something: ex. firewood cutting, or biomass energy production, wood chips, Etc?

Landslide and flood risk.

Water quality issues for fish habitat- sedimentation, increased stream water temps, and polluted run off from herbicide application after replanting (elevation appropriate species diversity?)

Blowdown - we all know this happens at all edges of cut areas. Please require MUCH larger buffer zones than the minimum required along streams and drainages.

Soil erosion and slope stability from log haul and new road construction.

Habitat fragmentation and negative impacts to both plant and animal threatened and endangered species.

Reducing amount of the carbon sink by cutting the trees. Tree cover plays a valuable role in mitigating the effects of pollution and greenhouse gases, and climate change.

Water shortage issues - lack of tree cover leads to less ground storage of water. And snow melts much faster in clearcuts, leading to less snow melt later in the summer, and lower stream flows.

If the long-term benefits of this forest management project include forest health, species diversity, old growth, wildlife habitat - perhaps there are more creative, innovative, ecological and holistic ways to achieve that desired endgame. This seems like the perfect opportunity to really evaluate how things can best be done, and not do something mainly because it is the most economically feasible for our current markets, with human benefit put above all others. Don't be afraid to do things differently than they have typically been done in the past. Use your extensive knowledge of the forest ecosystem to figure out what should be done to best manage the forest with sustainable and ecological goals, and long term benefits. I do believe this is possible and we can do better.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts. Good luck!

Chama Archimede