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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments on North Fork Nooksack Project #58218.

Dear Mt. Baker District Ranger Uloth,

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

I support comprehensive restoration actions to improve forest health and ecological resilience in the North Fork Nooksack River watershed, including thinning of young plantations to increase structural diversity, blocking off and disrupting the ditching and culverts of unnecessary roads, improving conditions for fish and wildlife, and enhancing recreation site access. This designated Key 1 watershed also provides critical habitat for threatened fish species.

I strongly oppose the massive 1,900-acre clearcut around Canyon Creek that was recently proposed. Canyon Creek is an important North Fork Nooksack tributary known for floods and landslides, and is home to Endangered Species Act-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead as well as bull trout. Nearly the entire area proposed for clear-cutting is classified by scientists as high risk for landslides and erosion, and is therefore designated as a Riparian Reserve where timber harvest is prohibited. Rain on snow events in the recent past have caused extensive damage, costing millions to repair.

Given the extensively degraded aquatic conditions in Canyon Creek, here is a great opportunity to reduce the road densities driving sediment delivery and flooding, and reduce old forest habitat fragmentation (see Canyon Creek watershed analysis). These objectives, which align closely with the Nooksack Integrated Restoration and Enhancement Project, should be the priority actions for Canyon Creek and elsewhere in the Nooksack.

Please reduce the forest road density in deer and elk winter range. There are nearly 60 miles of roads threatening aquatic ecosystem health that should be considered for diversion drainage removal and barricading through this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comments,

Alan Trunkey