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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments on North Fork Nooksack Project #58218.

Dear Mt. Baker District Ranger Uloth,

-- My comment is slightly different from those similar to it. I do not agree with thinning forests. I believe the canopy is meant to hold in moisture so that one rainfall may evaporate only to be trapped by the canopy and keep everything between the canopy and the forest floor moist as the water cycles beneath the canopy in a pattern of rise and re-fall.

I also do not agree with getting rid of existing roads. Just leave them. Everything else below is unaltered from the suggested statement which I'm sure you've seen many of. --

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

The North Fork Nooksack watershed contains vast old-growth forests with more than 1,700 acres of critical spotted owl habitat, the struggling remnant Nooksack elk herd, prime mountain goat habitat, and key wildlife corridors facilitating movement between the Forest, Wilderness areas and the larger transboundary area including wildlands in Canada. 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, there is a great opportunity here to improve large tree and old-growth habitat in riparian and lower elevations, reduce old forest habitat fragmentation, improve wildlife habitat, and increase ecological resilience to climate change (see Canyon Creek watershed analysis). These objectives should be the priority actions for Canyon Creek and elsewhere in the Nooksack, not a massive clearcut.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comments,

Carrie Aquiningoc