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First name: Erin

Last name: Zamzow

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I'm writing to provide comments on the Twisp Restoration Project environmental analysis #56554.

I know how bad fire risks are getting across the West. We've seen large ones in populated areas here in Alaska, and barely dodged one getting out of control in the small town where I live. My sister in Ellensburg, WA has helped to rescue animals from fires in Kittitas County, and my mom in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California is moving out of the area to escape the fire danger. I do not take this lightly, and know it will get increasingly worse until we get climate change under control.

I support forest restoration such as the Mission Restoration Project, in which large and old trees were kept intact while removing unnecessary roads and restoring fire as a tool for ecological resilience, a method Indigenous people across the lower 48 and Alaska have used for thousands of years.

I drive through the Washington and Canadian Okanagon area annually -- except in this unusual COVID year. The Twisp area is beautiful, and I understand that it is biologically diverse, hosting multiple charismatic mammals and birds.

I strongly oppose plans to cut large (>20" diameter) fire resilient trees and trees over 10" in roadless areas, bulldozing trees in old-growth areas, and logging in riparian areas. Fires are often driven by open grassland - removing large trees and damaging riparian and wetland stream areas may do more to increase rather than decrease fire risk.

Please remove these elements from the Twisp Forest Restoration Project; they are not supported by either science or the local community. Protect all old trees (>150 years old) regardless of size and species.

Given the Project's massive scale, scope and complexity, I request you provide appropriate limits and monitoring where "condition-based management" is proposed, and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to assess whether an ecological need exists for careful restoration actions in roadless areas, Reserves, and elsewhere.

Please show how the proposed actions adhere to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest's restoration strategy, and exactly where logging and other activities will be located and why. Environmental review must address site-specific impacts. Fire threats from extensive logging slash will be addressed in the analysis as well as impacts to outdoor recreation interests and neighboring communities and residents from logging-related traffic and other disruptions over the next 30 years.

Generally I request that you work with the North Central Washington Forest Collaborative and Methow Valley community to reduce the Project's scope, scale, and negative environmental impacts.

The Twisp Project has some good elements. I support the aquatic restoration actions including significant road decommissioning, placement of large wood in streams, beaver dam analogs, and culvert and stream crossing improvements. The plans for large prescribed fires and maintenance burns are commendable. With the changes proposed above, the Project could improve wildlife habitat and landscape conditions, and gain public support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Twisp Forest Restoration Project.