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Organization:

Title:

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

I support comprehensive forest and aquatic restoration to improve forest health and ecological resilience in the Twisp River watershed, such as maintaining and restoring large and old tree populations, careful understory thinning-from-below of the younger trees, removing unnecessary roads, improving conditions for fish and wildlife habitat, and restoring periodic fire for ecological resilience.

The Twisp River is a unique and special place for wildlife and many local and visiting people. It provides home for wolves, wolverines, deer, moose, songbirds, owls, salmon, steelhead and bull trout and an array of other fish and wildlife. As such it is a refuge for many species with threatened or endangered populations. It includes portions of the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness Area, the Sawtooth Inventoried Roadless Area, Late-successional and Riparian Reserves, the Wolf Creek Research Natural Area, and critical habitat for spotted owls and other endangered species.

I strongly oppose elements of this proposal including plans to cut large (>20" diameter) fire resilient trees and trees over 10" in roadless areas, bulldozing trees in old-growth areas, salvage logging in Reserves and roadless areas, Riparian logging especially along the valley bottom, excessive shaded fuelbreaks, new ATV routes, and logging in the ecologically functional Upper Twisp sub-watershed, including quality spotted owl habitat. Old growth logging, new roads, increased ATV access, and timber harvest in riparian areas are actions that will degrade this pristine watershed that so many local residents use and appreciate.

These elements need to be removed from the Twisp Forest Restoration Project; they are not supported by either science or the local community and economy. 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.

The proposed actions are in direct contrast to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest's restoration strategy. The local community deserves to see exactly where proposed activities will be located and know how they will help with restoration goals. 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.

I request that you work with local Methow residents and the North Central Washington Forest Collaborative 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.