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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to submit comments on the Forest Service's proposed Twisp Restoration Plan. My name is Cameron Green and I have lived and worked in the Methow Valley for 20+ years. I am a farmer, and a land steward. I have great concerns about the proposed Twisp Restoration Project.

First, I think the proposal is inconsistent with the Okanogan-Wenatchee District's own "Restoration Vision" as part of the Forest Service's 2012 Restoration Strategy. We should not be cutting big trees! We should not be cutting trees bigger than 20" in diameter. The Twisp Restoration Plan calls for being able to cut trees with diameters of 30" or more. This goes against the Forest Service's own science and strategic plan that trees greater than 20" in diameter should be kept intact for forest health and diversity. The Twisp Restoration Plan also fails to provide consistent and reliable means for tracking and evaluating the outcomes of this proposal- especially when it comes to cutting big trees- which is unnecessary and counter-intuitive to addressing the issues of climate change. I would like to see the Forest Service develop a clear monitoring and tracking program, and develop measures to adapt the project over time. We should not be cutting BIG TREES period!

I am also very concerned about opening miles of roaded and currently unroaded areas to ATV use. ATV use areas should not be expanded in this proposal- that should be addressed in the Forest Service Travel Management Plan. ATVs should not have unlimited access to areas of Twisp River that have highly sensitive riparian areas and wildlife habitat. As someone who has lived in Okanogan County a long time, I have seen first hand that many ATV and ORV users do not respect existing roads, and the potential for going "off-trail" in highly sensitive habitat is sure to happen. ATV use does not belong in the Twisp Restoration Plan.

Another area of concern is the proposed "salvage logging" in burned areas that are roadless and/or have special old growth reserves or could be considered for wilderness designation at some point in the future. This proposal fails to take into consideration existing old growth reserve areas, and suggests that logging in these areas are part of "forest health management". As someone who hikes and recreates in the Twisp River drainage, and who has lived through catastrophic wildfires here in Okanogan County, my on the ground experience shows that old growth trees survive fires most often whereas small diameter trees are fuel for fire, and those trees, often growing in dense, thick clusters, are the ones that should be "managed" for forest health. Salvage logging does not "salvage" anything, and often makes areas that have already experienced environmental degradation through wildfires, less resilient and able to rebuild their natural defenses against disease and more fire risk. "Salvage logging" as a management tool should be removed from this proposal. And any potential plans to log in old growth reserves, existing roadless areas, or potential wilderness designation areas should be removed from this proposal. Again, with the looming reality of climate change, the Forest Service should be working to make our forests more resilient and healthy, not less so by pointless logging of big trees in sensitive areas.

Finally, the scope and breadth of this project is huge, and one that will have impact on this ecosystem and our community for many years, and generations, to come. There is not enough space for community input and comment for a project of such magnitude in our forests. The areas of proposed management in the upper Twisp River drainage are at the end of a road, and the idea of logging trucks barreling up and down Twisp River Rd- which already is maxed from so many full time residents and families, makes me shudder. This is a plan that needs more opportunities for comment and community participation. The Methow Valley is full of very smart, very innovative people, and with more room for public comment and conversation, I believe a forest management plan that makes sense for that drainage, and for our community, could evolve. Maybe the Forest Service could look at how the Twisp Restoration Plan could be a model for innovative and forward thinking planning and forest health implementation instead of just going with the old model (that doesn't really work) of extract and destroy.

I hope the Okanogan-Wenatchee District will improve opportunities for community involvement in this plan, remove additional ATV access, remove cutting trees larger than 20" in diameter, remove the potential of cutting, and particularly any "salvage logging" in existing old growth reserves, roadless areas, or potential wilderness designation areas. We need innovative thinking on our public lands to help address the real issues of climate change, not old school ways of thinking that cater to specific special interests.

Thank you for your time and attention to the revision of the Twisp Restoration Plan.

Sincerely,
Cameron J. Green
Carlton, WA