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First name: Rosie

Last name: O&#39;Neil

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear District Ranger Uloth

I have reviewed the recent Environmental Assessment of the Nooksack Vegetation Management Project, and I appreciate this opportunity to share my comments with you. It is fantastic to see that the Forest service developed further alternatives to the original project scope after receiving feedback from the public. In my view, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement should absolutely be prepared before moving forward with such an expansive project. With this further analysis, I would support management of the area that follows the practices and decisions outlined in Alternative 2 of the EA.

While a further examination is still needed as to the impacts of the project, the absence of variable retention harvests and regeneration harvests in Alternative 2 tells me that we are headed in the right direction. Clearcutting practices have no place in the 21st century. The intensive logging that occurs on private timberlands is already excessive, and Public Forest lands are our best defense against the current climate crisis and essential to capturing and storing excess carbon in the environment. We must move towards norms of management practice that focus on commercial and noncommercial thinning treatments to support desired ecological impacts, not clear-cutting and other even-aged forestry strategies. Regarding this specific project, the Canyon Creek watershed has already suffered negative effects of industrial forest practices, like decreased streamflow, threats to salmon habitat, and mass wasting. We cannot achieve your stated objectives, and ensure long term forest health and resilience, using same outdated practices.

Reduced streamflow that would occur from even-aged clearing and plantation management in this area is especially concerning to me because of the impacts on salmon and aquatic ecosystems. These effects would weigh heavy on systems already threatened by intensifying summer temperatures and dry periods. Climate science clearly indicates that the risk to local species and habitats is extremely high, and it is our responsibility to steward public lands with the protection of sensitive and endangered species as the top priority.

My family home shares a bank with the North Fork Nooksack river, and the watershed and forested slopes of the project area are dear to my heart and essential to the safety and wellbeing of my neighbors. As the proposal stands, I feel great concern for the impacts that logging in the area will have on slope integrity, wildlife, streamflow, and the peace of mind of residents and visitors of the surrounding areas. In managing public forests, we must have accurate, detailed, up-to date research to do right by our natural ecosystems. Before moving forward with any proposal for logging-related activities in the North Fork Nooksack River area, I would like to respectfully, and emphatically request that the Forest service conduct a full EIS, engage foresters who can make the most ecologically sound decisions on-the-ground with Alternative #2, and continue to keep the public informed and involved every step of the way.

Thank you for taking these concerns into consideration.

Sincerely,

Rosie O'Neil