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Comments: [External Email]Supporting Alternative 4 on the QMS project

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Dear NEPA Planner Joanie Schmidgall,

As someone who cares about the public forest lands in the Willamette National Forest, please accept my comment on the proposed QMS project on the Sweet Home Ranger District.

The QMS Project proposes logging on 7,800 acres of public forest lands, as well as associated road and fuels management. The stated purpose and need for this project is to produce timber, improve diversity in young plantations in LSR, create diversity in structure and age class throughout the area, and identify and manage a sustainable minimum roads system.

While I agree with some of the purposes of the project, I think the USFS can do better for the forests by taking a more cautious approach that will better address important issues like climate change, wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation. I urge you to choose Alternative 4 with some additional changes to better address these concerns.

I am generally supportive of the goal to restore diversity and structure to previously logged plantations, regardless of the land use allocation. However, I don't believe that "creating diversity in structure and age class" should be used as a justification for intensive logging. Fires, like those that recently burned in nearby areas in the North Santiam and McKenzie, are providing plenty of young forest habitat and structure and additional man-made openings are not necessary. Preserving the rare and ecologically valuable mature and old forests in the project area is a better way to maintain this diversity. Rather than log old forest stands as proposed in Alternative 2, these forests should be protected for their important wildlife, scenic, water quality, and carbon storage values.

Alternative 4 drops the proposed logging in 140 acres of these older forests and focuses solely on thinning previously logged forests. I believe this is a better option as it better protects values that are important to me. And it will still produce 50 to 60 million board feet of timber through timber sales over the next several years, meeting the identified purpose and need for the project.

However, I also urge the Forest Service to go further in analyzing and protecting the carbon storage potential for the QMS area, in protecting spotted owl habitat, and in mitigating impacts to recreation use.

I also think the proposed road management in the project doesn't seem to go far enough towards a sustainable "minimum road system". It only closes 19 miles (which can be reopened later) and decommissions 14 miles,

while reopening 27 and building 4 or 5 new ones. Reopened and temporary roads still have big impacts that are far from temporary. I urge you to focus on thinning areas that are accessible from existing open roads so fewer need to be reopened or built.

Thank you for your consideration.

How can we demand that Brazil stop clearcutting The Amazon if we're doing the same thing here?

Sincerely,

Mr. Stephen Baker