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Organization:

Title:

Comments: [External Email]Limit logging in the Quartzville-Middle Santiam project area to scientifically valid, climate conscious restoration work

[External Email]

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Dear Joan Schmidgall,

Dear Public Land Manager:

?I have had the pleasure of exploring 13 units in the Quartzville-Middle Santiam timber project on the Sweet Home Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest. My favorite for hiking and exploring are the older grove units for the amazing discoveries of large trees, water features, flora and finding signs of wildlife habitat like scat and woodpecker holes. The recreational opportunities the Sweet Home Ranger District provides is a big reason I live on the East side of the Willamette Valley.

I realize that the original purpose and needs of this project is to "contribute to a predictable, sustainable supply of forest products to help maintain the stability of local and regional economies and markets." This goal is based on an out dated Forest Plan and doesn't take in consideration the recent fires that have supplied the local mills with an abundant source of salvage logs or the devastating effects of climate change on our local communities. The mills are doing quite well right now and with climate change making our forests dryer and hotter those mills may be getting a steady supply of timber from salvage logging on an annual basis. Sad, but a very good possibility.

A serious look and update of the Forest Plan needs to take place before the Forest Service follows through with their plan of choosing Alternative #2 in the QMS timber project. This alternative allows for shelterwood with reserves (85% removal of old growth trees) on our public lands. Units 240 (age 117), 243 (age 119), 242 (age 146), 166 (age 117) and unit 172 (age 104)* are at risk for severe timber removal with the justification that this type of "restorative treatment" provided by "shelterwood with reserves" can provide early seral habitat. Early seral forest environments have their place in our forest ecosystems, but not at the expense of the old growth stands. With so much fire damaged area in our forest district, the early seral issue is taken care of. I feel strongly that there is no justification to cut old growth trees to provide early seral forest environments.

In this era of accelerating environmental crises including climate change and biodiversity loss, any cutting of trees over 80 years should be prohibited on public lands. Timber volume can no longer be the primary driver of management decisions in our Pacific Northwest forests if stable climate is to be achieved. Our PNW forests need to be part of the solution to our climate crisis. Not the only solution, but part of the solutions we have available right now. The Forest Service must shift their priorities to preserve our remaining mature and old-growth forests as the priceless carbon stores they are, as well as for their ever-increasing potential to sequester more carbon as they age. Public lands needs to contribute to the stability of our "regional economies", not by cutting down our large old growth stands, but by keeping them intact.

Please choose Alternative #4

Sincerely,

Nancy Mauter