

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/23/2021 8:00:00 AM

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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:??

Please consider my comments as you review plans for the proposed Quartzville-Middle Santiam timber project on the Sweet Home Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest.

This very special area encompassing the headwaters of Quartzville Creek and the Middle Santiam River should be managed for its ability to provide carbon storage, clean water, and recreation opportunities. In this era of accelerating environmental crises including climate change and biodiversity loss, the Forest Service must take seriously your role as caretaker of our public lands. If we are to achieve resilient public lands, timber volume can no longer be the primary driver of management decisions in our Pacific Northwest forests. The agency must shift your 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.

I urge the Forest Supervisor to choose a modified Alternative 4, which would log only stands under 80 years of age and would not employ harmful "regeneration" logging methods. This alternative would still produce 50-60 million board feet of timber but would refrain from any logging activity in the mature forests over 80 years of age that are so crucial to our climate future. Please consider ways to reduce the mileage and impacts of roads in this plan, which can damage watersheds and wildlife habitat, as well as increase fire risk by allowing vehicle access to formerly inaccessible places.

Additionally, the Forest Service should identify units to be dropped from Alternative 4 that contain special features or values as identified in the extensive groundtruthing efforts undertaken by concerned local residents and communicated to the agency in comment letters at each stage of the NEPA process. And, the Forest Service should go further in analyzing the impacts of this alternative to Northern spotted owls and their habitat, taking into particular consideration how much key habitat was lost in recent wildfires, as well as the complete carbon lifecycle analysis for this project. Finally, I ask the Forest Service to refrain from building more roads into these heavily roaded watersheds and focus its efforts on thinning previously managed, young plantation stands that are

accessible from the current road system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JAY RICHARDS

Bend, OR