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First name: Nick

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I am writing to strongly oppose plans to open the upper North Fork Stillaguamish basin in Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest to new clearcutting and commercial thinning. Our national forest is beloved by thousands of people in Northwest Washington and beyond who value it as a place for recreation, wildlife protection, and as a critical source of ecosystem services like carbon storage. We should be managing National Forest lands with these goals in mind, not opening new areas to industrial timber development.

I am the founder of a Bellingham-based nonprofit, Reconnect Earth, that leads backpacking trips for college-age students in Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest every year. We have brought dozens of students into the National Forest to learn about environmental issues, connect with the landscape, and become better stewards of public lands. Healthy National Forests that are managed for recreation, education, and conservation are what make it possible for organizations like Reconnect Earth to fulfill our mission of fostering the next generation of environmentally conscious leaders. And yet, with interest in recreating on public lands seeming to increase every year, our existing Wilderness and National Recreation areas are under strain from increased use. We should be expanding the lands that are managed as protected areas, not opening new forestlands to logging.

I urge that all plans to move forward with commercial logging in the North Fork Stillaguamish basin--or anywhere else in Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Forest--be cancelled, and that recreation and conservation be the guiding priorities for management of National Forest lands. Thank you for considering this comment.