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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment on behalf of the Twentymile project. The basis for forest management should be the maintenance of biodiversity which studies show support a healthy forest.

I'm concerned that it appears on this project we are prioritizing timber sales under the guise of prevention. Labelling a standard logging project an emergency action is a misuse of government authority. Fire, insects, and disease are markers of any wild forest, not a cause for evading analysis and public participation.

Additional studies illustrate that wildfire is not mitigated, controlled, or diminished by either logging or thinning. In fact, these actions, in many cases actually create openings in the forest and increase the fire's intensity and rate of spread, just like making a campfire, allowing oxygen to flow more freely and fuel the fire. This argument was used in 2019, only ten air miles away, in the Orogrande Community Fuels Reduction Project, where in 2022 following the completion of logging, the 200+ acre break did not stop the wildfire that started west of the project.

This project is most concerning as it has the ability to accelerate our climate crisis. Intact, unlogged, mature and old-growth forests are a carbon reserve and one of the most cost-efficient "technologies" on Earth. Logging, including the roadbuilding, thinning, and slash-burning that comes with it, not only pollutes our atmosphere but worsens our climate crisis. Logging is the leading carbon emitter in our national forests, far and above wildfire.

Additionally, this project accelerates our biodiversity crisis. Protecting rare species requires a high-quality "core" habitat and well-protected "corridors" to travel between. This project knowingly degrades habitat connectivity, which is crucial for rare carnivores like lynx, wolverine, and grizzly bears, populations that have been decimated by humans. In particular, the area offers excellent habitat for fisher, a rare forest-dependent weasel that deserves protection. You have the opportunity to put the forest and it's inhabitants above profit and I urge you to think ahead 7 generations and imagine what the forest could look like on either side of this decision.

In addition to forest residents, fish habitats will be harmed by this proposed project. Twentymile Creek is considered a stronghold for Westslope cutthroat trout. Downstream, the South Fork of the Clearwater supports populations of other rare fish, including steelhead, bull trout, and chinook salmon. We still don't have a full understanding of the interconnectedness of Salmon, specifically, to our full lifecycle and we must do more to strengthen protections for this life giving species that feeds the world.

Lastly, I'm concerned with the proposal to burn old-growth. Old-growth forest habitats are defined by long-term evolution outside of human management and under centuries of constant natural disturbances. Human-caused fires do not create a replacement for natural cycles. Attempts to create thousands of acres of elk and deer forage at the expense of rare old-growth forest species is simply unethical. In addition, the 1987 Forest Plans for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests require 10% old-growth forest wide, which almost certainly is not being met with this proposal.

Thank you for accepting my concerns and I hope it provides pause and additional considerations as we move forward on a decision whose impacts could have permanent and deadly damages to our forest and its biodiversity.