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Comments: Having read portions of the Midnight Restoration Proposal, it's clear that the Methow Valley Ranger District has brought to bear expertise and put together an impressive, well thought out and researched proposal. My concern is how well that plan is translated into a contract for commercial logging, and even more, how the logging is monitored.

Last fall, I studied the Buttermilk Restoration prescription, looked at how that translated into the logging contract, and finally assisted Sam Israel, of MVCC in monitoring what actually occurred on the ground in several plots. While the overall plan seemed well designed and took into account a balance of practicality and best science, the contract parameters were watered down and cursory, and gave the logger full responsibility in choosing how to interpret the prescription. In every plot I was working on, the logger chose the low end or below the prescribed range, of trees to leave behind. There was little attention to leaving beneficial clumps of trees.

After all the thought and effort by USFS professionals that went into the design of the treatments, it was disappointing to see how poorly these treatments were executed, and how the Forest Service abdicated responsibility and oversight to the commercial logger.

I have always had, I hope not naively, respect for the expertise and commitment of the Forest Service, and particularly, the Methow Valley Ranger District staff, and what seems to be their well considered plans for forest restoration. I've worked as a millwright in musical instrument tonewood mill that relied on various species of fairly old growth trees, so I have a sense of the difficulties of balancing all the issues and economics of putting together a plan, and putting it out to bid.

But the Midnight Proposal should only go forward with the stipulation that Forest Service staff are on the ground marking trees to leave prior to logging, particularly in areas that are most sensitive or have other habitat potential. And the contract that goes out to bid should more thoroughly translate the well designed prescription that the Methow staff has worked so hard to get right. And finally staff should provide more oversight when and after logging has occurred.

Thanks for all your hard work. I know it's a tough job and wish the economics of forest management and timber weren't so difficult.