Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/9/2023 3:29:25 PM
First name: Dwight
Last name: Filer
Organization:
Title:
Comments: After observing the results of some areas on the Mission Project, I believe there is room for improvement of outcomes on future restoration projects like the Midnight Project. Specifically, a written prescription and how that prescription is implemented on the ground by the logging contractor has proven to be problematic in areas of the Mission project. One concern I have is the number of different prescriptions a contractor may encounter on the same project, and how difficult it is for the logger to bounce between prescriptions and implement each as intended. In "Design by Prescription" the logger is tasked with constant decision making, with an underlying incentive to cut more valuable trees. I think going forward it is imperative that the oversight on Midnight be more stringent than it has been on the Mission.

Another concern I have is the implementation of the ICO concept (Individuals, Clumps, and Openings). An example of this that the Forest Service can be proud of is the Cub Creek units done in years past and how ICO was implemented there. This could be a model for the Midnight project.

In talking with a key employee of the Methow Valley Ranger District, the importance of those in oversight developing a good working relationship with the logging contractors was discussed. This is clearly a very important part of the job. I do have one concern: I believe it is possible for USFS employees involved in oversight to develop too close a relationship with the logging contractors, in such a way that makes it difficult for them to be firm with the contractors when needed. I believe that it is every bit as important for District Employees to develop a good working relationship with the public, and i applaud the District and its leadership for attempting to do just this.

I want to stress what should be the primary focus of this Midnight Project and the others coming up in the pipeline -- that of restoring forest resilience to the effects of wildfire. The generation of revenue should be of secondary importance, and I encourage Forest leaders to make this a cornerstone of all restoration projects in the future- forest resilience to fire first, revenue generation as a truly secondary consideration. If this means some difficult conversations with the logging contractors by those in oversight, so be it .

I am also very interested in seeing the monitoring program (i.e., the taking of plots) implemented in a more transparent and effective way so as to make it possible for the public to verify and have confidence in the Forest Service's prescription oversight. The District's assurances of an improved monitoring program are welcome.

I thank all District employees for considering my thoughts and concerns. Good Luck!