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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it concerns,

I am writing as a concerned citizen who recreates in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest who believes you should prioritize large, old-growth trees and wildlife corridors in your decision-making.

My understanding is that the agency is planning 318 acres of commercial logging in Old Growth Management Areas - places specially designated to provide old-growth habitat for wildlife. This is entirely unacceptable, and those plans should be dropped. Based on the recent legal decision, trees over 21" should be protected.

I understand thinning in the limited WUI areas due to fire risk. However, intentional decisions should be made to preserve big, old trees and wildlife habitat within the WUI. And for the over 60% of the project outside the WUI, protecting high-quality wildlife habitat should be THE priority.

This part of the Wallowa-Whitman is critical for wildlife habitat connectivity, and contains the only mapped Priority Wildlife Connectivity Area in the Pine Valley region. As this forest is already one of the most heavily roaded in the country, I am strongly opposed to adding more roads that would further disrupt the wildlife connectivity.

In addition, an analysis of existing and projected impacts to wildlife habitat must be completed. Units in the mapped wildlife corridor should be downgraded to the lightest-touch option, if not dropped entirely. ODFW has already stated concerns with the existing density of open roads and quality of elk security habitat in the project area, and this project will only exacerbate those issues.

There is so little "wild" left in Oregon. Please prioritize what's left and limit thinning to small, young trees in WUI areas.

Thank you,

LeeAnn Kriegh