

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/1/2024 4:15:23 AM

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Organization: Valley of Giants Nature Tours

Title: Owner/Operator

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Northwest Forest Plan revision. I am the Owner/Operator of Valley of Giants Nature Tours and hold an Operator and Guide (O&G) Permit in the Pacific Ranger District of the Olympic National Forest, and a Commercial Use Authorization in the Olympic National Park.

My business success is built on the growth of amenity migration, as documented by Hjerpe, et.al. (2020) in a study commissioned by the National Forest Service. Businesses like mine, "...can be a critical development strategy for rural communities." O&G businesses are an important development strategy to diversify the economy of our rural, resource extractive economies that will be (and have been) impacted by the reduction in available timber yields in a changing climate. Like this and other documented examples (in places like Escalante, Utah, and towns adjacent to national parks around the country) the yield of amenity migration, and 'willingness to pay' offers increasing returns.

I am aware there are tough budget decisions in federal agencies of public lands given congressional budget restraints. But it appears "forest industry" still equates with timber management, and not the broader opportunities of a more diverse recreation-based economy. We need both; amenity migration should not suffer for the emphasis on forest products industry.

I'm aware that the NWFP does not have a recreation component. But the updated NWFP will inform the individual Forest Plan revisions, which do. I am very interested in having input in the NW Forest Plan efforts and hope to be apprised of any proposed updates that may impact recreation on the Olympic National Forest.

Kind regards

Matt Houghton