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Comments: WEST WALL DEFENSIBLE FUEL PROFILE ZONE (DFPZ) PROJECT

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/wallowa-Whitman/?project=65581>

I am responding to the scoping letter for the above project.

First, let me say it is a poorly done document and does not provide enough information for an informed citizen to make a substantive comment. The initial map, alone, was a red flag. For example, the 77 road was not shown and yet referenced. A new map was subsequently sent out, but failed to show all private roads in the area. There is already an extensive road system in those areas to be "logged."

Second, has anyone from the forest service even walked the area to do a survey of the timber there? Or the roads that exist? Additional logging roads increase erosion and siltation in streams and in this case could lead to serious damage to irrigation ditches for Pine Valley that run along the west wall. These ditches water our hay fields and provide water for our cattle.

Additional roads will increase access to hunters, trappers, and poachers with potential negative impacts to wildlife which are all seen now in this same area with all the motorized vehicles that illegally make use of supposedly closed forest roads.

The ungulates need security and ground cover. There is plenty of open ground already for their grazing needs without the proposed additional road density (5.8 miles).

The statement that "temporary roads would be closed and restored after harvest activities have been completed" is a joke. Go into any logged FS area and know that any obstruction that supposedly blocks a road can be gotten around, through or over by illegal motorized use. The FS does not go back to inspect their closures. There is no enforcement. This is detrimental to wildlife and habitat. And by removing trees within 10' on either side of a road, the FS is only making access easier to illegal motorized users.

Using the "categorical exclusion" is allowing the FS to bypass existing environmental laws, i.e. NEPA. It appears that the NEO, Federal Forest Restoration Program Coordinator for the ODF agrees. In a letter dated September 12, 2023 he indicated that public input would be consistent with the NEPA planning process. It appears that ODF has been ignored in this process.

Logging does not reduce fire risks. The fire problem is the increase in high severity climate-driven fires. Logging, thinning, and vegetative management fail to slow fires at all. The Camp Fire in Paradise, CA. is an example of this. There had been significant logging and thinning in the area that never slowed the fire at all.

What does it take to protect homes in the WUI area? The National Fire Protection Association Firewise work states that the best thing is work from the building/home out. Homeowners need to take steps to make their homes fire resistant and create defensible space around them. This is the most important step in reducing losses from climate-driven wildfires-not logging.

Thank you.

Susan Bolgiano