

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/16/2024 5:41:16 PM

First name: Gabriel

Last name: Newton

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings,

I am deeply concerned about the direction of the Midnight Proposal, as it seems that commercial logging interests are being catered to over the actual health and fire resiliency of our forests. Cutting large trees clearly damages the carbon sequestration capacity and long term fire resistance of the ecosystem.

The Midnight proposal continues to allow far too many exceptions for the logging of large trees. By the Methow Valley Ranger District's own evaluations, large trees are deficient in this landscape and are an essential component of maintaining the structure and function of the forest. These trees can withstand fire and drought and play an important role in storing carbon. To restore old forests on the Midnight Project, all large trees over 20.9" in diameter should be kept. Ask that the Forest Service drop all exceptions for cutting large trees especially in the Late-Successional Reserves.

Logging should be minimized on steep slopes because it conflicts with restoration objectives.

Where condition-based management is used in this project, trees over 20.9" under the exception should be marked before harvest and total leave tree requirements should be met. Firewood gathering should not be allowed in the Late Successional Reserves remaining consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan's current policy.

Instead of the current plan, forest restoration should focus on prescribed burns, thinning of small diameter trees during winter months.

I urge you to revise this plan to be in accordance with the urgent needs of the Twisp River Watershed to return to stands of widely spaced large fire-resistant trees.

Thank you,

Gabe Newton