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Comments: I commented on this project last year and I want to reiterate my objections to the Rumble Owl project.

My principle objection centers around the construction of additional roads. The Swan and Clearwater drainages are heavily roaded and existing forest maps fail to show the true extent of this excessive road building. I object to the addition of 5.4 miles of new permanent roads regardless of their construction or design.

I find it disturbing that the project does not include detailed and easily accessible maps showing the areas affected by this proposal, including road construction.

I doubt that any old-growth forest remains in these areas but this status should be disclosed through the review process. As a layperson, I cannot find documentation within the proposal regarding retention and development of old growth forest.

As stated in my previous comments, it appears as though this project is designed to address the apprehensions and desires of wealthy landowners rather than focus on overall forest health. In particular, the Flathead National Forest has brought disgrace upon itself by engaging in secret negotiations for the sale of Holland Lake Lodge. Property owners to the north need to assume full responsibility for their choices in building ranches in wilderness areas. The Forest Service should not serve as their private gardeners or landscapers.

When I started hunting in the Swan Valley in the early 1990's, my partners described the Swan Mountains as "asbestos" for their resilience to resist fires. As the climate shifts, we've seen events such as the Bear Creek fire change that perception. However, any future wildfires within the scoping area of this project are most likely to burn eastwards and upwards into rocky terrain and away from heavily populated areas.

From a cost/benefit perspective, it makes better sense to do fuel reduction projects on the west side of Hwy 83 and around the Seeley Lake community. Given this fact, along with other environmental issues raised by local organizations, the Rumble Owl project appears more as a provocation than a legitimate forestry project.