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First name: Elise

Last name: Mazur

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am submitting a public comment on the Stone Creek Vegetation Management Project in July 2025 based on my observations from visits to the project site. I am a resident of Oregon and frequently visit the project area for recreation and enjoy the biological diversity present including old growth and mature forests, wildflowers, birds, mammals, aquatic life, and soils. I benefit from the ecosystem services this forest provides including clean air and water, nature based solutions to storing carbon critical for a livable planet, and I recognize the importance of forest products such as timber, as a sustainable building material if the forests are managed properly.

I recognize and affirm that the area under consideration, now referred to as Mt. Hood National Forest, is the rightful homeland of the indigenous people who have always lived with this land, and that the process of forcible displacement of native people, and the displacement of native authority by the US federal government, has not been rectified.

I support the following parts of the project:

*I support the decision to conduct a complete and thorough Environmental Assessment with public comment, rather than to use CE authority to speed through the process.

*The collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

*The use of fire as a management technique.

*The focus on logging smaller diameter trees and protecting more mature trees.

*Thinning along roads where shrubs and trees are close to roads if it will help with fire safety and control where the roads are more heavily used. For example in section 703, an often used road to access some of the dispersed camping sites, on the western end of that road the brush is quite thick and could be a fire risk.

*Decommissioning many roads throughout the project site.

I encourage the following actions:

*Protecting species diversity during treatment. There is a wide variety of tree species seen in many of the plots, and the diversity adds to the function of the ecosystems. For example, in units 1356, 1362, and 2001, where commercial thinning is proposed, there is Douglas Fir, White Pine, Western Hemlock, Mountain Hemlock, some true Firs, and even Larches.

*Leaving old downed trees and snags throughout the project, as these contribute to habitat.

*In the units that have been previously harvested with the shelter log management to leave the older/larger trees.

*Careful protection of wetlands throughout, especially as many of the rivers are ephemeral and may be dry during flagging or harvest and easy to miss.

*Consider not using roads that will be decommissioned for logging when possible. For example in unit 1379, roads 52 and 53, which could likely be avoided by using the main road that winds through the unit.

*Favoring local contractors and using strong language in the contract to ensure contractors are aware the land is being monitored and they must use proper techniques and approaches for harvesting appropriate trees and leaving what is necessary for habitat and ecosystem protection, minimizing impact to understory, and sticking to unit boundaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments and for taking them into consideration.