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First name: Brad

Last name: Burgess

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello,

My name is Brad Burgess,

I am writing this response on behalf of myself, and my brother Jeff Burgess.

We would like to voice our support for domestic sheep to continue grazing on the Wenatchee-Okanogan National Forest under a special use permit that they have had for many years. It's our belief that this permit should be expanded to cover more acreage in the Leavenworth/Lake Wenatchee area also.

We were born and raised in the Plain/Lake Wenatchee area and have lived here all our lives. Our great grandfather settled in the Plain valley back in the late 1800's. The Plain valley up until the 70's was a great resource for lumber, and food production for his family. WW Burgess, grazed cattle and horses on the land, raised hogs' chickens and grew many varieties of produce, grains and hay on the land. Back in those days the families survived off the land.

Over the many years, the Forest Service was a vital asset to the timber and agriculture taking place in the area. Our grandfather, WO Burgess actually worked for the Forest Service. He was involved with building some parts of the Crest Trail before it became the Glacier Peak Wilderness back in the 1960's. WO Burgess in his later years was a Ranger at the Rock Creek guard station in the Chiwawa river drainage. WO Burgess had many responsibilities during his years as a Forest Service employee.

The goals of the Forest Service were to manage our forest, for multiple use, which included timber harvest, mining, grazing allotments, recreation and fire suppression. Up until the 1970's, 1980's the Forest service, and the timber industry did everything they could to put the fires out, as soon as they got started. We can remember our grandpa talking about 2 or 3 guys taking off in the middle of the night to hike into a remote fire, to put it out. Attacking, and putting these fires out was policy for many years. The Forest Service had lookouts all over the forests, set up in the mountains, to watch, and report fires. In later years, they started dropping smoke jumpers into these remote fires.

At some point, back in the 1970's congress passed the endangered species act. We are all for protecting the environment, and wildlife but at what cost? Environmental groups started using the ESA based on bad science, against the timber, mining and grazing communities. As a result of many frivolous lawsuits by environmental groups against the Forest Service and these industries, a lot of good people have lost good paying jobs. Many sawmills, and logging companies have gone out of business, as a result of the spotted owl, and the ESA. Even if the government wanted to bring back sound management for our forest, it would take years to rebuild the infrastructure to handle the volume of timber that needs to be harvested. The marketing of lumber will be difficult, as foreign countries have filled the market void, here in the U.S.A. The Forest Service does not have the funding

to keep the wilderness trails, and high lakes open anymore. Most people don't know that funds from federal timber harvest have built and maintained the bulk of the roads, campgrounds found in our national forest today. Those funds, here in Washington, also funded our public schools.

Fast forward to today, where timber harvest has all but come to a standstill. The Forest Service's new timber management plan is to incinerate our forest. Has there ever been an Environmental impact statement done on the effects these forest fires have on our environment? You will have a difficult time convincing us that all of the smoke, erosion caused by fires has less impact on wildlife than timber harvest, and grazing. The

erosion from forest fires, puts more mud and sediment into the rivers than logging ever did. How many salmon do these forest fires kill every year from depositing mud and sediment into the rivers they spawn in? The spotted owl was the tool used to shut down timber harvest and protect old growth timber and wildlife. We find it ironic that the Forest Service has adopted a new policy, to protect the public by burning our old growth and wildlife. We need a congressional investigation into this fact. It's just amazing to us how wildlife is no longer a part of the equation, now that the timber industry has all but been destroyed. All we hear is how climate change is causing these catastrophic fires. The planet has been changing for thousands of years. The dinosaurs went extinct thousands of years ago. We really would like these college professors explain to us how man had anything to do with the dinosaur's demise. We would argue that if we went back to sustainable management of our forest, such as timber harvest, grazing, and proactive initial attacks, we could limit the size of most of these fires.

We have never heard of long horn sheep being in Chelan county ever. At least not until recently the sheep in the Swakane wildlife area, were never native to that area. They were transplanted in from areas outside of Chelan county. Another great idea lets reintroduce wolves and Grizzly bears back into the area. We would like to see the EIS that support such an idea. If it does exist, you can be its full of politically driven science. We believe the world is continuously evolving. Just because wildlife was historically here or there, doesn't necessarily mean it a good idea to bring them back. Too many of these policies are coming out of our Universities, from politically motivated professors. They call it Science. We need to get back to letting common sense be a part of the management equation.

Grazing permits for many years were one important form of management for our forest here. The sheep and cattle industry have historically grazed thousands of acres of our national forest. Going back nearly a hundred years ago, it was common to see great bands of sheep on Leavenworth, Lake Wenatchee, Chelan, and Entiat ranger districts. They were all over the headwaters of the Entiat valley, Lake Chelan, Wenatchee, Chiwawa, White river, and little Wenatchee, deep into the Glacier Peak Wilderness. The sheep herders kept the mountain trails open. The brush, weeds, and grasses were managed, for the purpose of recreation, and fire suppression. Some may say that the ranchers were cutting a fat hog, by all of this free grazing, not to mention they have always done a great public service ridding the forest of brush and weeds, and fire mitigation. I challenge anyone that thinks this, they should get in the business of ranching. These grazing permits are not free. It takes lots of money, and hard work to keep a ranch operating. This is our food supply we are talking about.

My brothers and I have considerable private lands in the local Plain area, that have benefitted for years from the sheep coming to graze our lands. We don't want the buildup of brush and grass on our properties. We believe that grazing our properties helps mitigate the fire fuels, if a fire does get started.

Lets get back to letting common sense being a part of the management equation.

In ending, please continue to allow multiple use in our forest, and specifically continue the grazing permits for our ranchers, and food suppliers.

Thank you,

Brad Burgess

Jeff Burgess