

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/4/2025 12:02:20 AM

First name: Janis

Last name: Sodt

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a permanent Methow Valley resident who lives adjacent to the boundaries of the Midnight Restoration Project. I have previously filed many comments regarding the planned "restoration" in its various revisions. I recreate within the project area and I have participated in many citizen science projects over the years. I object to the latest plan for several reasons: 1) Some of the proposed treatment area burned in 2021 in a mosaic, with heavily burned spots beside those with understory burning. And yet the maps and the blue tagging does not indicate these areas to be exempt from further thinning activities. Many bulldozed lines have not been treated or repaired and remain as scars or access points for ATVs and bikers. Some marked areas are completely free of undergrowth or logs/brush, but have commercially viable trees for the cutting. This plan smacks of log grabbing for the areas damaged by fire or already thinned. 2) I do not see any indication that the Forest Service or anyone else has studied or reported on potential impact on wildlife from this project. There are endangered species and at-risk species in the area. The watersheds provide invaluable havens and corridors for many species who travel in and out of the Methow Wildlife Areas and the Sawtooths. Those animals have already been forced to move and adapt to previous fires, thinning projects, and the Mission Project. Why hasn't the WDFW been consulted and asked to prepare an impact statement? Data collection and reports of the area do exist. 3) The noise and destruction of our infrastructure by heavy logging trucks and machinery impacted all communities between various thinning projects and the mill on the west side. Those trucks began before daylight in order to make two trips over the pass each day. Our main roads and the FS roads suffered greatly from this traffic, along with the residents. I don't believe that impact has been addressed for the Midnight Project. 4) the "science" of forest management has evolved over the last ten years, with many reports questioning the wisdom of thinning projects as a method to protect human habitation along the perimeters of FS land. Recent studies suggest we save large trees/canopy to protect the soil, preserve lower temperatures and serve as windbreaks during a large fire producing large amounts of embers. Controlled burns without thinning is a method that is not mentioned in the project. And the FS apparently doesn't have the funds to burn the piles of debris that were created from thinning projects in the past. I understand that funding for and monitoring of thinning projects is minimal, but the solution is NOT to sell our old 2nd growth trees in an effort to "manage" the forest. I appreciate the opportunity to "object" to the current plan and respectfully request that the public comment periods be observed after input from WDFW and other reports have been considered.