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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Dear Sir,

The Olympic National Forest is recovering from years of logging from which many parts of the forest have been designated for restoration per the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. The proposed thinning project must be revised. The areas targeted for thinning in the Late Successional Reserves and Adaptive Management areas under the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan must be removed from consideration. These areas are in the process of restoring damaged ecosystems and are already providing an increased diversity of species and the development of a more complex habitat structure. Climate change is real and these legacy forests are an important carbon sink which is desperately needed to curb the acceleration of global warming. The proposed thinning would negate the gains that have been made over the last thirty years.

The proposed 11.4 miles of new roads required to access these stands will deposit sediments into salmon streams and tributaries, provide vectors for non-native and invasive species, and open stands to avian predators, all of which degrade fish and wildlife habitat, including habitat for federally listed and sensitive species. As a tax payer who supports the Forest Service's efforts to save endangered salmon, adding new road structure does not make any sense. It becomes a waste of taxpayer monies and appears to be more of a boondoggle as these roads once cut provide opportunities for illicit activities for which there currently will be no budget to manage. Providing an increased opportunity for crime in our National Forests is not in the best interests of the public that owns these lands.

At a minimum a project like this requires a full environmental impact statement under NEPA. The EA is insufficient. Additionally, I request that if the thinning proposal goes ahead that the Forest Service focus on thinning only previously logged and planted second-growth stands and monitor those stands to see if the expected benefit habitat appears before opening up naturally regenerating forests.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Janet Thompson