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Comments: RE: Midnight "Restoration" Project 63933

I have lived in Omak for 40 years. During this time, I have recreated extensively in the North Cascades, including the Twisp drainage. I am intimately familiar with the area and care deeply about it.

I object to the Midnight Project as being hopelessly flawed:

- 1)The area in question does not need to be "restored".
- 2)The project is a profound waste of money that could be spent doing actual restoration (e.g. closing roads) and assisting homeowners with fireproofing.
- 3)There have been zero public meetings. The USFS has not shown good faith with public involvement.
- 4)No alternatives were assessed. This too shows a striking lack of good faith.
- 5)Midnight ignores many scientific studies contradicting outdated USFS fire doctrine.
- 6)Midnight does nothing to protect communities OR ecosystems, in the long term, if at all.
- 7)The Twisp Drainage above the Buttermilk junction (the subject area) is a unique ecosystem. It is particularly valuable in terms of protection, being a relatively undisturbed highly-varied forested valley bottom (despite the devious USFS-sanctioned timber grab that occurred along the road during the Cedar Creek Fire, and moderate "selective" logging in the past.) Because the valley bottom should have been included in the adjacent Wilderness, it should now be managed accordingly.
- 8)The Midnight EA is not clearly written. However, the USFS has clearly demonstrated locally and regionally what they mean by "restoration", including in the Mission Project. "Treated" areas have been severely degraded ecologically while not being any less likely to burn intensely in fire weather. Meeting "harvest" quotas is the obvious goal of Mission, Twisp, and Midnight, etc., not forest or planetary "health".
- 9)Worst of all, there is no oversight or accountability with CBM and self-policing by contractors.

The job of the government must be to protect the public commons in perpetuity, not to subsidize and enable exploitation by corporate industry. Midnight and similar "projects" should be scrapped.

~Robert Kendall