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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Isabella, and I am writing to express strong opposition to the proposed logging and forest restoration project along the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and in the Skyland area near the Great Bear Wilderness.

At a time when climate change is already intensifying wildfires, drought, flooding, and ecological instability, large-scale logging in ecologically significant and relatively intact forest landscapes is the wrong approach. Mature and old-growth forests play a critical role in carbon storage, climate resilience, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection. Removing trees in these areas undermines those functions at the moment they are most needed.

The Middle Fork of the Flathead River is a globally significant wild river corridor valued for its ecological integrity, wildlife connectivity, and cultural importance. Logging and associated road construction, even when framed as restoration, increase erosion, degrade water quality, fragment habitat, and permanently alter forest structure. These impacts are especially concerning given the project's proximity to the Great Bear Wilderness, where intact landscapes are essential for wide-ranging species and long-term climate adaptation.

Assertions that increased logging will meaningfully reduce wildfire risk are not supported when projects occur far from communities and focus on backcountry areas rather than defensible space around homes. Effective wildfire and climate strategies should prioritize community protection, home hardening, and place-based stewardship, not industrial-scale logging in wildland landscapes.

Although public comment is no longer legally required, the decision to solicit input carries responsibility. I urge the Flathead National Forest to meaningfully consider public concerns and to choose a path that reflects climate science, ecological integrity, and long-term stewardship.

For these reasons, I oppose the proposed project and ask the Forest Service to withdraw or substantially revise it to prioritize conservation, climate resilience, and protection of the Middle Fork Flathead ecosystem.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I truly appreciate it!