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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I'm writing to request that the Forest Service drop the use of the emergency authority on the Austin project, as well as the proposed site-specific forest plan amendments related to increasing road densities, reducing wildlife connectivity, and logging trees over 21 DBH.

I am against this project overall as it will impact such a large area, larger than the Strawberry Wilderness!! Specifically, I am recommending the following changes -

Drop the use of the emergency authority and complete a full public process, including objections, as well as a robust consultation process with Tribes and agencies managing endangered species.

Drop the proposed Forest Plan amendment that would allow insufficient habitat connectivity between mature forest stands, and eliminate commercial thinning within wildlife corridors to ensure essential hiding cover is maintained for species like the marten.

Avoid the construction of 43 miles of temporary roads and the removal of large trees in moist forests, which would further fragment the landscape and degrade the integrity of habitat, including within ODFW's Priority Wildlife Connectivity Areas.

Remove the proposed Forest Plan amendment to reduce satisfactory elk cover and instead prioritize meeting existing standards to prevent big game from being driven onto private lands.

Address the excessive open road densities that exceed Forest Plan limits rather than seeking an amendment to maintain them, as motorized disturbance remains the leading driver of elk displacement.

Thank you,
Karen Anspacher-Meyer
La Grande resident