

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/5/2026 6:56:36 PM

First name: R

Last name: R

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Eagle Creek Project (#68983) in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. I care deeply about the health of our forests, the safety of nearby communities, and the long-term resilience of this landscape. After reviewing the project description and the best available science on wildfire, forest ecology, and habitat protection, I have significant concerns about whether this project will achieve its stated goals.

Thinning and logging may not reduce wildfire risk as intended:

While reducing hazardous fuels is important, many studies show that thinning can sometimes increase fire spread by opening the canopy and allowing more wind and sunlight to dry out surface fuels. If slash and debris from logging are not fully treated, the forest can end up with more flammable material than before. Under extreme fire-weather conditions - which are becoming more common - these treatments may offer little protection.

I urge the Forest Service to fully analyze fire behavior under worst-case scenarios, not just average conditions, and to consider alternatives that rely more on prescribed fire and less on commercial thinning.

Large, old trees are irreplaceable and must be protected:

The east-slope Cascades depend on old, fire-adapted trees for stability, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage. Even when projects say they will "retain large trees," diameter limits can still allow removal of trees that are ecologically critical. These older trees are the most resilient to drought, insects, and fire - and once removed, they cannot be replaced for generations.

I ask that the project include strong, enforceable protections for large and old trees, not just general statements of intent.

Wildlife habitat could be harmed by canopy opening and road activity:

Many species in this region rely on dense canopy cover, snags, and downed wood. Thinning and road maintenance can fragment habitat, increase disturbance, and reduce the structural complexity that wildlife needs. Without clear safeguards, the project risks degrading habitat for species that are already under pressure from climate change and past logging.

The Environmental Assessment should identify no-treatment or light-treatment areas to preserve interior habitat and connectivity.

Roads are a major source of sediment and disturbance:

The project includes road maintenance but does not clearly address whether the existing road network is already too dense. Roads contribute to sediment in streams, disrupt wildlife movement, and increase human intrusion. In many watersheds, the most effective restoration action is actually reducing road density, not maintaining it.

I encourage the Forest Service to evaluate opportunities for road decommissioning, not just maintenance.

Climate and carbon impacts must be fully considered:

Logging removes carbon-rich trees and reduces the forest's ability to store carbon for decades. Claims that thinning will prevent future fire emissions must be weighed against the low probability that any specific treated area will burn during the treatment's effective lifespan. Protecting large, old trees is one of the most effective climate strategies available in forest management.

The project should include transparent, science-based carbon accounting and explain how the proposed actions align with climate goals.

The range of alternatives must include a low-impact option:

NEPA requires the agency to consider reasonable alternatives. A meaningful alternative should include:

No commercial logging, Emphasis on prescribed fire, Strong protection for old trees, Reduction of road density, Minimal mechanical disturbance

This type of alternative could meet safety and resilience goals with far fewer ecological risks.

I respectfully ask the Forest Service to ensure that the Eagle Creek Project is guided by the best available science, prioritizes the protection of old and resilient forests, and fully evaluates alternatives that reduce wildfire risk without sacrificing long-term ecological health.

Again, thank you for considering these comments. I submit them as a concerned citizen who wants to see our forests managed wisely and responsibly for future generations.