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First name: Carrie

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Acting Forest Supervisor,

I am submitting comments in opposition to the North Trinity County Community Risk Reduction Project. This project proposes commercial logging across thousands of acres of Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat, Late Successional Reserves, and includes more than 2,000 acres of logging in Riparian Reserves, in one of the most ecologically significant landscapes in the National Forest System.

These watersheds support over 30 documented NSO territories. The low-elevation forests between Trinity Lake and the Trinity Alps Wilderness represent the last functional stronghold for this endangered species. They provide refuge in the sea of flammable clearcuts surrounding and intertwined with the project area.

The forest between Trinity Lake and the wilderness is doing ecological work that the surrounding landscape cannot. Sierra Pacific Industries has clear-cut the forests bordering the project area on nearly all sides. Forests on public lands are what remains: the connected, structurally complex forest that wildlife depends on to survive. These watersheds support more than 30 documented Northern Spotted Owl territories. The owl is functionally extinct across British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. This landscape, specifically, is the last functional stronghold for the species in the Pacific Northwest.

Low-elevation forests like these are especially critical. They remain snow-free longer, support year-round owl activity, and provide thermal refuge for cold-water streams and heat-stressed wildlife during increasingly extreme summers. They are the first forest animals to move through when dispersing and the last to dry out in drought years. Losing canopy here is not a recoverable loss on any meaningful timescale.

What this project describes, at this scale, leaves a forest permanently altered in character and ecological function. Reducing canopy cover, removing large trees over 20 inches, with miles of temporary roads, skid trails, and likely hundreds of clear-cut log landings not a community risk reduction prescription. What would remain is a disturbance footprint that is vast, long-lasting, and wholly inconsistent with forest resiliency by any scientific measure, as seen on Rainier Road.

I urge you to revise the EA around a prescription that is targeted, enforceable, and grounded in science. Protecting communities and protecting wildlife are not mutually exclusive. Treating small-diameter vegetation, limiting harvest to trees under 20 inches, using the existing road system, and maintaining 60 to 80 percent canopy cover would reduce fire risk without dismantling the forest that wildlife depends on.

Sincerely,

Carrie Grace