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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Responsible Project Official, I am writing to provide substantive comments regarding the proposed salvage logging of 600 acres, 21 miles of road maintenance, and 9 miles of temporary road construction resulting from the White Pine Fire on the Palouse Ranger District. While I support the replacement of the bridge on Trail #221-A and infrastructure safety upgrades at the Giant White Pine Trailhead, I have severe concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the intensive harvest methods and temporary road network. To ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the protection of the human environment, please address and mitigate the following specific issues in your final decision:

- 1. Severe Impacts of the 9-Mile Temporary Road Network**  
The proposal to construct 9 miles of temporary roads presents a severe threat to watershed integrity, soil compaction, and localized erosion. Ground disturbance from temporary roads in recently burned areas drastically increases sediment runoff into nearby streams, threatening critical fish habitats.  
**Requested Mitigation:** I ask that the Forest Service drastically reduce the mileage of these temporary roads and prioritize helicopter or skyline yarding methods that do not require building new ground-disturbing corridors. Furthermore, the final decision must include a legally binding, strict timeline for the immediate decommissioning and re-vegetation of any temporary roads used.
- 2. Degradation of the Recreation Experience at Giant White Pine Trailhead**  
The Giant White Pine area is a highly valued recreational and ecological asset for the community. Utilizing heavy commercial logging equipment for "regeneration harvest" across 600 acres risks permanently altering the visual quality, shade canopy, and quiet enjoyment of the trails connected to this trailhead.  
**Requested Mitigation:** Establish a substantial, un-logged buffer zone around all recreational trail corridors, specifically Trail #221-A, to prevent industrial machinery from destroying the trail bed, altering natural drainage, or presenting safety hazards to hikers. Commercial hauling operations should be entirely prohibited on weekends and holidays during peak recreation seasons.
- 3. Ecological Risks of Broad-Scale Regeneration Harvesting**  
While removing immediate hazard trees along public paths is necessary for public safety, a broad "regeneration harvest" over 600 acres removes the vital biomass that naturally protects scorched soils and provides crucial micro-habitats for recovering wildlife. Snags and down woody debris are a fundamental component of post-fire forest regeneration.  
**Requested Mitigation:** Limit logging strictly to true safety hazards within 100 feet of established roads and trail infrastructures. Retain all large-diameter snags and undamaged live trees within the 600-acre project area to protect local biodiversity and ensure natural seed sourcing for forest recovery.

Thank you for considering these substantive points. Please keep me informed of all future environmental assessments, decision notices, and administrative review opportunities regarding this project.

Respectfully,  
Leah Berman