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First name: Laura

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Salt Creek Falls and Diamond Creek Falls are two of the most stunningly beautiful places I know. I have hiked both trails with friends, and those memories matter to me. I am an avid bird watcher and wildlife enthusiast, and I photograph the landscape and the plants I find there. This forest, the Willamette National Forest and the Middle Fork Ranger District specifically, is somewhere I return to because of what it holds. That is why I oppose the Fall Creek project, number 301396.

Commercial thinning at this scale will alter stand structure across the district. As someone who watches birds and wildlife on these trails, I depend on the existing forest conditions to support the animals I come to see. The Forest Service has not demonstrated that species relying on current stand conditions will be protected through this harvest. I want to know what analysis the agency has done of impacts to wildlife, and I ask that the agency address this question directly and specifically in the record before any decision is finalized.

Beyond wildlife, I care how public land is managed and how my tax dollars are spent. The stated goals of increasing stand growth and supporting the local economy may sound reasonable on their surface, but goals alone do not justify commercial harvest. Ecological tradeoffs on Willamette National Forest lands deserve transparent review. A project that generates commercial timber revenue must show the public that economic benefit is not being prioritized over the health of the forest. The agency should explain, in full, what ecological costs were weighed against those stated goals and why that balance was found acceptable.

I am asking the agency to take these concerns seriously and respond to each of them before moving forward.