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Title: All-Lands Environmental Planner
Comments: The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would like to thank the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF) and the Entiat-Chelan Ranger District for developing the draft EA and FONSI designed to increase the resilience of the Lower North Shore Restoration Project area. The watershed comprising the project area is a priority planning area for the State of Washington's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington (20-Year Plan). DNR is Washington's lead for all forest health issues (RCW 76.06.150), with the goal to promote communication and coordination between the state and federal government regarding management decisions that potentially affect the health of Washington's forests.

DNR supports the Purpose and Need for the project including improving plant vigor, increasing forest resilience and preparing for climate change, restoring forest structure and stocking in post-wildfire conditions, and reducing future wildfire severity and risk within and around the wildland urban interface.

DNR supports the Proposed Actions of the Lower North Shore Restoration Project. The proposed treatments will enhance forest resilience in the face of climate change, wildfire, drought, and insects and disease, and aid in future fire suppression. We would like to see treatments implemented specific to PCL/POD level (e.g. 150' buffer with long-term maintenance with reduced surface/ladder fuels) where there is overlap between the project area and long-term strategic wildfire containment areas. We would also encourage you to allow broadcast prescribed burning across the entire project area and prioritize getting as many piles as possible burned each season. This may be an implementation activity that partners already working in the landscape could help accomplish. DNR would also like to see language incorporating the beneficial impacts of the work in reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

DNR thanks your team and the OWNF for its leadership on planning forest restoration activities in this high-priority landscape. We look forward to our continued partnership to improve forest health and promote resilient landscapes for this project area and throughout the eastern Cascades.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have questions or would like to discuss these comments further, please contact Amy Ramsey by emailing Amy.Ramsey@dnr.wa.gov or by calling 509.905.0846.