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Comments: Burned areas need to be left to regenerate and recover naturally. That is my position on the Whitman Post-Fire Recovery project. The following describes why the agency's own document does not give me any confidence that this project has been analyzed honestly or completely.

The socioeconomic analysis in the document concludes that there will be no adverse impacts, but at the same time it acknowledges in Section 2.2 that "Given the nature of socioeconomic impacts and the broad scope of a national-level environmental assessment, quantifying the impacts on human communities is complex and challenging." You can't just have a purely qualitative finding of no significant harm that is has no project-level estimate of jobs, board feet, acres treated, or dollars of timber value recovered. This is not a reasoned leap. NEPA requires reasonably complete disclosure of effects. It appears that the agency cannot or will not quantify socioeconomic effects at a meaningful geographic scale. That is unacceptable. The agency should prepare an Environmental Impact Statement that forces that discipline of quantification. I want the agency to explain IN THE RECORD how exactly a qualitative conclusion alone satisfies its disclosure obligations under NEPA.

The document also has a tension among its own factual assertions that cannot be solved. In Section 2.3.6 the agency states that "The available volume from fire-killed timber of similar species was shown to be about zero by year five following a fire." But then in another place in the document, it describes the implementation window as the first 5 years following a wildfire, with activities that may occur later or extend beyond that time period. If the value of timber hits zero by year five, the economic rationale for salvage harvest dissolves in exactly those cases where implementation slips toward or past that time horizon. The agency presents both assertions without ever reconciling them. It should directly analyze, for each proposed treatment area, whether salvage harvest remains economically viable at the anticipated implementation date, and what recovery objectives are being served when it is not.

The document also never analyzes log truck traffic on shared roads. Section 2.3.1 notes that forest roads carry people to work, school, and health services, and Section 2.4.4 counts truck drivers among affected jobs, but the document does not weigh the impact log hauling on those same routes. With this salvage harvest, there will be heavy commercial travel from log trucks sharing the roads with visitors, school trips, and residents. The document doesn't analyze this issue at all - this is a big gap in the analysis. The agency should estimate log truck volumes on forest and county roads from the logging, and analyze possible issues of safety and wear on roads when those uses are happening simultaneously.

I have backpacked and climbed in the Elkhorns and Wallowas with friends and family. My daughter has seen that landscape in its natural beauty, and I want those places preserved rather than exploited for financial gain. Logging adds insult to injury on a burned landscape. Post-fire forests recover; what they need is time, not extraction. Responsible management of the Wallowa-Whitman means transparent public process, restored scientific capacity at the Forest Service, adherence to the Roadless Rule, and timber harvest levels that reflect genuine ecological analysis rather than financial pressure. This project, as documented, reflects none of that. The agency should not spend public money on a project whose economic rationale, traffic impacts, and socioeconomic effects remain unquantified and unreconciled.