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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom this may concern,

I am a resident of Twisp, Washington and a town council member in Twisp. Twisp is a community center for much of the Methow Valley, a valley which is for its economy and quality of life, heavily dependent on outdoor recreational activities for those who live here, work here, and visit here. Those who visit here are the life blood for many jobs located here in Twisp and the larger Methow Valley area. Those recreational activities mostly take place on trails, forests, mountain areas, and the lower foothills which surround the Methow Valley and Twisp. The reason people live here and visit here is often because of the beauty of the forests and natural landscapes. It is also for the pristine natural areas that provide for abundant wildlife and healthy ecosystems.

The opportunities for public involvement have been grossly inadequate given the potential social and ecological consequences of Midnight Restoration Project #63933. There were no public meetings, and only an abbreviated comment period that afforded minimal time to review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and associated technical documents.

The assertion that the project will have "No Significant Impact" on the Twisp River Ecosystem or local residents, is unsupported. I can tell you, thousands of logging trucks rolling through our community will degrade our streets, our air quality, will increase tailpipe pollution, and decrease the safety of bikers and pedestrians on Twisp river road, in Twisp as well as on Highway 20 through the rest of the upper valley.

The EA contains little discussion of the project's direct social and recreational impacts, including commercial logging operations occurring over 20 years in popular camping, hiking, fishing, and biking locations. It does not consider the consequences of changing the natural character of the Twisp Corridor to people who appreciate undisturbed landscapes. The effects of logging equipment and tens of thousands of log trucks traveling in residential areas, along scenic roads, and in rural towns, are passed over. What does the Town of Twisp get out of allowing thousands of loaded and unloaded logging trucks to drive on our streets, degrading them over 20 years? How will those who profit from this timber sale (that is what it seems to be) pay the town of Twisp for the streets these trucks will most likely degrade? Is it up to this small town to pay for the roads these logging trucks will use? What is the impact on the tourists who like biking up the Twisp River road in the warmer months? Will they stop coming to Twisp to ride their bikes up the Twisp River road? If they do stop, how is that good for Twisp and the community who lives here? These are the effects that should be looked at and evaluated before moving forward with this project.

The EA's description of the project's primary purpose is inaccurate. Fire safety and altering forest conditions are secondary to timber production. Sending logs from the Methow watershed to faraway sawmills does not help our community, or our economy. In fact it will probably lower property values, degrade our air and water, our wildlife habitat, and safe and beautiful places to take part in outdoor recreational activities.

The project violates the standards set forth in the Northwest Forest Plan for the protection of wildlife species listed under the Endangered Species Act, particularly with commercial logging planned in Late Successional Reserves.

The project claims to make the project area more resilient to climate change, yet removes trees

that would provide thousands of tons of carbon sequestration, and it contrives conditions that may increase wildfire frequency and intensity.

The claim that forest conditions should be mechanically altered to reflect a previous condition fails to consider that past and present conditions are not static. Conditions presented as "historic" were part of an ever-evolving ecosystem. There is no discussion of how the contrived condition will be maintained post-project. The only plan is to take the trees so a few truckers and log operations folks, some of whom may be from the area will take profits and leave the community to pick up the pieces in a sub-optimal landscape.

Again, I ask, what's in this plan for Twisp and the bigger Methow Valley community? I do not believe that wild fire mitigation is the primary driver of this project or any of the logging projects in the Methow Watershed. I see the primary driver as profit primarily for those outside this valley, outside this community, outside of Twisp and I believe that this projects and others like it should be stopped until there is exhaustive local community input. This community should at the very least get paid for the externalized costs these forest management, AKA industrial logging operations will cost this community.

I've seen and been presented with scientific study that refutes much of the fire suppression claims this project espouses. I don't believe this is the best plan for this community and I object to moving forward with this project named the Midnight Restoration Project #63933.

Attached are some research and educational materials for anyone who wants to learn more. If I had more time I'd send info on impacts on communities near similar projects in the past. From what I've heard the impact is detrimental to the communities, especially when the trees are shipped to a far off mill.

Thanks you for reading and considering my perspective. I'd really like to know the upside of what you are proposing to do just up the river from Twisp and how that will benefit this community in the short, medium and long term. I do not see the upside.

Tim McGuire