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Comments: 1/8/2026Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest1000 SE Everett Mall Way, Suite 410Everett, WA 98208Electronically submitted via CARARE: Draft EA for Forest-wide Thinning Treatments Project (Publication #68852)Dear Erin Uloth,On behalf of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe (Tribe), please accept these comments on the United States Forest Service's Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Draft EA for Forest-wide Thinning Treatments Project.The Snoqualmie Tribe is a federally recognized Sovereign Indian Tribe and a signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855, in which it reserved to itself certain rights and privileges and ceded certain lands to the United States. As a signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliot, the Tribe specifically reserved to itself among other things, the right to fish at usual and accustomed areas and the "privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands" off-reservation throughout the modern-day state of Washington (Treaty of Point Elliot, art. V, 12 Stat. 928). The Tribe has lived on, tended, and managed this land since time immemorial and the Snoqualmie River basin, including its tributaries and surrounding lands, are vitally important both culturally and ecologically.The Tribe has reviewed the draft EA and appreciates the USFS's dedication to improving both forest health and the quality of habitat within the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. We wish to highlight the importance of preserving and enhancing hydrology through thinning and related project actions. Project equipment and heavy machinery should stay outside of riparian management zones and should not negatively impact water quality. We also ask that, when possible, some woody debris be left behind on the forest floor to help contribute to wildlife habitat. Project sites should also be considered for ability to contribute to woody debris additions to rivers and streams.We also want to remind USFS of the Tribe's expectations for consultation. The Tribe wishes to be notified of all project actions and given the opportunity to comment. We require, at minimum, 30 days to review project documents, including the level of effort and clearly defined area of potential effect, before a cultural resources survey is conducted. We also require an additional 30 days to review the cultural resources survey report and comment on results and recommend changes to the project design depending upon the results of the survey. We also ask that USFS allow the Tribe the opportunity to participate in cultural resource surveys and to utilize a Tribal monitor to watch for cultural resources during on the ground project actions.
It is our belief that there are many more overstocked stands in MBSNF where well-designed thinning treatments could help to improve forest health, fish and wildlife habitat, first foods productivity, and overall resiliency, than this Forest-Wide Thinning project will be able to treat. After demonstrating through this initial effort that thinning can be implemented for multiple benefits while protecting cultural resources, we encourage planning for more comprehensive and extensive efforts, and we would like to coordinate with the USFS on thinning activities near the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Forest boundary so that we can maximize our opportunity to increase landscape resiliency and first foods productivity, and to enhance wildlife corridors.The Snoqualmie Tribe appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed Draft EA for the Forest-wide Thinning Treatments Project. We wish to highlight the potential impacts the project may have on both natural and cultural resources. We also wish to highlight the need for early and often consultation throughout the planning process. We welcome any questions or clarification you have on these comments.Sincerely,Michael RossDeputy Executive Director of External Affairs