

NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON FOREST HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

November 13, 2014

Kyle Cannon, Acting District Ranger
Wenatchee River Ranger District
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
600 Sherbourne
Leavenworth WA 98826

Dear District Ranger Cannon,

Thank you for requesting input from the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative (NCWFHC) on the Wenatchee River Ranger District's proposal on the Upper Peshastin restoration project. The NCWFHC Projects Workgroup appreciates the District meetings on Dec. 18, 2013, March 6, May 8, and May 14, 2014, and the June 3, 2014 field trip.

The NCWFHC supports the purpose and need identified by the district, but also believes (as communicated to the District on May 14, 2014) that the project analysis should include social and economic benefits for local communities from actively restoring healthier aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. These benefits include employment opportunities, wood products, healthier watersheds, and reduced risk of uncharacteristic effects from insects and disease, which lead to uncharacteristic fire behavior.

THE NCWFHC is interested in increasing the pace and scale of restoration on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF), and strongly supports projects that achieve this goal. In order to ensure the Upper Peshastin project is implemented in a cost-effective and socially-beneficial way, the NCWFHC can support the project in the following ways:

- Help analyze potential costs and revenues, and identify strategies to increase the economic viability of the project.
- Leverage resources for project implementation (need to know specific amount of resources needed and for which actions).
- Publicize NCWFHC support for project implementation.
- Develop zones of agreement among NCWFHC members, through project discussions and field trips, which can be used by OWNF in planning future projects that will also have broad community support.

In order to provide this support to the District, and to provide more detailed comments on the project, the NCWFHC requests the following information about specific aspects of the proposed project:

- The basis for the number of miles of historic aquatic habitat in the proposed action, and if the project will restore all of those miles of habitat (98 for steelhead, 90 for bulltrout).
- The narrative that came from application of the aquatics approach (presented to the Workgroup on March 6, 2014), how it was used to develop project elements, and whether private lands were included in the analysis.
- The overall strategy for addressing roads on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and how the public will be involved in decisions about which roads to decommission or close in the project area.

- The expected costs and revenues associated with the proposed project.
- How the various elements are integrated to achieve holistic watershed restoration, especially in context of the checkerboard land ownership.
- The vegetation treatments: What are the prescriptions and the structure, composition and pattern of vegetation that will remain after treatments.
- The “down cutting” caused by forest roads, and what techniques and metrics will be applied to remedy and assess this issue.

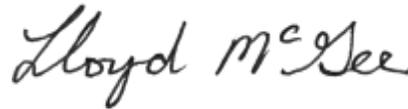
The NCWFHC looks forward to continued collaboration on large-scale restoration projects in the Wenatchee River Ranger District. The NCWFHC is committed to finding efficient and productive ways to engage with the District to increase the pace of restoration, a goal shared by the NCWFHC and the Forest Service.

Please contact Melody Kreimes, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board and NCWFHC facilitator, (509) 888-0321 or melody.kreimes@ucsrb.org, with any questions.

Sincerely,



Paul Ward, Yakama Nation
NCWFHC Co-Chair



Lloyd McGee, The Nature Conservancy
NCWFHC Co-Chair