

James Campbell

I am very concerned about the new proposed rule for additional fish buffers in Western Washington's Non Fish Stream buffers.

In 1987 my best friend and I purchased a piece of timber land in Lewis County for the purpose of recreation. Shortly after that we purchased two additional adjacent parcels. All three of these parcels boarder the North Fork of Mineral Creek. Our plan was to use this property as a private campground until we needed the money for retirement.

About 5 years ago we changed our plans. We enjoy using the property so much we decided to keep it for our families future enjoyment. Our new plan included managing this property as an industrial forest to free up some of our capital at a later date. We hired a professional forester who helped us with a long-term plan, and we put the property into designated forest land. We have been attending the WSU and DNR small forest owner's seminars to learn about how to best manage our forest. We have already planted approximately 1,000 new trees!

Over the last 5 years demand for 2nd homes along Mineral Creek has exploded. Financially our best move would be to sell our properties to a developer who would develop several house lots. While we would like to keep this property in our families for future generations, not being able to harvest the timber would be a financial strain on us and would lead to us eventually selling.

One of our motivations to not sell is environmental - while a timber harvest might result into some environmental disruption but several new homes with septic systems and more human activity would be of greater environmental impact to our forest. We are not a unique case! Other forest owners large and small will be looking to sell their property if they can't get a reasonable return from future timber sales. Privately owned forest land will be converted to 2nd homes at a much faster rate! Washington Forest meet urban sprawl! This is just one negative environmental impact if you adopt this new rule!

As small forest owner my partner and I are planting trees and managing our forest for future generations. One concern we have is what kind of wood products industry will there be in 40-60 years to market our logs to? If rules like this cause local mills to close what incentive is there for us to keep our properties in forest land?

There are other impacts to passing these new rules - smaller timber harvests equal loss of family wage jobs in the forest products industry and less lumber supply to build housing for our growing urban population. Our forest products industry infrastructure is a valuable tool to manage private and public forests to fight climate change. The lack of this industry infrastructure in Central Washington and Northern California is already hampering forest managers in their effort to manage our forests in the face of climate change.

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