

Jeffrey Mocniak

I write in support of the Draft Tier II Forest Practices Board's draft rule. I am a resident of Skamania County, a very rural and forest dependent set of communities. I am also a small business owner who depends on the forest for some of the materials and ingredients integral to our products. As such, I understand the value of a diversified local economy and the balancing act of maintaining ecological integrity for the longevity of healthy forest productivity vs. the needs of an economic system which demands ever more access to the materials which benefit bottom lines. I have witnessed the effects of excessive and unfettered logging practices, both around my home and throughout the state of Washington. I have also seen logging done well, and the difference is palpable, in many metrics, including water quality and habitat vibrancy, but also in the forest's ability to remain productive for more than just monocropping quick growing, profitable trees. From these perspectives, I strongly support increasing stream buffers for all types of streams, perennial and non-perennial, fish-bearing and non fish-bearing. A few of the reasons are:

- Climate change requires us to take bold action to enhance the ability of our "working forests" to do the work of carbon sequestration and temperature moderation. A big aspect of achieving these goals is to help re-establish healthy local hydrological systems. Forested streams help achieve this by not just cooling water temps, but also in enhancing flows and increasing water saturation which feeds into local hydrological cycling – increased transpiration contributing to increased rainfall, increased organic matter contributing to increased sponge-effect of forest soils, etc.
- The importance of local stream health contributing to larger watershed integrity cannot be overstated. As an avid fisherman, I see the importance of cool water refuges to both migratory fish species and local vertebrates and invertebrates integral to maintaining the food web. Living near the Columbia River, with its many dams, emphasizes that in lieu of the removal of the dams, our next best approach to facilitating the survival of salmon runs and the ecosystems intertwined with their life cycles, is to cool the water as much as possible before it enters the mainstem.
- Sedimentation is a major player in aquatic systems degradation. It is obvious from my time spent hiking, hunting, and exploring forests, that those areas which have had extensive upstream removal of vegetation in areas which see above-ground water flows during high rainfall events have significantly more sedimentation and erosion than areas with intact vegetation in riparian zones all the way to the headwaters and ridgelines.
- Having lush vegetation, especially deciduous vegetation, in corridors, gullies, and valleys, provides fire breaks. This is especially important in these times of increasing threats of wildfire due to climate change effects. I hear a lot about logging to create fire breaks and control lines, but little in terms of how riparian areas which have increased humidity and cooled temps can contribute to mitigating the spread of wild fires. To look at these PNW forests which have burned, is to see a mosaic in which such riparian areas are often those best protected from wild fire and those to re-establish the fastest post-fire.
- Dr. Kurt Fausch and others have shown through their investigations and scientific field work that forested riparian areas contribute immensely to the forest food webs. The vast amount of invertebrate life which is found in shaded riparian areas has ripple effects through the forest, and these invertebrates contribute significantly to fish and non-fish species alike. Being that the

invertebrates spread outside of the riparian areas, they contribute to the well-being of species which would otherwise not be able to live or re-establish themselves as quickly in forests areas which have been logged.

- Forested arteries and veins of the landscape look and feel better than completely logged slopes. This should be considered when one looks to the forests for the effects they have on the casual hiker or recreationist – as there are many in this state's forests! The health benefits of nature time are immense, and mitigating the effects that wholesale clearcutting can have on the psyche should not be de-prioritized.

Thank you for your time, and for your work to protect our forest ecosystems and local economies.