

Anonymous Anonymous

I am writing in support of the proposed change in the buffer zone for non-fish streams. Riparian forests are critical to the health of those streams and all the aquatic life within them. They naturally filter out pollutants, stabilize stream banks and cool the waters with shading trees. It's a very intricate system that must be carefully protected. It's rather perfectly designed and it doesn't take a lot to unravel it.

I feel the proposal of the new buffer zone rule is an important step in helping to prevent the unraveling through reducing the warming of waters in non-fish bearing streams. According to DOE's draft analysis, the current buffer rule is not protecting the water of our streams from warming.

Tribes, conservation groups, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Tribes concluded the current rules are not adequate to meet water-quality standards.

While the streams affected by this proposal are non-fish bearing, they form the headwaters of our most important salmon habitats, running year round and flowing directly into waters that do support fish.

With this proposal, we have a chance to prevent logging pollution from degrading our fragile stream waters.

If I understand it correctly, this rule will be applied to less than 3% of approximately 6 million acres covered by the Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan. This means that it will not be applied to 77% of those acres. We need to give the 3% of these streams the ability to provide their cool, clean waters downstream.

At a time of climate change, keeping stream waters cool and clean in ways that only forests can achieve is vital to the health of our salmon and all aquatic life. Our streams and salmon need the increase in buffer zones. I urge you to adopt the proposed buffer zone increase.

Thank you for your consideration.