



February 23, 2021

Lisa Wood, SEPA/NEPA Coordinator  
WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division  
PO Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Re.: DNS/Adoption 21-005: South Fork Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement

Dear Ms. Wood,

On behalf of Conservation Northwest, this letter serves to support the Determination of Nonsignificance/Adoption Notice for the South Fork Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement project applied for by the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians.

We understand that this project has gone through the NEPA process, that the proposed action has been identified as a Categorical Exclusion, and that no extraordinary circumstances on resource conditions were identified in the September 2020 Decision Memo. We understand that potential impacts to endangered/threatened species such as Puget Sound Chinook Salmon, Puget Sound Steelhead Trout, Bull Trout, the Northern Spotted Owl, and Marbled Murrelet, and/or their habitat (riparian and mature conifer forest), are likely to affect individuals with no adverse long-term effects on larger species populations, and that all effects from this project are covered in Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinion (ARBO) II.

We are supportive of the overall goals of this project to restore aquatic and riparian ecological processes to the area such as historical floodplain and landslide activity and improved salmonid spawning habitat. While the project proposes to remove an estimated 30 large diameter trees, we see that their use will remain on site as large wood enhancement and bank stabilization, and that they are being removed in order to replace already developed infrastructure (i.e., a paved road and near-shore campsites) with habitat that will benefit endangered fish species. If you have not already considered bringing in large wood logs from upland areas, we would encourage you to look at this as an alternative or supplement to removing on-site large diameter trees, which would allow you to leave large diameter trees within the project area that are likely to provide riparian shade beneficial to spawning habitat.

We appreciate the project's early consultation with Tribes and the role of the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians as the proponent/applicant of this project.

We also appreciate the long-term benefits of moving existing campsites away from the shoreline to prevent the destruction of riparian vegetation and water pollution from human activity.

Conservation Northwest supports the work of Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest towards improving landscape scale conditions for wildlife, improved watershed functions, and balance between protecting natural resources and tribal and public access for cultural and recreational opportunities. We believe this project will help achieve these objectives in the South Fork of the

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Stillaguamish River. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and your work to support these conservation projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jen Syrowitz".

Jen Syrowitz  
Conservation Program Manager  
jsyrowitz@conservationnw.org

Cc: Laurel Baum, Conservation Associate  
Dave Werntz, Science and Conservation Director

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