

Rocky Robbins

From: Simone Alin <simone.r.alin@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 18, 2019 10:33 AM
To: Rocky Robbins
Cc: Gordon Holtgrieve
Subject: Comment letter on Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan

Dear Ms. Robbins,

I am a part-time resident and home-/land-owner in the Methow Valley near Mazama. I am also a parent and thus passionate about preserving the landscape and way of life here for my children and following generations to experience. I have also been an environmental scientist for a quarter of a century and am frankly terrified and depressed about the changes we are already seeing to snowpack, river flows, air temperatures, fire frequency, and species die-offs in this century in our region. I strongly support the Methow Valley Citizens Council Scoping Comments and proposed alternative four. I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of clean air and water to our own and future generations, as well as the other species we share the region with. Today I am writing in support of MVCC's comments and alternative as well as to add a few thoughts of my own.

1) While I presently work as an oceanographer, my environmental science training is broad. I am presently involved with national leadership on the North American carbon cycle (though I write today as a concerned citizen and parent, representing myself and my family only). As such, I would encourage the county to look for opportunities to secure or increase carbon storage in our landscapes in proposed future development plans. This might be done through incentivizing certain farming and other land use practices (although of course water availability needs to also be considered in any such approaches in this semi-arid region).

2) California knows all too well about linkages between fires and land slides following rainfall. I can tell you that on the west side of the Cascades we have seen record rainfall in some month every year of the last several. As air temperatures warm and more precipitation falls as rain in the Methow Valley (and elsewhere in Okanogan County), I don't believe I am overstepping the bounds of science to say that we might also reasonably expect landslide dangers to INCREASE in response to climate change, with observed increases in fires and potentially increasing/new records in rainfall in parts of our county. We need to plan for this.

3) Since we purchased our property in 2015, we have seen the number of salmon returning to our property each August (as surveyed annually by the Yakama tribe) dwindle from two to zero. I expect this decline is related to the anomalously warm ocean, river, and stream temperatures in 2015-2016 associated with the Blob and following El Nino. Conditions ripe for another strong Blob/El Nino event this winter suggest that we will again be walloped with another terrible year for river flows and temperatures, salmon, etc. throughout 2019. Given the importance of salmon for bears, orcas, and our state's economy, their preservation needs to be a priority for Okanogan County and should be reflected in high-level documents such as the comprehensive plan (the word "salmon" does not appear in the current draft).

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Simone Alin