



To: Jacqueline Buchanan, Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region

Re: Forest Plan Amendment for Planning and Management of Northwest Forests Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl

Date: February 2nd, 2024

Great Old Broads for Wilderness is a women-led national grassroots organization that engages in and inspires activism to preserve and protect wilderness and wild lands. Our volunteer-led chapters, located in rural and urban communities across the nation, organize members to engage as advocates to protect and steward wilderness and wild places.

This scoping comment represents the collective voice of our members. However, our Pacific Northwest chapters used their local insight and intimate understanding of these forests to develop and submit a substantive scoping comment. We encourage the USFS to pay close attention to this comment (letter ID: 64745-5501-3629).

Executive Order 14072 on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies states that it is the Administration's policy to conserve mature and old-growth forests on federal lands. When drafting the NWFP amendment, the USFS should work to advance the spirit and intent of Executive Order 14072 by creating the strongest possible protections for mature and old-growth trees within the planning region. The mature and old-growth forests included in the NWFP are particularly valuable for carbon storage and climate change mitigation. Therefore, they must be protected in order to combat the climate and biodiversity crises.

To protect the region's biodiversity, the amendment must protect wildlife habitat from disturbances such as wildfire, drought, disease, and insects. The Northwest Forest Plan was originally created to protect threatened and endangered species that are dependent on old-growth forests, such as the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. The amendment should only maintain or enhance these protections.

We are pleased the USFS has expressed a commitment to incorporating Indigenous knowledge into planning, project design, and implementation. We do not want the quick amendment

timeline to impact meaningful tribal inclusion. The USFS should take great care in ensuring that tribal communities are consulted early and often during the amendment process.

This amendment process is a rare opportunity to create new and lasting conservation paradigms for national forests and ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important effort. We look forward to engaging in this process alongside other stakeholders, tribal nations, and the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Husby', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sara Husby
Executive Director
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
(970) 385-9577