

Northwest Forest Plan Amendment: NFH Public Comment
February 1, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the public comment process for the NWFP Amendment. I am a recreation residence special use permitholder with a cabin on FS land.

Under the terms of our permit, my family has occupied our cabin for nearly 55 years and has collectively witnessed the steady decline of a healthy forest and vibrant local communities. Our cabin is within an FS Fuels Reduction Project Area that took 15 years, from initial scoping to a record of decision, for a project estimated to take 20 years to complete.

As crucial as amending the NWFP with up-to-date climate and forest health science is including practical frameworks for planning, managing, and staffing efforts (fuel reduction, landscape restoration, etc.) toward achieving more fire-resilient forests in a timely, well-staffed, responsible way.

I hope this process will:

- Address the sense of urgency to translate scientific findings into actionable and implementable plans with standards and timelines that are measurable and include recourse when timelines are unmet. Thirty-five years from initial scoping to estimated project completion is unacceptable in a rapidly changing environment.
- Balance the urgent need to complete projects supporting Fire Resistance and Climate Resilience with the requirements of Wildlife Habitat Protection. Often, plans span different forest unit types. Forest management projects containing Old Growth/LSRs units should include a risk assessment of increased fire severity impact on habitat and biodiversity. It is discouraging to see a project held up over requirements for a discrete set of units and habitat within the project area and then watch a large section suffer a high-severity wildfire.
- Explore and support emerging markets/infrastructure that can handle the byproduct of wildfire or wood management projects. Our recent experience with a public utility's fuel reduction project is insufficient capacity to handle our area's salvage or excess wood products. Is there an opportunity for rural community support to build capacity to contribute to local economies?
- Include building Forest- and District-level capacity to support increased community and respectful tribal collaboration. We all need healthy forests.
- Encourage increased direct communications. The Forest Service has our contact information. We are billed annually for our special use permit. However, I must maintain a subscription to the Federal Register to learn about actions happening in the forest where my cabin sits.

Respectfully,
Desiree La Maggiore