



SIERRA PACIFIC INDUSTRIES

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Thank you for accepting this comment regarding the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan. As a California Registered Professional Forester and recreational user of our National Forest lands I strongly urge the Forest Service to take advantage of this opportunity to improve the management of our federal lands and support our communities, wildlife, environment, and economy.

As a professional forester I see the need to increase active management, including routine timber harvest and thinning of overstocked stands. This supports the health and resilience of forests, supports wildlife habitat, and at the same time producing forest products that support our local communities. Currently only 16 percent of national forest lands in the Pacific Northwest are available for routine timber management (Matrix). In this amendment the Forest Service should look for opportunities to expand active management across all land designations including Matrix and Late Successional Reserves.

Currently, the Forest Service is limited in its ability after a wildfire to remove dead and dying trees, as well as hazard trees along forest roads. I have experienced the aftermath of recent wildfires on the Shasta Trinity, Klamath, Lassen, and Plumes National Forests. Many road systems are still unusable because of the fire-killed trees left to fall and block roads. The Forest Service should prioritize quick action after a fire to ensure safe access on public lands for firefighters, first responders and the public at large. Quick action also allows the Forest Service to capture the value of the dead timber that will often fund the hazard tree removal and additional forest recovery work.

Active management also maximizes the ability of forests to sequester and store carbon. The Forest Service should promote the development of forests of all age classes, especially younger forests that sequester carbon at high rates. Then responsible timber harvest can store carbon in long-lived wood products that are locally made.

Finally, the Northwest Forest Plan promised to include the "human and economic dimensions in management." Yet the plan has failed to deliver adequate timber supplies that many rural communities depend on for jobs, economic opportunity, and revenues to support public services.

Sincerely,

Joe Puentes
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