

There is No Going Back: Comments on the Northwest Forest Plan Amendment #64745

** “These forests are not only more complex than we think, they are more complex than we can think.”*

—Jack Ward Thomas, Forest Service scientist who eventually became chief of the agency.

Think of forests as the ocean. How much do we really know? What can we still learn? Do we want to risk destroying what we can't get back? Forests are life. Without the biodiversity we eventually die, along with known and unknown species necessary for all life.

Deep forests are not a luxury, they are a necessity. We require them not only for our physical health and the health of the planet, but also for our mental well-being. I have walked almost daily in forests both in Central and Western Oregon. As a human being, and as an artist, nature and these forests and all that live there — whether I know they are there or not — sustain me, bring me wonder, and a reason to be alive.

The Forest Service must reject plans to weaken core protections of the Northwest Forest Plan. Maintaining and expanding protection for forest reserves is critical to preserving biodiversity, clean water, and the long-term climate benefits our forests provide. A few points to highlight:

- Preserving biodiversity and habitat, protecting imperiled species, and protecting and restoring riparian areas and watersheds should be a core principle of this forest plan amendment.**
- Older forests store massive amounts of carbon and older forests are more resistant and resilient to wildfires.**
- Selectively logging younger, sustainable stands would create more jobs and preserve mature and old-growth forests.**

As a friend said in her comments on this amendment:

“It would be so much better to create higher end products from the logs within communities that rely on the forest for an income. Log fewer trees but generate more income from those that are logged. Some of this industry exists now, but we need more. We need stable, safe jobs for older loggers and their families. It doesn't mean that we should stop logging, but that we should log younger, sustainable stands in a careful fashion and make good, income-generating use of what we do log.”

Please do not weaken the Northwest Forest Plan because of pressure from the current administration. The risk is too great. There is no going back. Look into your own being and experiences for strength to do what is right.

*According to an article written by Kim Murphy, the thick, wet forests of the Pacific Northwest are the carbon storage powerhouses of the U.S. — in fact, they store more than 1-1/2 times as much carbon as the entire amount of carbon dioxide burned in fossil fuels throughout the country each year, a new study shows. [4] So the release of carbon dioxide from deforestation in the Pacific Northwest is huge.”They absorb as much or more carbon per acre than tropical forests,” said Beverly Lowe, a professor of global Change biology and terrestrial systems science at Oregon State University and a co-author of the study.

*<https://uw.pressbooks.pub/nwforestryresearch/chapter/cici-wang-and-jenny-wang/>