**Intro**

Dear Regional Foresters,

As a resident of Hood River, OR I am spoiled by having close access to the wonderful PNW Temperate Rainforests in both Washington and Oregon. Growing up in Oregon, I have spent many days working in, recreating and exploring the National Forests around me. This place is home to me. We are lucky to have this public land. I would like to ensure that my grandchildren are able to also explore and work in these forests. Please consider the following comments.

**Logging**

The Northwest Forest Plan was instrumental in protecting much of the remaining old-growth forests in our region, ensuring that these places can continue to function has habitat for endangered species and other plants and animals associated with these forests. While thinning and prescribed burns may help to protect these places for future generations, the largest trees in these areas should not be allowed to be harvested. The NWFP should have clear language that states that the trees over a 60” DBH shall not be allowed to be harvested. While performing thinning, the largest trees in the stand should remain. Thinning shall always leave the largest trees in the stand in to help seed the next forest. The larger the tree is, the more fire resilient it is; leaving the largest trees in a stand also will help ensure that the Forest Service will have a continual stock of trees in the area. The practice of leaving the trees in the top 25% DBH in a particular stand will help both the production of timber, protect the trails underneath, and to maintain the connected habitat that these places. Many of these places have stood for hundreds or even thousands of years. Consider our place in time when proposing actions with mechanized equipment in these fragile ecosystems. Please continue to adhere that wet weather haul shall not be permitted. Hauling when the ground is either frozen or dry can make a huge difference to help protect the soils that are the lifeblood to the forest. Mechanized equipment in the forest should strictly follow wet weather haul guidelines. Temp road pioneering in mature stands of forest should be to the minimum extent possible. Adding roads to the Forest Service with road pioneering should be banned. The NFS has plenty of roads and cannot to afford to maintain more. When creating timber sales, the timber team should communicate with the rest of the staff in the local ranger station to confirm that it is done to the best ability possible. Local staff should be the representatives of the sale and should be on site when the sale is taking place.

**Fire “Resistance and Resilience”**

Since time immemorial, fire has had a critical role across the northwest and will continue to shape these landscapes and ecosystems into the future. Amendments to the plan need to recognize the important role of fire and work to shift policy away from full suppression of all fires. Amendments should prioritize protecting communities, while also recognizing that during extreme weather events, the effectiveness of “fuels treatments” is dramatically reduced.

Amendments should bolster efforts to reintroduce beneficial fire to all forest ecosystems while prohibiting “fuels treatments” that aren’t grounded in the current and growing understanding of fire and its role in the variety of forest types across the Northwest Forest Plan area.

Fire management should be at the forefront of the updated NWFP as it is the biggest threat to keeping a stock of timber harvests in the area. Clear cut logging should be banned as it creates even aged stands of trees that burn hotter and have little resistance to forest fires. The forest’s best defense against fire is large diameter trees and diverse Old Growth ecosystems. Mechanized equipment use in Old Growth ecosystems should be banned. Thinning in Old Growth ecosystems for fuels treatment should be done with hand crews if at all. Beneficial prescribed burns should be mandated throughout Region 6 in order to reduce fuels for unpredictable large scale forest fires. Fire is a natural part of this place and should be used as one of our greatest tools, not fought against. This fight has resulted in the forests overloaded with fuel we see today. In addition I would like to see that harvesting of Old Growth, even after a wildfire, should be banned across Region 6.

**Incorporate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK)**

The Northwest Forest Plan does not include the traditional ecological knowledge held within the varied and diverse tribes that are indigenous to the region – something the original authors of the plan openly regret. The ancestors of these tribes shaped and stewarded the landscapes and ecosystems now managed by the Forest Service and the Northwest Forest Plan. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and goals into the proposed amendment is essential – especially (but not limited to) the beneficial use of fire.

**Communities**

There are countless communities scattered across our region whose identities, cultures, and economies are linked to the forests managed under the Northwest Forest Plan. Amendments to the plan must recognize the social and economic changes that have occurred in the 30 years since the plan’s creation and strive to build a workforce based on restoration and reciprocity.

The communities surrounding Region 6’s National Forests are economically diverse and should be treated as such. While the Forest Service land is a working forest for timber harvest, it should also be managed in a way that benefits the recreational economy of the surrounding rural communities. There have been many recent studies showing that recreation in our public lands creates many more jobs and brings in more to rural economies than timber harvest does alone. Clear cutting our forests destroys the regions recreational benefits and stunts the growth of these businesses. Many people do not want to travel to recreate in a clear-cut forest. In order to provide our communities with well-rounded options for economic growth, please consider banning all forms of clear-cut logging, or variable retention harvest, from all areas of Region 6.

This place is my home and home to many others throughout the Pacific Northwest. Please consider the voices of many instead of the wealth to be gained by the few when considering updates to the NWFP. Thank you for your time.